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THE
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ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

LABOUR IN INDIA.

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EVIDENCE.

Vol. V.—Part 1.

BENGAL

[Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars].

WRITTEN EVIDENCE.

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1930

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NOTE TO PART I.

In this part is reproduced the bulk of the evidence submitted to the Commission in the form of written memoranda in reply to the list of subjects circulated in August 1929. In preparing this volume the Commission have sought to retain all matter likely to be of permanent interest to students of the subject, and not available elsewhere. Material supplied to the Commission which has already been printed and published elsewhere has in general not been reproduced. Where memoranda have been abridged all considerable omissions have been indicated in the text.

Terms of Reference.

"To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations."

Note.—"Industrial undertaking" for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows :—

"For the purpose of this Convention, the term 'industrial undertaking' includes particularly :—

"(*a*) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.

"(*b*) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.

"(*c*) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.

"(*d*) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand."

* * * * * * * * * *

The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture.

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54	Mr. R. C. Parsons ..	Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
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56	Capt. W. O'Connor	Senior Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Bengal.	330—335	
57	Dr. Chas. A. Bentley, M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. & H., C.I.E.	Director of Public Health, Bengal.	335—348	199—213, E.-2970.
58	Mr. F. C. Griffin, M.I.C.E., M.I.E.	Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, Bengal.		
59	Dr. M. E. Sufi, B.A., L.R.C.P.&S., D.P.H.	Assistant Director of Public Health, Vaccination and Vital Statistics, Bengal.		
60	Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.	Assistant Director, Public Health for Industrial Hygiene, Bengal.		
61	Dr. B. C. Mukharji, M.B., D.P.H.	Inspector of Septic Tank Installations, Calcutta.		
62	Dr. A. C. Ray Chaudhury, D.P.H.	Diet Survey Officer, Public Health Department, Bengal.		
63	Mr. C. W. Gurner, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Local Self-Government Department.	..	213—219, E.-3215.

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64	Mr. H. J. Twynam, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department.	..	23—219, E.-3210.
65	Mr. R. N. Gilchrist, I.E.S.	Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce and Marine Departments, Labour Intelligence Officer and Registrar of Trade Unions.	1—190	
66	Mr. A. T. Weston, M. Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E.	Director of Industries, Bengal.	391—394	219—244 E.-3270
67	Mr. J. A. Beale ..	Sub-Divisional Officer, Asansol.		
68	Khan Bahadur Tasaddak Ahmed.	Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.		
69	Rai Sahib Sushil Kumar Ganguly	Officiating Registrar, Co-operative Societies.		
70	Mr. R. P. Adams, O.B.E., M.I. Mech. E.	Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
71	Mr. J. B. McBride, A. M. I. (Mech.) E.	Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
72	Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Kt.	Chairman, Calcutta Port Commissioners.		
73	Mr. W. A. Burns ..	Traffic Manager, Calcutta Port.	348—356	245—260, E.-3599
74	Commander Norcock.	Deputy Consevatorr, Calcutta Port.		
75	Mr. H. F. Darvell ..	Shipping Master, Calcutta.	Volume II, Part I, pages 328—334.	260—279, E.-3904.
76	Mr. E. C. Benthall	Representatives of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	357—362	280—295, E.-4050.
77	Mr. W. Gow ..			
78	Mr. D. K. Cunnison			
79	Captain R. Liddle ..	Marine Superintendent, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited.	362—365	296—309, E.-4250.

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81	Mr. U. M. Bose ..		365—375	310—320, E.-4423.
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84	Mr. L. M. Snelgrove	General Manager, The Oriental Gas Company, Limited, Calcutta and Howrah.	378—379	..
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86	Mr. C. W. Leeson ..	Rivers Steam Navigation Company, Limited, Calcutta.	382	..
87	Mr. J. Donald ..	Manager of Messrs. Sonakunda Baling Company, Limited, Naraingunge.	382—384	..
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89	Mr. M. Brooks ..	Managing Director, The Angus Company, Limited, Calcutta.	394—411	..
90	Major-General G. Tate, I.M.S.	Surgeon General with the Government of Bengal.	412	..
91	Mr. M. Dalmiya ..	Secretary and General Manager, Kesoram Cotton Mills, Limited.	412—423	..
92	Indian Chamber of Commerce.	Calcutta.	423—425	..
93	Mr. J. P. Mandelia ..	Secretary, the Birla Jute Manufacturing Company, Limited, Calcutta.	425—431	..
94	The Bengal Mariner's Union	Calcutta.	432—434	..
95	The Indian Quarter-Master's Union	Calcutta.	434—435	..
96	Mr. S. A. M. Shoostry	General Secretary, Bengal Labour Association.	435—436	..
97	Prof. N. Gangulee, C.I.E., B.Sc., Ph.D.	Khaira Professor of Agriculture, Calcutta University.	436—444	..

The evidence (written or oral or both) of the following witnesses belonging to this Presidency, or examined at one of the centres in this Presidency, is printed in Volume VIII, Parts I (written) and II (oral)—Railways.

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1	Mr. K. P. Banerjee	Representatives of the Eastern Bengal Railway Indian Employees' Association.		510—530	314—331, K.-2970.
2	Mr. J. N. Gupta ..				
3	Mr. P. Chakraborty				
4	Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union			530—532	
5	Mr. Cameron ..	General Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.	Representatives of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Employees of Railways	618—634	332—343, K.-3174.
6	Mr. Bastien ..	of the E. B. Railway.			
7	Mr. Powell ..				
8	Mr. Rigg ..	of the E. I. Railway.			
9	Mr. Lardner ..				
10	Mr. Martston	of the B. N. Railway.			
11	Mr. Backman ..				
12	Mr. Wilson ..	of the E. I. Railway (O. and R. Section).			
13	Mr. Atkinson ..	Travelling Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.			
14	Mr. P. H. Maflin, O.B.E., M.C.	Agent.	The Eastern Bengal Railway.	1—358 (Joint Memo.)	343—372, K.-3287.
15	Mr. I. St. C. Pringle	Deputy Agent. ..			
16	Mr. A. H. Joscelyne	Locomotive Superintendent.			
17	Dr. H. Suhrawardy	Chief Medical Officer.			
18	Mr. H. N. Parker ..	Officer on Special Duty.			
19	Mr. H. A. Outhwaite	Statistical Officer.			
20	Mr. V. P. Bhandarkar	Welfare Officer. ..			
21	Mr. D. Ghose ..	Assistant Traffic Superintendent.			

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22	Mr. Surendra Nath, M.A., LL.B.	Acting President.	Representatives of the East-Indian Railway Union, Moradabad.	461—477	373—388, K.-3570.
23	Mr. Hikmatullah, Bar-at-Law.	Chief Legal Adviser.			
24	Mr. H. S. Bhatnagar	General Secretary.			
25	Mr. K. N. Pandey	Asst. Station Master.			
26	Mr. G. L. Colvin, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	Agent. ..	The East Indian Railway.	1—358	389—425, K.-3788.
27	Mr. F. E. Robertson	Chief Operating Superintendent.			
28	Mr. R. L. Ray ..	Chief Mechanical Engineer.			
29	Mr. A. V. Venables	Chief Engineer..			
30	Dr. A. K. H. Pollock	Chief Medical Officer.			
31	Mr. E. Cameron Ker	Deputy Chief Accounts Officer.			
32	Mr. A. O. Evans ..	Deputy Agent ..			
33	Mr. M. Robertson ..	Secretary to Agent.			
34	Mr. H. Lancaster ..	Manager, Giridih Mines.			
35	Mr. F. C. Badhwar	Employment Officer, Lillooah.			
36	Mr. C. S. Whitworth	Chief Mining Engineer (Railway Board).			
37	Mr. Santi Ram Mondal	Representatives of the East Indian Railway Labour Union, Lillooah.		477—486	425—430, K.-4196.
38	Mr. Ram Autar ..				
39	Mr. Atal Behary Santra				
40	Mr. S. N. Shaw ..				
41	Mr. Ismail ..				
42	Mr. Ali Mohammad				
43	Mr. K. D. Chatterjee.				
44	Mr. Hardin Shaha				

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46	Mr. J. C. Mitter ..	General Secretary, East Indian Railway Union, Khagaul.		489—497	..
47	Bengal North Western Railwaymen's Association	Gorakhpur.		497—509	..
48	Mr. V. E. D. Jarrad	Agent.	The Bengal Nagpur Railway.	1—358	431—458, K-4274.
49	Dr. Mozumdar ..	Medical Department.			
50	Mr. Bazaz ..	Engineering Construction.			
51	Mr. Chakrabartty ..	Engineering Open Line.			
52	Mr. Khanna ..	Commercial Department.			
53	Mr. Faroque ..	Transportation Department.			
54	Mr. Chowdhury ..	President, Urban Bank.			
55	Dr. A. Martin-Leake, V.C., F.R.C.S.	..			
56	Mr. Kanshi Nath Muttu	Representatives of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur.		532—546	459—487, K-4613.
57	Mr. W. V. R. Naidu				
58	Mr. P. Ramachandra Rao				
59	Mr. Somayajulu ..				
60	Mr. A. N. Bose ..				
61	Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy	President, Muslim Welfare Committee, B. N. Railway, Kharagpur.		546—549	

M29RCL—3,054—10-3-31—GIPS

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

I.—Recruitment.

Letter from Government of Bengal, dated 18th October, 1929.

I am directed to enclose herewith two memoranda,* on Section I (Recruitment) in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission on Labour in India. These memoranda, which have been compiled according to the headings in the provisional list of subjects, contain the official views of the Government of Bengal on the items within their administrative cognizance on which opinions have been asked for by the Commission.

2. The main facts connected with recruitment of labour in Bengal are that the great majority of workers in organized manufacturing industries and in plantations are recruited from other provinces, and that such recruitment is regulated by the industries concerned without official intervention. Bengal is a labour-receiving and not a labour-supplying province. So far as Bengali labour is concerned, therefore, no problems of unemployment arise. Such unemployment as does occur is of a temporary character only, and solves itself automatically in a short period. In Bengal for many years there has been a demand for more labour than is available. And if there is slackness in one industry, the labour is sooner or later absorbed in another.

3. The average incoming worker is unskilled : he comes to seek *kam*, and has no definite idea as to what the *kam* may be. He prefers to work in close proximity to his fellow villagers or relations, but if work is not available in their areas, he goes elsewhere. If he settles down in a manufacturing area, where he is absorbed in a regular calling in which in due course he becomes skilled, he has no difficulty in getting employment if he loses his job, provided he is a well-behaved and reasonably good worker, for skilled workmen find a ready market for their services in this presidency. If he remains unskilled, he may move from place to place, as his inclinations dictate and opportunities offer. If, at the worst, he can get nothing to do, he returns to his home, and perhaps sends out a more competent younger or older brother to seek work, while he himself works on the family plot of land. Actually the immigrant may prefer casual or seasonal employment. He may not desire to settle down as a factory hand for the reason that he may not wish to be separated from his family for the greater part of the year. His home circumstances may be such that he does not require regular wages.

4. In times of stress during famines or floods there may be a temporary over-supply of labour in Bengal, leading to lack of employment. Similarly, the flow of labour may vary according to the type of harvest in labour-supplying areas. In the coal-mining areas, for example, the supply of labour varies inversely with the quality of the harvests. A good harvest means a bad labour supply, as there is less need for the villager to seek extra means of sustenance, and a bad harvest the opposite. Famines and bad harvests thus lead to unemployment in the sense that there is a surplus of labour asking for employment. The problem is primarily an agricultural one, and is not susceptible of treatment by western methods, such as unemployment insurance. In the present stage of industrial organization, indeed, unemployment insurance, so far as Bengal is concerned, is not only impossible ; it is unthinkable.

5. As indicated in the appropriate memorandum, Bengal fortunately is not seriously affected by famines. When they do occur, they are dealt with by the regularly constituted famine machinery. It is the famines or poor harvests in other provinces which affect the labour supply of Bengal, and whether such machinery is necessary for them is not for the Government of Bengal to say. Possibly some type of special recruitment agencies might help, but, as far as Bengal alone is concerned, they are not necessary. Such agencies, indeed, unless under the most rigorous management, tend to deteriorate. It is well known, that the existing *sirdari* system of recruitment is honeycombed with abuses arising from the relations between the *sirdar* and the person recruited. Those abuses continue from the actual recruitment right through the term of employment, so long as the person recruited continues to be under the control of the *sirdar*. The same is true of other recruitment, such as lascar recruitment through serangs. Evils of this nature cannot be terminated by official organizations. They might almost be said to be essential to Indian labour at its present stage of development. The cure lies with labour itself through its

* (1) Recruitment ; sub-headings (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9). (2) Recruitment for Assam ; sub-heading (6).

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own organizations, the virility of which depends on some measure of education, the provision of which in the case of the great majority of industrial and plantation workers in Bengal is not primarily a Bengal problem. Something too, may be done on the side of employers by the organization of special labour offices under well-qualified labour or welfare supervisors, but the task of eradicating the long-established habit of receiving and giving bribes or *dastoori* is not one that can be expected to yield results quickly.

6. So far as the information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal goes, there is no case for establishing new agencies for the recruitment of labourers for Bengal industries or plantations. No representations have been made for such by either employers or workers. Were any industry, such as the tea industry, to require new methods, each case would be considered on its merits, but the probability is that the problem of the Government of Bengal would be similar to what it is at present in respect of recruitment to Assam, viz., their main function would be to provide for the safe transport of workers recruited in other provinces.

7. With regard to the recruitment of seamen, I am to say that the administration of the mercantile marine has now been taken over by the Central Government, and that all papers bearing on the subject have been transferred to them. I am, however, to say that prior to the transfer, the Government of Bengal were in entire agreement with the policy which, it is understood, the Government of India are now pursuing with regard to lascar recruitment. That policy is to encourage shipping firms to adopt what has come to be known as the British India system of recruitment. The muster system for serangs not in the permanent employ of individual firms, which, it is understood, has also been introduced, should aid in eliminating at least a part of the bribery which has been going on in the lascar recruitment system, but the extirpation of bribery between serang and lascar, like that between *sirdar* and factory operative, depends mainly on the lascars themselves. Calcutta crews, it has been indubitably proved, cannot be selected at random. Serangs must be allowed the right to select or reject members of their crews, and lascars must be allowed the preference of choosing the crews with which they sail. To force serangs to take men they do not wish, or to compel men to sail with crews with whom they do not wish to work, would be to court disaster on the high seas. The part of Government in eliminating bribery between serangs and the members of their crew lies in impressing upon the members of the crew at the time of signing on or off that the wages they earn are theirs alone, and that they are under no obligation whatsoever to pay one anna to anyone else. Government, of course, could also inform lascars that criminal action might be taken in cases of proved corruption. Experience, however, has proved in Bengal, as it has also proved in other countries, that allegations of bribery in almost every case ultimately fail, because of lack of evidence. The future of bribery among lascars depends largely on the effectiveness of the Indian Seamen's Union, a body which has already done much to help to extirpate the evil and which has recently been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926.

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(1) *Origin of Labour*—(iv) *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*—The Census Report for Bengal for 1921 (Part I), paragraph 99, distinguished five types of migration :—(*a*) Casual migration due to short moves continually taking place between adjacent areas ; (*b*) temporary migration, due to business journeys, pilgrimages and the like ; (*c*) periodic migration, arising from seasonal causes, such as harvests ; (*d*) semi-permanent migration, when persons reside and earn their living in one place but retain their home and family connections in another ; and (*e*) permanent migration, when, for various causes, families are settled in permanent areas other than their home districts.

The migration of industrial labour falls within the last three classes, but there are no reliable figures to show the extent of periodic migration. Migration of this type is caused by seasonal demands for labour and most of it is agricultural in character. The chief industry utilizing labour of this class is jute-baling, most of the workers in which are not assembled in factories when the census figures are taken.

Migration in Bengal may be examined from three points of view :—(*a*) General migration ; (*b*) migration to particular areas ; and (*c*) migration in individual industries.

(i) *General Migration.*—The figures of general migration show the movement of the population from two points of view :—(*a*) Movement to Bengal from areas outside Bengal ; and (*b*) movement within Bengal.

With regard to the latter, migration within Bengal, there is little to be said so far as industrial labour is concerned. The causes of such movement are connected with the social, commercial trading, educational and agricultural necessities of the population. The only areas in Bengal that can be said to supply industrial workers to the metropolitan manufacturing area, a term used to indicate the manufacturing districts on the Hooghly, stretching about two miles inland on each side from Naihati

to Budge-Budge, are Midnapore, and, to a smaller extent, Bankura. There is, indeed, a general movement of population from Burdwan to the metropolitan area; thus in 1921 there was a balance of migration from Burdwan to Hooghly of 8,803 persons, as compared with 6,221 in 1911, and from Burdwan to Calcutta of 15,749 in 1921, as compared with 20,234 in 1911; but this movement of population includes persons of all classes and arises mainly from social, educational, commercial and trading reasons. Burdwan is not a supply centre of labour for the metropolitan area. Midnapore, however, does send large numbers to the industrial areas, as shown by the balances of migration from 1891 to 1921. The figures in 1891 were 44,958, and they grew through the decennial periodic figures of 67,665 and 96,743 to 114,176 in 1921. Thus, Midnapore has supplied large numbers of workers to the metropolitan mill area, and these numbers have shown marked increases from decade to decade. The exodus from Midnapore is evidence of the very heavy pressure of the population on the soil in that district. The bulk of emigration from the Bankura district arises from agricultural reasons. In 1921 only 6,262 emigrants went from Bankura to Calcutta, 1,647 to Howrah, and 2,335 to the 24-Parganas. Considerable numbers of the aboriginal inhabitants of Bankura seek work in the Raniganj coalfield, but the majority of the emigrants from that area prefer agricultural work, if possible, in the neighbouring districts.

The important type of migration from the point of view of industrial labour is migration from other provinces to Bengal. Nearly 2,000,000 persons of all classes and races were enumerated in 1921 as coming from outside Bengal, including other provinces in India and other countries, and the great majority of the immigrants came from the areas which supply labour to Bengal industries and plantations. Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces, for example, supplied 66·1 and 17·8 per cent. of the total respectively. The following table indicates the extent of immigration and the variation in the decade 1911–21 :—

Province or state or country.	Immigrants from it to Bengal (thousands).		Emigrants to it from Bengal (thousands).	
	1921.	1911.	1921.	1911.
Bihar and Orissa	1,228	1,252	117	165
United Provinces	343	406	19	26
Nepal	87	107	Not available.	
Assam	69	67	376	194
Central Provinces	55	21	3	6
Rajputana Agency	48	37	1	1
Madras	32	14	3	7
The Punjab and Delhi ..	18	19	6	4
Europe	13	14	Not available.	
Bombay	11	8	8	7
Burma	2	3	146	136

General immigration increased in volume between 1901 and 1911, but the figures fell in the period 1911 to 1921, especially the figure of immigrants from Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, and Nepal—three of the chief recruiting areas of Bengal. There was, however, a distinct increase in the numbers from the Central Provinces, due to the exploiting of areas in that province by the tea industry. The decrease in numbers affected the agricultural more than the industrial parts of Bengal; nevertheless, it was interpreted in the Census Report of 1921 as indicating that the tide of immigration had reached its high watermark and had turned since 1911.

The proportion of immigrants to the total population in each district also shows how far the industrial and plantation areas depend on outside help. Thus, in the metropolitan industrial area, as also in the district of Burdwan, in which the Asansol-Raniganj coalfield is situated, and the Northern Bengal tea area, the immigrant population varies between 100 and 150 per 1,000 inhabitants in Burdwan, to 287 and 390 in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, respectively, and 664 in Calcutta; as against a figure varying from about 30 to 90 per 1,000 in Central and Northern Bengal and from 10 to 40 in Eastern Bengal.

The most important streams of immigration which flow directly to the industrial and plantation areas in Bengal are :—(*a*) From Bihar and the United Provinces to the metropolitan industrial area; (*b*) from Nepal into Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri; (*c*) from Chota Nagpur to Jalpaiguri; and (*d*) from Orissa to the metropolitan industrial area.

The total numbers of immigrants to Bengal (all districts) from Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces in 1911 and 1921 are as follows :—

	1911.	1921.
Bihar and Orissa	1,248,401	1,220,426
United Provinces	404,198	342,810

The following tables show :—(*a*) The number of immigrants from the several Bihar and Orissa and United Provinces districts which send the greatest number of recruits to the metropolitan area—

	Hooghly.	Howrah.	24-Parganas.	Calcutta.	Total.
Bihar districts—					
Patna	5,013	6,160	12,333	19,989	43,497
Gaya	4,802	5,612	13,986	38,083	62,483
Shahabad	3,407	7,324	20,672	16,068	47,471
Monghyr	3,506	3,802	15,458	15,947	38,713
Saran	10,477	6,562	24,768	10,331	52,138
Muzaffarpur	4,677	4,018	11,682	14,656	35,033
Darbhanga	1,908	2,572	5,436	7,793	17,709
United Provinces districts—					
Balia	3,204	9,082	9,712	3,491	25,489
Ghazipur	2,779	4,586	16,631	7,065	31,061
Benares	1,912	3,179	8,515	10,948	24,554
Azamgarh	2,115	3,598	12,458	5,753	23,924
Jaunpur	1,220	5,047	8,656	5,588	20,511
Orissa districts—					
Cuttack	8,995	16,571	37,472	31,720	94,758
Balasore	3,864	6,134	13,785	12,131	35,914

(*b*) the numbers in the metropolitan area who were born in Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces in the 1901, 1911 and 1921 censuses.

	Born in Bihar and Orissa.			Born in United Provinces.		
	1921.	1911.	1901.	1921.	1911.	1901.
Hooghly ..	62,553	50,105	29,571	17,377	15,013	12,069
Howrah	69,667	58,094	43,692	42,242	47,243	39,727
24-Parganas ..	177,989	144,723	78,822	88,913	83,536	46,295
Calcutta ..	185,265	207,446	176,313	67,433	89,695	90,452
Total ..	495,474	460,368	328,398	215,965	235,487	188,543

The figures in the former table show that certain areas in the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa account for 553,255 persons, or more than a quarter of the total number of immigrants to Bengal from outside. The manufacturing areas of Bengal receive relatively few immigrants from the Chota Nagpur plateau, as the aboriginal tribes prefer out-of-door work in the country.

Although the above figures do not differentiate between labourers and other immigrants, it is safe to say that the great majority of the immigrants take up some sort of manual labour : in the words of the Census report of 1921 :—

" Many of them (i.e., the immigrants) ply their traditional caste-trades in the industrial area as they do also in towns in others parts of Bengal. Muchis and Chamars are cobblers ; Goalas are milk-men and cartmen ; Kahars are *palkibearers* and coolies are Kurmis, Bhats, Gorns, etc. ; Nunias are commonly earthworkers ; Mallas, boatmen, and so on. Other castes are domestic servants, and needy Brahmins from Orissa are found in great numbers in the towns employed as cooks by orthodox Hindus of the higher castes. Chhatris and others of superior caste from Bihar and the United Provinces are constables, *durwans*, *zamindars' peons*, and the like. Most of the menial staff and porters on the railways come from Bihar

and Orissa. Such immigrants are found in considerable numbers all over Bengal, although they are fewer in Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong, Bakarganj, Khulna, Jessore and Faridpur, than in the rest of the province."

The migration from the Sonthal Parganas to Bengal affects only the Asansol area. In 1891, the number of immigrants to Burdwan from the Sonthal Parganas was only 6,241, but with the development of the coal-mines, their numbers rose to 13,825 in 1901, and to twice that number or 27,376 in 1911, which number rose to 28,042 in 1921. The rise in figures is directly attributable to the development of the coal industry in the Raniganj field and to the growth of other industries in the same area.

Plantation labour accounts for the very high proportion of immigrants in the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling areas. The two streams to the tea-gardens come from Nepal and from Chota Nagpur and the Central Provinces. The numbers of emigrants for the last four decades migrating from Nepal to Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri, are shown in the following table :—

Found in—	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
Darjeeling	58,026	70,021	76,301	88,021
Sikkim..	20,876	25,610	22,720	Not available.
Jalpaiguri	23,681	34,015	18,649	20,578

The explanation for the fall in the numbers of Darjeeling is given as follows in the report (page 145) :—" In 1891, the total population of Darjeeling district was only 223,314 so that at that time no less than 39·4 per cent. of the population had been born in Nepal. The hills had in fact been peopled anew by Nepalese during the 30 years or so previously. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the number born in Nepal has since decreased, as settlers died off and were succeeded by their native-born children. That after the lapse of another 40 years, as much as 20·5 per cent. of the population still consists of emigrants from Nepal, is evidence that the stream of migration has by no means run dry. Sikkim was closed to settlers from Nepal up to the time of the war of 1889, and the number born in Nepal found in the State in 1891 must have been very small. The immigrants from Nepal in 1901 were 40·6 per cent. of the whole population, and still form 25·5 per cent. though Nepalese must have shared equally with others in Sikkim the heavy mortality which has reduced the population by just over 10 per cent. in the last 10 years in spite of continued immigration."

The number of Nepalese emigrating to Jalpaiguri shows fluctuations for which the explanation would appear to be that the Nepalese go to the Jalpaiguri gardens for temporary appointments only, and that they return to their own homes or to the Darjeeling area after a period. A secondary explanation offered in the Census report is that as Nepal is the nearest source from which labour can be drawn for the Duars tea-gardens, the supply is more elastic than that of Chota Nagpur. Therefore, it is probable that the Nepalese are recruited to meet temporary demands, whereas the tea-gardens make an effort to settle the Chota Nagpur labour permanently in the Duars area. In the Duars and Terai, the bulk of the labour is imported from the Chota Nagpur plateau, i.e., from the provinces of Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces. The centre of the supplying area is Ranchi, and the variations, and the reasons therefor, in the recruitment of this labour are indicated in the following extract from the report :—

" The number of persons born in Ranchi who were enumerated in Jalpaiguri district at the last census was no less than 126,214. The number from Singhbhum was 7,545 ,from Palamau 1,595, and from Hazaribagh only 1,323, and there were smaller numbers from other parts, so that migration from Ranchi completely swamps that from adjoining districts. In 1891, there were but 18,808 immigrants in Jalpaiguri from Lohardaga district as it was then, fewer than there were from Nepal. Recruiting went on apace in the next 10 years and the census of 1901 showed 80,436 persons in Jalpaiguri who had been born in Ranchi. Apparently, there was a movement in the direction of employing Nepalese labour in the next decade, for though the number of immigrants from Ranchi had risen to 99,000 by 1911, the number from Nepal was nearly double as large as in 1901. During the last 10 years, the tea industry seems to have definitely decided against Nepalese labour on the gardens in the Duars, where it has proved by no means as satisfactory as in the hills, for not only

has the number of recruits from Ranchi risen by more than 25 per cent. since 1911 and the number of Nepalese immigrants to the district fallen by 30 per cent., but there has been a commencement of recruiting further into Central India. In 1901, there were only 609 persons in Jalpaiguri district who had been born in the Central Provinces and in 1911 the number was 611, but the figure according to the recent census has risen to 8,334 persons, of whom 6,314 came from Nagpur district, 989 from Bilaspur and 897 from Raipur. The number of females who have been brought in is almost equal to the number of males. This even balance of the sexes is also apparent among the emigrants from Ranchi, for the tea industry finds employment for females as easily as for males."

(ii) *Migration to particular areas.*—The above analysis of general migration also indicates the trend of the population to particular areas, namely, the metropolitan and the tea-garden areas. No further analysis is necessary regarding the latter area as the extent and causes of the movement of workers have already been demonstrated, as also has the ratio of males to females. Some further remarks, however, are necessary regarding Calcutta and individual manufacturing centres in the metropolitan area not only to show the extent of the non-Bengali population, but also to give some indication of the causes of particular streams of migration and of the effects of migration on domestic life.

The census figures for 1921 show that just less than a quarter of the inhabitants of Calcutta and the suburban municipalities of Cossipore, Manicktollah, Tollygunge, the South Suburbs, Garden Reach, and Howrah, were born in the city, that rather less than a quarter of 22·25 per cent. were born in the neighbouring areas of the 24-Parganas and Howrah, and that rather more than half were born further afield ; 16·70 per cent. were born in other parts of Bengal, 34·99 per cent. in other provinces, and 1·19 per cent. outside India. 5,288 persons per 10,000 in Calcutta and suburbs were born further away than in Calcutta and the 2 adjoining districts, and the following table shows the number per 10,000 who were born outside the Calcutta and district area, and also the number of females per 1,000 immigrant males :—

Birthplace.	Numbers per 10,000 of the population.	Females per 1,000 male immigrants.
Burdwan Division beyond Howrah district	854	542
Presidency Division outside Calcutta and 24-Parganas	284	540
Rajshahi Division and Cooch Behar	61	426
Dacca Division	395	322
Chittagong Division	75	95
Bihar and Orissa	1,991	183
United Provinces	958	327
Rajputana	230	467
Punjab	79	346
Bombay	66	392
Central Provinces	61	635
Madras	46	813
Assam	30	280
China	24	184
Europe	64	322

The labour supply areas in Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces furnish 1,991 and 958 immigrants respectively per 10,000 of the population ; in other words, the Province of Bihar and Orissa supplies nearly one in five of the Calcutta population, a greater number than comes from the rest of Bengal outside the city and the two adjoining districts. The United Provinces supply one in ten, but whereas only 183 females accompany each thousand Bihar and Orissa male immigrants, 327 females accompany each thousand of the United Provinces male immigrants. The larger ratio of the United Provinces women is further due to the fact that the United Provinces men are in more regular employment than those from Bihar and Orissa, and also that their women find work in certain factory processes along with the men. Similarly, there is a higher proportion of females accompanying the immigrants from the Madras Presidency, because not only do Madrassi women not object to being seen abroad, but they also find employment readily in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, in factories and as domestic servants.

The following table gives an analysis of immigrants to Calcutta and its suburbs by sex and age :—

Birth place.	Females per 1,000 male immigrants.	Number per mill of each sex aged						Dependants per 1,000 workers.
		0–15.		15–40.		40 and over.		
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
Midnapore	568	108	109	668	544	224	347	293
Hooghly	497	142	171	569	484	289	345	546
Dacca	292	125	249	639	525	236	226	496
Patna, Gaya, Shahabad, Monghyr, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Saran in Bihar.	218	99	187	621	546	280	267	247
Cuttack and Balasore in Orissa.	62	75	155	699	586	226	259	79
Azamgarh, Benares, Gazipur and Jaipur in the United Provinces.	371	118	179	590	550	292	271	369
Bikanir and Jaipur in Rajputana.	471	183	224	600	539	217	237	353
Normal distribution by sex and age in Bengal.	932	400	400	412	426	188	175	—

These figures apply to all immigration into Calcutta, but from the industrial point of view, attention has to be concentrated only on those arising from the Bihar and the United Provinces districts and Cuttack and Balasore in Orissa. The last column, dependants, indicates only the dependents who accompany the immigrants. The table shows that the Oriya most readily separates from his family. Only 79 dependants per one thousand workers come to Calcutta and only 62 women per 1,000 males. Probably, the small number of females accompany the better class of Oriyas who are engaged in trade and professions, so that, as the Census Report points out, the Oriya cook or coolie never brings his family with him. The table also shows that seven out of ten Oriyas are workers in the prime of life. There are a few boys under 18 and none who are not old enough to be working. Men over 40 are less numerous than immigrants from other parts. The age proportions of males from Midnapore, which adjoins the Balasore district, and which also, as shown separately, supplies a large number of immigrants to Calcutta, are similar to those of males from Orissa. More dependants, however, come from Midnapore, and half of the females earn their own living. In this half one female in every three admits to being a prostitute. The age distribution of persons born in Hooghly, the Report points out, is less abnormal, although there is still less than one female to two males and dependants are only about one to every two workers. One-third of the females earn their own living, but among female workers one among every four owns to being a prostitute. Immigrants from Bihar include many more women than those from Orissa, but the proportion is still only about one female to five males. The proportion of older people is higher and they are all workers. The proportion of females, the number of dependants, and the number of old people are all higher amongst emigrants from the United Provinces.

The birth-place figures of the 1921 census, when compared with similar figures for the previous three decades, show that the number of immigrants from every part outside Bengal increased very much between 1891 and 1921. The figures, which are given in the table below show variations from decade to decade :—

Born in	Found in Calcutta City.			
	1891.	1901.	1911.	1921.
Bihar and Orissa	149,742	165,313	204,484	185,635
United Provinces	54,110	90,414	89,695	67,534
Central Provinces and Berar ..	8,912	1,926	2,666	4,747
Madras	1,221	1,922	3,014	3,425

For example, the number recruited by Bengal from the United Provinces rose in 40 years from 54,000 to 67,000, reaching a peak of 90,000 in 1901. The fall of emigration from the labour supplying areas is mainly due to the fact that Calcutta has reached saturation point, so far as the creation of important new industries is concerned. New concerns are started not in Calcutta or its immediate neighbourhood, but in the more outlying parts of the metropolitan area. The only type of labour emigrant which goes on increasing is the Oriya, as they flock to Calcutta to take up the many unskilled and casual jobs which an expanding city always offers.

The above description shows the figures for Calcutta and suburbs; figures, however, were also compiled in the 1921 census showing the birth-place of the population in typical mill towns near Calcutta. The following table shows the remarkable difference in the ratios of persons born outside the province, in country towns in Bengal, as compared with the mill towns in the metropolitan area :—

Inhabitants of :—	Number per mille.		
	Born in the same district.	Born in other part of Bengal.	Born outside the Province.
Mill towns	209	96	695
Country towns	814	106	80

In the mill towns, only about one-fifth of the total population was born in the area surrounding the towns, whereas only 8 per cent. of the people of the country towns were born outside Bengal. In Titagarh, a compact manufacturing area, no less than 90 per cent. of the inhabitants were born outside Bengal. In Bhadreswar, a similar town on the opposite side of the river, 79 per cent. were born outside Bengal. As the Census Report points out, these towns may be regarded as no more than colonies of up-country men. It is also pointed out that, although a few workers had children with them who were born since they immigrated, practically none of them had settled down and brought up their families to maturity to swell the number of the native-born. In the words of the Census Report, these places " are no more than the temporary habitations " of the workers.

The following table gives the number of females per 1,000 males in the average mill town, the average industrial or commercial town, Calcutta City and Bengal as a whole in the decennial periods from 1872 to 1921 :—

	Number of females per thousand males.					
	1872.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1911.	1921.
The average country town	947	971	903	869	841	816
The average industrial or commercial town.	798	767	685	605	582	537
Calcutta City	552	556	526	507	475	470
Bengal	992	994	973	960	945	932

The table shows a gradual decline in the number of females per 1,000 males for the whole of Bengal, but the greatest disproportion is in the industrial areas and in Calcutta. In 1872, the proportion of the sexes in Calcutta was low, but it was relatively high in the industrial towns. Since then the decline in the ratio in the industrial towns has been very marked. This is due to the steady influx of single male workers who have left their families behind. In Calcutta, the census figures show only 374 married females per 1,000 married males, and only 47 per cent. of the total number of women were returned as married. Hence, it is clear that the predominance of males involves a great increase in sexual immorality, and this, in its turn, tends to discourage men from bringing their wives to the towns with them.

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As regards particular streams of migration in Bengal, the main facts have already been given. The supply areas are, for industries, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, the Central Provinces, and Madras; and for plantations, the Chota Nagpur plateau, Nepal, and the Central Provinces. The great body of emigrants from the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa come from two distinct areas—in Orissa from the districts of Cuttack and Balasore, in Bihar the western districts, in the United

Provinces the eastern districts. More than 80 per cent. of those who come to Bengal from the Central Provinces come from three districts, Bilaspur, Raipur, and Nagpur; while two districts in the Madras Presidency, Ganjam and Vizagapatam, with Madras City, send most of the Madras immigrants.

Further analysis of the figures of immigrants to Calcutta and suburbs shows that seven districts in Bihar send more than 5,000 immigrants each—Gaya 48,000, Patna 28,000, Shahabad 26,500, Muzaffarpur 21,000, Monghyr 20,500, Saran 17,000, Darbhanga 10,000, and Hazaribagh 7,000. The Orissa districts send :—Cuttack 46,000, Balasore 16,500, and Puri 5,000. Nine districts of the United Provinces adjoining each other send more than 5,000—Benares 16,500, Ghazipur 15,500, Balia 14,000, Azamgarh 12,500, Jaunpur 12,000, Mirzapur 8,000, Fyzabad 6,500, Sultanpur 6,000, and Allahabad 5,500. The general cause for emigration from these districts is pressure of population in the districts themselves, but the direction of emigration of making a living, is determined largely by the system of recruitment for the large Bengal industries through sirdars. Sirdars in the jute mills, engineering works, and other concerns recruit in their own native villages and surrounding areas; hence, there is a tendency for people from the same village or the immediate neighbourhood to congregate in the same industrial area in Bengal. For example, 8,240 out of a total of 14,092 emigrants from Balia district, were found in Howrah, but of a total number of 12,562 emigrants from the adjoining district of Azamgarh, Howrah had only 2,593. Similarly, in the other mill-towns the tendency is for men from the same area to congregate together. For example, 27·3 per cent. of the total population of Titagarh or a total number of 14,350 persons were born in five adjoining districts—Patna, Gaya, Sahabad in Bihar, and Balia and Ghazipur in the United Provinces; 22·7 per cent. of the population of Bhatpara and 19·6 per cent. of that of Bhadreswar came from the same areas. It may also be noted that 6·6 per cent. of the population of Serampore came from these areas, and that 12·3 per cent. of the population of Titagarh, 7·1 per cent. of that of Bhatpara, 7·3 per cent. of that of Serampore, and 6·7 per cent. of that of Bhadreswar came from Cuttack and Balasore.

The actual vocation of immigrants is also determined to a certain extent by the type of work. Oriyas, for example, are found in larger proportions in Calcutta, where there is greater scope for casual labour and domestic service. Two-thirds of the Oriyas from the districts of Cuttack and Balasore, in 1921, were found employed in the city, whereas the Biharis are divided between the city and the suburbs in almost equal proportions. A relatively small proportion of emigrants from the United Provinces come actually to Calcutta; they are employed more largely in the mill areas outside the town. Generally speaking, the up-country men are found in larger proportions in industries where a certain amount of skill is required, whereas Oriyas tend to adopt unskilled callings.

(iii) *Migration in individual industries.*—The above analyses have reference to the total number of immigrants with respect to the areas from which they come, and in which they temporarily settle, to the sex ratio between males and females, and to particular streams of immigration. A short description is given below of migration as it affects individual industries.

The occupational census of 1921 (Census Report, 1921, Volume V, Part I, Chapter XII) gives figures showing the numbers and birth-places of persons supported by the chief industries in Bengal—agricultural, manufacturing, and transport. The only agricultural industry with which we are concerned is the tea and plantation industry, and only two types of plantation need be considered : one is tea-gardens, and the other cinchona plantations. The two cinchona plantations are in the Darjeeling hill area, and in 1921 they were returned as employing only 2,088 persons. Tea plantations in 1921 employed 87,413 males and 101,136 females of all grades, including children under 14. These were employed in 340 gardens. The birth-place of the unskilled labourers in tea-gardens which includes all the labour save a small minority, is also shown in the census tables. The two main tea-garden areas are the Jalpaiguri and the Darjeeling districts, and the returns show that of a total labour force of 141,141 unskilled labourers employed in Jalpaiguri, 90,348 were born in the Chota Nagpur plateau, 29,018 in Jalpaiguri itself, mainly the children of imported labourers, and 16,529 in other parts of India, mainly, it may be assumed, in the Central Provinces and Madras. In Darjeeling, of a total of 62,729 unskilled labourers 29,632 were born in the district, 8,359 in the Chota Nagpur plateau, and 22,824 in other parts of India outside Bengal (most of them in Nepal). In Chittagong and Tripura State, which between them employ 5,115 workers, a big proportion, viz., 1,576, were born in the same area as that in which they were employed, while 1,462 were born in other parts of India.

In transport, which supports one way or other, 16 per 1,000 of the population of the Presidency, birthplace figures are shown for steamer coolies, railway coolies, and railway khalasis, and for day-labourers and coolies, including workers in docks and ships. Steamer coolies, railway coolies and railway khalasis, classed together

under one heading in the census figures, are shown as comprising 26,830 adult males, 2,096 adult females, 3,046 male children under 14, and 288 female children under 14. Of this total of 32,260, 9,008 were returned as born in the district of enumeration, 1,586 in the adjoining district, and 1,118 in other districts of Bengal. The numbers from North Bihar were 3,676, from South Bihar 4,879, from the Chota Nagpur plateau 2,325, from Orissa 1,824, from the United Provinces 5,030, from Madras 182, from other parts of India 2,626, and from outside India 6, or a total of 20,548 from outside Bengal, as compared with 11,712 in Bengal. Day labourers and coolies, including workers in docks and ships were classified together, and showed a total of 97,883 made up of 90,918 adult males and 3,986 adult females, with 2,917 male and 62 female children under 14. Of these, 11,441 were born in the district of enumeration, 7, 942 in the adjoining district, and 10,731 in other districts of Bengal, that is a total of 30,114 in Bengal. The total from outside Bengal was 67,769 made up of 11,538 from North Bihar, 21,386 from South Bihar, 2,254 from the Chota Nagpur plateau, 18,366 from Orissa, 12,138 from the United Provinces, 90 from Madras, 1,678 from other parts of India, and 319 from outside India. Of the foregoing number, 69,541 adult males, 2,378 adult females, and 2,115 children under 14 were employed in Calcutta, i.e., a total of 74,034, and of this only 24,559 were born in Bengal, the remainder were born outside Bengal; and of these South Bihar provided the largest number—17,812, Orissa the next largest, 12,440, North Bihar, 9,542, and the United Provinces 6,942. From the above figures it will be seen that only a little over 9,000 out of over 32,000 railway and steamer coolies were born in the Bengal districts in which they were working, and many of these must have been the children of immigrant workers. The great majority of such workers come from the United Provinces, Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa. It is, therefore, clear, as the census report says, that the people of Bengal leave all the work of porters on the railway and steamer routes to immigrants. The same is true of day labourers and coolies, including dock labourers.

The census figures give a fairly complete analysis of the birthplace of both skilled and unskilled workmen. The result for all the industries for which figures were compiled is indicated below :—

(1) *Skilled Workmen.*—The total was 169,860 adult males, 9,771 adult females, 2,119 male children under 14, and 224 female children under 14, or a total of 181,974. Of that total 51·151 were born in the district of enumeration, 13,429 in the adjoining district, and 6,560 in other districts of Bengal, or a total of 71,140 born in Bengal. North Bihar provided 27,120, South Bihar 24,779, the Chota Nagpur plateau 2,427, Orissa 12,524, the United Provinces 35,991, Madras 4,180, other parts of India 3,225, and outside India 588.

(2) *Unskilled Workers.*—The corresponding figures total 588,488, composed of 363,610 adult males, 137,300 adult females, 54,822 male children under 14, and 32,716 female children under 14. Of the total, 135,669 were born in the district of enumeration, 21,725 in the adjoining district, and 16,945 in other districts of Bengal, that is a total of 174,339 born in Bengal. North Bihar provided 36,099, South Bihar 63,977, the Chota Nagpur plateau 122,942, Orissa 51,766, the United Provinces 68,154, Madras 13,294, other parts of India 57,535, and outside India 342.

The above statistics were compiled for collieries, cotton spinning and weaving mills, jute mills, silk filatures and mills, iron foundries and iron and steel works, machinery and engineering works, paper mills, flour mills, railway workshops, steamer workshops and shipwrights' and dockyard workshops. It does not include tea-garden labour, which has already been dealt with, but it includes railway and steamer coolies and day labourers, including workers in docks and ships, in Calcutta and its suburbs. The following table indicates the number per 10,000 workers born in the various parts of India :—

	Number per 10,000 workers born in							
	Bengal.	North Bihar.	South Bihar.	Chota Nagpur.	Orissa.	United Provinces.	Madras.	Other parts of India.
Skilled workmen ..	3,910	1,490	1,362	133	691	1,974	230	177
Unskilled workmen ..	2,835	919	1,657	612	1,367	1,812	334	449

The figures show that, taking skilled and unskilled workers together, those born in Bengal are only 3,187 per 10,000, that is less than one-third. The proportion born in Bengal is much lower amongst unskilled than among skilled workmen. In each case, skilled and unskilled, the proportion of Bengalis is really lower than the figures show, because they include a number of children of immigrants, probably more amongst the skilled than unskilled, for skilled labourers have more permanent employment than unskilled, and many of them bring their children to work with them. Immigrants from North Bihar are more numerous than those from South Bihar among the skilled, but they were not much more than half as many among the unskilled. Skilled workmen from the Chota Nagpur plateau are relatively few: the proportion is four times as high amongst the unskilled. Twice as many unskilled Oriyas come to Bengal as skilled, but more skilled workmen come from the United Provinces than unskilled. The proportion of unskilled workmen from Madras is also greater than the skilled. Both among the unskilled and skilled, the province of Bihar and Orissa supplies many more operatives than Bengal, and the United Provinces supplies half as many to the skilled as Bengal itself does, and two-thirds as many to the unskilled.

With respect to coal-mining, the census gives figures for 202 mines, or, discounting 13 which employ less than 20 men, 189 as against 129 in 1911. In 1911, all but one were located in Burdwan, and the one was in Bankura. In 1921, there were two in Bankura, which, however, only employed 53 persons between them, 4 in Birbhum, with 418 employees, and the rest were in the Raniganj field. The number is now, as shown in the last report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India, 191. The detailed figures show that, amongst both unskilled and skilled employees, the majority of workers were born in the area in which they were employed. The bulk of the others came from the Chota Nagpur plateau, and immigrants are proportionately more numerous amongst the unskilled labourers than amongst the skilled.

The chief manufacturing industry in Bengal is jute spinning and weaving. This industry is concentrated in the metropolitan industrial area, and the following table shows the total number of mills and the total number of employees in 1911 and 1921 :—

	Number of mills in		Number of Employees in			
			1921.		1911.	
	1921.	1911.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Hooghly	9	7	41,300	9,875	25,579	6,358
Howrah	12	9	57,388	10,059	37,993	6,464
24-Parganas	38	31	133,644	26,372	95,077	21,139
Calcutta	5	3	5,336	784	6,534	1,362
Total ..	62	50	237,668	47,090	165,183	35,263

The number of mills, according to the latest report of the chief inspector of factorie is now 86, and the number of employees is 331,899, composed of 260,342 adult males, 53,678 adult females, 16,939 male children below 14, and 940 female children below 14. Table XXII, in Parts IV and V of Volume V of the 1921 Census Report shows the detailed numbers of skilled and unskilled labourers according to birth-place. The number of skilled workmen who were born in Bengal was only 31·56 of the total, whereas only 2 out of every 11 of the unskilled labourers were born in Bengal. Allowing for the fact that many were children of immigrant workmen, it is thus clear, as the census report says, that the people of Bengal take a very small share in the labour employed by the premier factory industry of the province. Of the total number of unskilled workers, 36,988 were born in the United Provinces, 29,607 in South Bihar, 23,218 in Orissa, 15,947 in North Bihar, and 10,786 in Madras.

The figures for jute presses could not be given in the Census Report, as the census was taken at a period when the majority of presses were closed down.

At present there are 14 cotton spinning and weaving mills in Bengal. In 1921, the census accounted for 12 mills with more than 100 operatives each, and five employing from between 10 and 20. In 1911, 9,552 males and 1,286 females were employed. In 1921, this number had risen to 11,780 males, and 1,955 females, inclusive of children. A third of the skilled workmen in cotton mills were returned as born in the near neighbourhood of the mills. The immigrants were shown as

coming mainly from the United Provinces and Orissa. A smaller proportion of the unskilled labourers were born in the neighbourhood of the mills, and larger proportions came from the United Provinces and Orissa.

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The metal industry is not so concentrated as the jute industry, but the great majority of concerns are in the metropolitan area, the others, including the blast furnaces being in the Asansol area. Skilled workmen in iron foundries, iron and steel works, and machinery and engineering works are practically all male adults. Amongst the unskilled workers, however, there were 2,247 adult women, 458 boys, and 166 girls, to 7,406 adult males in iron foundries, but most of them were employed in one large foundry. In iron and steel works there were few women employed, and, again, they were mostly employed at Asansol. The number of children employed in iron and steel works was relatively small. Very few women were employed as unskilled labourers in machinery and engineering works, and also very few boys. Persons born in Bengal take a greater share in the iron industries, as is shown by the following table :—

	Skilled workers.		Unskilled workers.	
	Total.	Born in Bengal.	Total.	Born in Bengal.
Iron foundries	4,600	2,611	10,277	3,717
Iron and steel works	2,588	1,663	3,857	998
Machinery and engineering works	10,685	7,696	6,691	1,678

Amongst the immigrants, the proportion of unskilled workers is higher than that of skilled workers. The proportion employed from the eastern districts of the United Provinces and the western districts of Bihar is also less in the metal industries than it is in the jute mills.

Railway workshops, which, in 1921, employed 30,387 males and 727 females, as against 22,272 males and 463 females in 1911, showed the following figures :— 7,385 born in Bengal ; 4,109 in the United Provinces ; 1,996 in North Bihar ; 1,603 in Madras ; 1,210 in South Bihar ; 786 in Orissa ; 104 in Chota Nagpur ; and 1,712 in other parts of India, mainly the Punjab. Among the skilled labourers, 7,385, out of a total of 19,124, were born in Bengal. The majority of the skilled immigrants came from the United Provinces, North and South Bihar, Madras, and other parts of India, mainly the Punjab. All supplied over a thousand ; in two cases—other parts of India and South Bihar— the numbers being almost 2,000. Of the unskilled labour in railway workshops, totalling 10,836, 2,666 were born in Bengal, and the rest distributed over the rest of India—the United Provinces and the Punjab supplying the bulk of it.

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3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—Practically the entire labour force of Bengal outside tea gardens and specialised employment, like the inland steamer services, is recruited by means of the sirdar system, reference to which has already been made.

In the Duars and Terai tea areas, approximately 90 per cent. of the estates recruit through the Tea District Labour Association. The system is modelled on the Assam system, and is operated by a special Duars and Terai Sub-Committee of the Indian Tea Association, and it has been found to work satisfactorily. The Darjeeling estates do not recruit in the plains. They rely entirely on hill labour, who move voluntarily backwards and forwards between their homes and the tea estates.

In the case of inland steam vessels, the serang takes the place of the sirdar in general industry.

The existing methods of recruitment work well, and, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, no question of intervention with a view to improvement has arisen.

7. *Unemployment*—(ii) *Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.*—These two subjects were fully considered in 1921-22 in connection with the Washington Convention and Recommendation concerning unemployment. The Government of Bengal expressed the following views on the Convention and the Recommendation :—

" The Governor in Council agrees with the Government of India that Article 2 of this Convention, which requires (*a*) the establishment of free public employment

agencies under the control of a central authority, and (*b*) the appointment o advisory committees consisting of representatives of employers and of workers is premature for India."

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So far as the Province of Bengal is concerned, free public employment agencies are not necessary to inform people in areas affected by famine or scarcity where work can be obtained. The Province of Bengal is fortunately not affected in the same way as other provinces in India by periodic famines, and in those cases in which famine conditions do from time to time establish themselves, or where local scarcity occurs, the existing administrative machinery of the Government is sufficient for the dissemination of necessary information to the people who are likely to migrate in search of employment. There is, however, no necessity in Bengal for the permanent establishment of public employment agencies. If such agencies became necessary, as the result of temporary calamities, they could be created as circumstances demanded.

(i) *Extent and character.*—As already indicated, there is practically no industrial unemployment in Bengal. From time to time, the volume of unemployment in the main industries varies for special reasons, such as seasonal fluctuation, as in the jute presses, or changing over from the multiple to the single-shift system in the jute manufacturing industry or the slump in the coal trade, but the labour either transfers itself to other industries or simply leaves for its home districts. During the last two or three years, a large number of jute mills have changed over from the multiple to the single shift system ; it is estimated that on the single shift about 25 to 33 per cent. less labour force is required than on the multiple shift, but in spite of the changes no trouble has been reported to the Government with regard to unemployment. In the coalfields, although many mines have been closed down in recent years, no difficulty has been experienced in miners finding work, if they desire it, but few of them depend entirely on mining for their livelihood.

Generally speaking, the supply of skilled labour in Bengal is not equal to the demand, and if there is much labour, either skilled or unskilled, turned off for trade reasons, it is either easily absorbed or disappears to its home districts.

9. *Apprentices Act*, 1859.—This Act is reported to be a dead letter in Bengal.

6. *Recruitment for Assam*—(i) *Need for retention of control.*

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(v) *Possible substitute for the existing system.*—The Assam tea industry is the only industry which is controlled in its recruitment of Indian labour. Other industries, and even the tea industry in the Duars, Darjeeling and Madras Presidency are free from Governmental control. There are some who advocate that the Assam tea industry should also be free, but up to now the Indian Tea Association has not accepted this view ; on the contrary, it has definitely urged that Government control is necessary. The advocates of control fear that if recruiting were free, abuses would arise as they did in the past from the competitive spending of money to secure labour. There appears to be no doubt that the unrestricted spending of money with the object of securing labour under a system of free recruitment, would very quickly revive all the abuses which were associated with the arkati system of recruitment. If free recruitment is to be inevitably associated with lavish and uncontrolled expenditure on recruitment, then there can be no doubt that the continuance of control is essential. The labourer gets no advantage from the large sums spent on his recruitment. On the contrary, the greater the amount expended in securing his emigration the less happy is likely to be the lot of the labourer. Recruitment expenses swell the labour bill and it may be assumed that, as no firm can afford to expend an indefinite amount on labour, high recruiting expenses injuriously affect the wages and other conditions of employment. Furthermore, the large amount spent on the importation of labourers, did, in the past, engender a tendency on the part of employers in Assam to restrict their free movement in the labour market. Till very recently a system of labour rules was in force which had the effect of making it exceedingly difficult for a labourer to find employment on any garden other than that which imported him. These rules are now being revised.

What should be aimed at is a system whereby recruiting expenses will be reduced to a minimum and the labourer will be given the utmost freedom, even after he reaches Assam, to secure the best market for his labour.

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(iii) *Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.*—As the Board consists chiefly of representatives of the tea industry, it is a means by which the industry is associated with Government in the administration of the Act, and as such it has proved valuable in removing abuses previously connected with recruitment.

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(iv) *Defects of existing Act and system.*—The chief defect of the existing Act is that it was passed to regulate a system of recruitment entirely different from the system now in vogue. Recruitment by contractors, sub-contractors and recruiters

has been abolished and all other form of recruitment except recruitment by certified garden sirdars working under the supervision of licensed local agents has been prohibited. Registration of coolies by Government officers has been abandoned and labour contracts, together with the penal provisions for their enforcement, have been done away with. These changes have entirely altered the character of recruitment for Assam and the consequential changes in the Act have completely altered the Act itself. A fundamental consequence of the abolition of labour contracts and Government registration of emigrants, is, that the definition of " labourer " contained in the Act ceases to have any application. The repeals and alterations of the Act have, therefore, resulted in the peculiar position that an Act designed to regulate the emigration and conditions of employment of labourers has no application whatever to labourers as defined in the Act. At the present moment, recruitment is regulated almost entirely by rules promulgated by notifications of the Provincial Governments under sections 3 and 91 of the Act read in conjunction with the penal sections 164 and 174. The system works simply because the tea industry endeavours to make it work An overwhelming proportion of recruitment for Assam is conducted by the Tea Districts Labour Association and it is the policy of this Association which represents the great bulk of the tea industry to carry out the system of legal control imposed by Government. Other minor recruiting agencies which are in existence also follow the same policy. Should the present system of control ever be seriously challenged it will probably prove unworkable.

Though the tea industry submits to the present system of control, it cannot be said that it is satisfied with it or that the system is a good one. The restriction of recruitment to certified garden sirdars imposes a serious handicap on the industry and renders recruitment unnecessarily expensive. On an average, each sirdar recruits one coolie. It is reported that in Ceylon and Malaya each recruiter secures on the average 6 and 9 recruits respectively. The evils of the present Assam system in this respect have been aggravated by the strict interpretation which has been placed by the courts in at least one province on the word " assist " in section 164 of the Emigration Act. Under this interpretation it is unlawful, for instance, for a missionary who is approached voluntarily by members of his congregation who desire to emigrate to Assam, to send them to a certified sirdar or a licensed local agent for the purpose. It has also been held that general propaganda by the Tea Districts Labour Association local agents setting forth the conditions of employment in Assam is inadmissable under the Act, inasmuch as it would constitute illegal assistance to recruitment.

A further instance of the rigidity and unsuitability of the present Act is found in the fact that it contains no provision whereby an emigrant who comes in of his own accord to a local agent with a view to emigration to Assam can be forwarded. The difficulty is at present overcome by the expensive method of getting a sirdar sent down from the garden in Assam to which the coolie wishes to proceed, but even this course is open to objection, as at any time it may be held that the local agent is guilty of illegal assistance to recruitment in putting the sirdar in touch with the recruit.

It in unnecessary to dwell at length on technical defects of which the Act is full. Enough has been said to show that the Act is unworkable.

(v) *Possible substitutes.*—A possible substitute for the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901 will be found in the draft Bill forwarded by the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, with their letter No. L-1266, dated the 3rd December, 1928. That Bill proposed to repeal the existing Act and to substitute therefor an Assam Labour Recruitment Act. The Government of Bengal accepted the general principles of the draft Bill, subject to minor modifications.

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The Government of Bengal are not directly interested in restrictions on recruitment and movements of labour, as no restrictions exist in respect of Bengal industries or plantations. Bengal is, however, interested in seeing that no abuses or scandals in connection with the movement of labour from or through this province to Assam take place. The Government of Bengal therefore accepted the general principles of the draft Bill which provide for the retention of control with certain relaxations.

III.—Housing. IV.—Health. V.—Welfare. VI.—Education.

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,
dated 26th November, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of the following papers* containing information, and, where necessary, the views of the Government of Bengal on the above headings :—

A.—Letter No. 79 T. Com., dated the 21st April, 1927, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department, to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Department of Industries and Labour on Welfare Work.

* Papers F and G are not reprinted here, and parts of some of the other papers have been omitted.

This letter contains an analysis of, and commentary on, the types of welfare work, including housing, medical relief, and education, undertaken by the various industries in Bengal.

B.—Note on housing and health conditions on data obtained from certain jute mills, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Burdwan Circle.

This note, compiled on the basis of the items in the final list of subjects, partly covers the same ground as the letter referred to above.

C.—Report on housing and health conditions in eight collieries in the Asansol coal-mining area, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Burdwan Circle.

This report may be read with the corresponding passages in the report of Mr. Beale, forwarded with my letter No. 1330 T. Com., dated the 21st October/12th November, 1929.

D.—Note on the sanitary condition of printing presses in Calcutta, with particular reference to lead-poisoning, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

This note is the result of an investigation made in 1921–22.

E.—Extract from a report on housing and health conditions of workers in tea gardens, by the officiating Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri (Mr. N. V. H. Symons, I.C.S.).

*F.—Joint report on the general health and working conditions of children employed in factories in Bengal, and their certification under the Indian Factories Act, by Captain W. O'Connor, I.M.D., Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Barrackpore, and Military Assistant Surgeon H. C. Pownes, Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Bengal.

*G.—Report regarding ventilation and humidification of cotton mills in Bengal, by Mr. R. C. Parsons, B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E., Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

H.—Memorandum on Sickness Insurance.

I.—Memorandum on Maternity Benefits.

J.—Memorandum by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal (Rai Jamini Mohan Mitra Bahadur), containing information on co-operation.

K.—Report on educational facilities for children of the labouring classes in Bengal, by Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduk Ahmad, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.

2. The above papers contain the information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal on the various items included under the main headings—Housing, Health, Welfare, and Education.

3. With regard to item (16) (*Extent to which housing is provided*), I am to refer in particular to paragraph 12 of paper A, in which it is pointed out that 100 per cent. of the concerns covered by the returns received in 1926–27, provide some sort of housing for their employees. Further information on housing in the colliery area of Bengal is provided in paragraphs 16 to 22 of Mr. Beale's report. Further notes on the type of houses provided are given in Dr. Batra's reports (papers B and C).

4. In summary it may be said that housing is provided generally in Bengal by employers, and that the extent and quality of housing depends on the cheapness and availability of land. In the more congested areas in Calcutta, Howrah and the near neighbourhood, housing facilities are not provided on so big or so good a scale as in other areas. Government and other public agencies do not provide houses for industrial purposes. No statistics have been compiled to show the extent of housing provided by private landlords or by workers themselves, but it is known that, particularly in the jute mill municipalities, a considerable proportion of workers' houses is provided by private landlords and sirdars.

5. As regards item (17) (*Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses*), information regarding coal mines is provided in Mr. Beale's report. With respect to housing in other industries, arrangements have also to be made privately. The Land Acquisition Act cannot be used for the purchase of land for building workers' houses.

6. Accurate information on item (18) (*Nature of accommodation provided in each class*) is not available, except in regard to coal mines, *vide* paragraph 18 of Mr. Beale's report and the relevant item in Dr. Batra's report on the collieries (paper C). Dr. Batra makes certain remarks (*vide* paper B) on the type of houses provided in the jute mill area from the health point of view, and also on the provision made for lighting, conservancy, and water supply.

7. With regard to item (19) (*Utilization by workers of accommodation available*), the information that has been collected shows that where houses are provided they are fully utilized by workers.

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* Papers F and G are not reprinted here, and parts of some of the other papers have been omitted.

8. As regards item (20) (*Rent rates in various classes*), reference is invited to paragraph 12 of paper A. Dr. Batra says (*vide* paper B) that the rents vary from 8 annas to Re. 1 per month per room. In some cases the rents are as low as 4 annas per room (capable of housing four people), and in many cases accommodation is provided free.

9. On item (21) (*Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing*), no official information is available, nor is such information available on item (22) (*Moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions; improvements tried and suggested*).

10. The outstanding feature of available information on heading " IV—Health " is that no general survey of the health conditions in the industrial centres in Bengal has been made. With the exception of the coal-mining area, which is under the Asansol Mines Board of Health, the figures which have been compiled must be accepted with reserve. In 1921 the Government of Bengal created a post of Assistant Director of Public Health for industrial purposes, but owing to financial exigencies it was found necessary to abolish this post. Intensive research into the health conditions of industrial workers in this province must await improved finances.

11. As regards item (23) (*General health conditions of workers*), reference is invited to the report of Dr. Batra contained in paper B, the report of Mr. Beale, and the joint report of the certifying surgeons (paper F). With regard to item (23) (iii) (*Working conditions :* (a) *at workplaces*, (b) *at home*), the Chief Inspector of Factories reports that in jute mills and other large industrial concerns, working conditions must be considered generally to be satisfactory. On the other hand, in small concerns, especially in the congested areas of Calcutta and Howrah, conditions are often unsatisfactory. He reports that this is particularly noticeable in the case of printing presses, where, in many cases, factories have been established in buildings originally intended for residential purposes. Such buildings are badly lighted and insufficiently ventilated. Dr. Batra's report on the sanitary condition of printing presses (paper D) amply bears out the remarks of the Chief Inspector of Factories. On the whole, however, factory operatives, particularly those employed in the better organized industries where housing accommodation is provided, are reported by the Certifying Surgeons of Factories, who have unrivalled opportunities of making observations on this subject, to have better physique and generally to be better nourished than non-factory workers. They are also reported by the same authorities to be less liable to disease, for not only are they accommodated in more healthy dwellings than other workers, but they are also protected from disease by prophylactic treatment provided by the mill authorities. As regards sub-item (23) (vi), it has to be added that the effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities were mentioned in the memorandum on heading I (Recruitment).

12. Information on item (24) (*Extent of medical facilities provided*) and item (25) (*Extent to which medical facilities are utilized*) is contained in paper A, supplemented by paper I and the reports of Mr. Beale, Mr. Symons (paper E) and Dr. Batra (papers B, C and D).

13. With regard to item (26) (*Sanitary arangements* : (*a*) *at work places*, (*b*) *at home*), the Chief inspector of factories reports as follows :—

" (i) *Latrines*—(*a*) *At workplaces.*—Under the Factories Act, all factories with the exception of those outside municipal limits, are required to provide latrine accommodation in accordance with a scale laid down in the Factories Rules and they must be designed and constructed to the standard approved by the Chief Inspector of Factories and the Director of Public Health. In most of the larger factories, septic tank latrines are provided. 87 septic tanks have been installed during the past 10 years and these provide accommodation for approximately 375,000 workers.

As regards tea factories and small concerns outside municipal limits, only a few have been provided with latrine accommodation. The difficulties being experienced are the scarcity of conservancy coolies, the natural habits of the labour, and the necessity for separate latrines for different castes. Owing to the open position of most of these factories, the absence of latrines seldom gives rise to any nuisance within the factory compound.

(*b*) *At home.*—Where housing accommodation is provided by factory owners the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—(*a*) *At work places.*—The provision of drinking water in factories is governed by Rule 29 of the Bengal Factories Rules :—

' 29 (i) *Drinking water.*—In every factory a supply of water fit for drinking, and consisting of at least as many gallons as there are persons employed in the factory, shall be provided daily free of cost.

(ii) Such supply shall be derived either from a public or private supply of efficiently filtered water, or from one or more wells or specially reserved tanks so situated as not to be possible of pollution or contamination by organic matter or other impurities.

(iii) Proper arrangements approved by the inspector shall be made for maintaining in a drained and cleanly condition the area around the place where the drinking water is distributed.

(iv) When the drinking water is obtained from an intermittent public water-supply, each factory shall be provided with a storage of water not less than 1 gallon per head of persons employed.

(v) The inspector may, at any time, in order to satisfy himself that the water supplied is fit for drinking, take samples for analysis, and the cost of analysis shall be borne by the occupier of the factory.'

Its enforcement gives no anxiety except perhaps in the smaller establishments in congested areas, or away from municipal water-supply where lack of general cleanliness and up-to-date control makes pollution and inadequacy possible. Purity and adequacy of supply in the smaller establishments depend largely on the habits of the workers themselves, and they are such that no small employer can keep abreast of them in attempting to comply with the above rules.

The larger industrial establishments, however, notably jute mills, go far beyond the requirements of the Act in this matter, and where municipal supply is not available, tube-wells are sunk from which sufficient water is obtained to meet more than the workers' needs, or expensive plant for purifying the river water is installed. Some jute mills whose tube-wells have proved unsatisfactory have even routine arrangements for bringing water by boats from Calcutta to meet the workers' requirements in that respect.

(*b*) *At home.*—Where workers live in quarters provided by the factory-owners and near the factory itself, the same system of water-supply of the factory is extended to the quarters for the workers' benefit. Where workers live away from the factory and within municipal limits of water-supply, water is generally available in the shape of a common hydrant, or road taps so distributed, that all living within the vicinity may make use of them.

Outside of municipal areas, however, or wherever there is no water-supply, workers have to rely upon wells and tanks which may or may not be polluted or adequate, depending upon the workers' habits and the state of the previous monsoon.

(iii) *Bathing and Washing.*—It can be generally said that with respect to all large industrial establishments bathing and washing facilities, are provided for the workers. In smaller factories, however, situated in congested areas of municipalities, on account of the lack of space, adequate bathing and washing arrangements cannot be provided. Such workers, therefore, have to rely upon the adequacy of water-supply and the municipal hydrant near their own homes. Those workers living outside the reach of municipal water-supply make use of tanks and the water from wells, the former often being polluted, possibly shared by buffaloes, and made use of for all domestic purposes."

Complete information regarding sanitary arrangements at the workers' homes is not available, but, as the Chief Inspector of Factories points out, where housing accommodation is provided by factory-owners, the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory. Workers living in municipal areas in houses not provided by the factory-owners may utilize the facilities available for other residents in those areas. Outside municipal areas, if water-supply is not provided by the factory, workers have to depend on wells, tanks, rivers, etc., for drinking, bathing, and washing.

14. As regards item (27) (*Extent and nature of official supervision*), the only Board of Health especially devoted to industrial purposes in the province of Bengal is the Asansol Mines Board of Health. The extent of official inspection in the tea-garden area is mentioned in the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri. Apart from municipal regulations, there is no official inspection of mills in other industrial areas in respect of matters which do not fall within the purview of the Factories Act.

15. *Item* (28): *Suitability of existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules.*—This item is read to apply only to control of temperature and humidification, and the nature of the action taken by the local Government in this respect is indicated in Mr. Parsons's report (paper G)*. The local government are in general agreement with the conclusions reached by Mr. Parsons. At present there is no provision in the Factories Act under which temperature may be controlled in the sense of

* Not printed here.

preventing extremes of temperature causing distress or ill-health to workers. Extremes in temperature, it is known, are detrimental to the health of workers, but prolonged investigation is necessary in order to determine what the most healthy and workable standards of temperature are. A provision should be included in the Act to enable the Chief Inspector of Factories to adopt such means as are reasonably possible to mitigate the effects of very high (or very low) temperatures in factories.

16. *Item* (29) : *Disease.*—Reliable material on the prevalence of industrial diseases in Bengal is lacking. Reference is invited to the appropriate sections in the reports of Dr. Batra (papers B, C, and D), Mr. Beale, and of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri (paper E). Special information regarding sub-item (29) (ii) (*Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm, and other tropical diseases*) has not been forwarded, as this heading is read to apply to the prevalence of these diseases as a whole in the presidency, a subject which is dealt with in the reports of the Public Health Department, and also in the annual administration reports of the province.

17. *Item* (31) : *Maternity benefits.*—Since the local government expressed their views on the subject of legislation for maternity benefits in their letter No. 4912 Com., dated the 4th July, 1925, relevant extracts from which are reproduced in the memorandum on the subject (paper I), considerable advance has been made in the provision of maternity benefits, and the principle was accepted by the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association as part of the terms of settlement after the recent strikes. On general grounds, the Government of Bengal are still inclined to the view that legislation is not necessary in the main industries in Bengal, but if some measure of co-ordination could be adopted between the various provinces, they would not oppose a maternity benefit measure of the nature introduced in Bombay.

18. Information on item (32) (*Extent of welfare work*), item (33) (*Employment of welfare officers and workers*), item (34) (*Nature of other welfare activities* : (*a*) *by employers*, (*b*) *by other agencies*), and item (35) (*Results achieved*) is provided mainly in paper A, but reference is also invited to the relevant sections of Mr. Beale's report. As regards sub-item (34) (i) (*Provision of refreshments, shelters, and creches*), the Chief Inspector of Factories has reported as follows :—

" In so far as the smaller establishments are concerned there can be said to be no definite arrangements to accommodate workers in these respects. It is not only a question of lack of room, but small employers have not reached the stage of consideration of such refinements. As regards refreshments, workers are left to look after themselves and apparently there is no objection raised to food-sellers entering the factory compounds. In the larger engineering concerns, however, better arrangements are generally made with respect to those workers who cannot return to their homes on account of distance ; food stalls and shelters being provided within the precincts of the factory.

As regards textile factories and the meal-time accommodation of workers living at a distance, little has been done to provide special shelters or refreshment rooms. Like other large industrial establishments, food vendors are permitted to enter the precincts of the factory, but generally speaking, that is the maximum of progress in this direction. Where mills are comparatively isolated, however, and the majority of workers live in the immediate neighbourhood of the mill and in the mills property, bazaars in many cases have been erected by the employers, and are controlled by them, thus clean and wholesome food is guaranteed to the workers at reasonable prices.

The provision of creches or enclosures for infants has long been under consideration by employers, but the difficulties of the situation can only be appreciated by those intimately acquainted with the customs, habits and prejudices of the workers. Two or three employers have actually made the experiment of erecting enclosures within the mill for the purpose of segregation of infants, and have encouraged, but not forced its use on female workers. Differences of caste, habits, and customs, however, appear to have been an insuperable barrier to the establishment of their effective and correct use. Those enclosures, erected by way of experiment, have had to be dismantled."

19. Further information regarding creches is supplied in connection with item (82)—*Admission of infants to factories.*

20. Information on all the items arising from heading VI—(*Education*) is provided in paper K, and on co-operation in Paper J.

21. No information has been collected regarding provision for old age and premature retirement in factories, but probably intensive enquiries would show that pension and provident fund schemes are more prevalent than is generally supposed. The root difficulty in providing for old age and premature retirement in Bengal industries arises from the migratory character of the workers. An attempt has been made to ascertain in representative jute mills the length of service of workers. The

figures will be forwarded when available, but it may be said here that the chief guarantee against old age and premature retirement lies in the land connection of the worker. So long as he does not lose his lien on his ancestral home or small property, there is not the same need for his making provision for old age as there is for a worker in the west. How far a settled factory population has developed in Bengal has not yet been ascertained, but, as industry develops, the tendency would probably be for workers to lose their land connection. This might redound to the benefit of industry by creating a fixed class of skilled factory workers, but it would be a very doubtful benefit to the workers themselves.

A.

Copy of letter dated the 21st April, 1927. From—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department. To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Industries and Labour.

Welfare Work.

I am directed to refer to the letter of the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, No. L.1248, dated the 3rd May, 1926, on the subject of welfare work among Indian workers. The Government of India forwarded with their letter a copy of a letter from the Director of the International Labour Office, Geneva, on the subject of measures for the utilization of the spare time of workers, arising from the recommendation on this subject adopted at the sixth session of the International Labour Conference; and they interpreted that phrase to mean welfare work in general, and to include all efforts made to ameliorate the conditions under which the workers live when they are not actually at work. With their letter the Government of India also forwarded two sets of forms "A" and "B," to be used in the collection of information, the former for the use of industrial concerns, and the latter for associations conducting activities of a welfare nature directly bearing on the working classes.

2. According to the desires of the Government of India, as expressed in paragraph 2 of their letter, the enquiry was conducted in consultation with the principal organizations of employers in this Presidency, and also through heads of departments interested in the subject, and local bodies known to employ fairly large numbers of workers. The services of commissioners of divisions were also enlisted to collect local information, and as a result, before the close of 1926, a fairly large volume of information had been collected, covering the chief classes of industrial and municipal activity in Bengal. A further effort was made to fill in some lacunæ in the material and to supplement that which had already been received by a rough application of the method of sampling. The various concerns under the Factories Act were classified under main headings—jute mills, cotton mills, printing works, etc.—those which had sent in returns were struck off the list, and random samples of the remainder were taken, to which form "A" was circulated direct. The result was gratifying; much additional information became available, and, judging from the ready response which followed the request for information, His Excellency in Council is persuaded that, had staff and time been adequate, a detailed survey of the whole Presidency of Bengal could have been made, which would have covered practically every concern under the Factories and Mines Acts, as well as municipalities and other public bodies employing large or fairly large bodies of labour. In spite of the limited resources at his command, His Excellency is pleased to report that the returns cover nearly 450 concerns, and nearly five lakhs of workers. Of the returns, a proportion was collected on the sample basis; so that it is safe to assume that the compilations which accompany this letter are sufficiently representative of the total labour force employed in organized industries in the Presidency of Bengal.

3. It will be seen that the returns, with one exception, are all in form "A." The only return in form "B"* (which is enclosed) relates to the Karwal Nat Settlement at Saidpur on the Eastern Bengal Railway, which is managed by the Salvation Army. In this settlement work, medical attention, education and entertainment are provided for the settlers. From the paucity of returns in form "B"*it is not to be assumed that similar activities are not conducted by other independent bodies. Information has been received, and incorporated in the general returns, which shows that missionary bodies are active in welfare work, particularly in the tea districts; such work, however, is only part of their total activities, and has not been shown separately in the returns. Similarly, in Calcutta there are bodies of workers whose activities affect factory employees; this is particularly the case with the various infant welfare centres conducted under the auspices of the child welfare branch of the Red Cross. In the return relating to the Pabna Municipality, it will be noted that there is a private organization of social workers in that town who are reported to devote attention to the depressed classes, which include the conservancy

* Not printed.

staff of the municipality. The work of all such bodies, however, is not aimed specifically at factory workers : it applies to the population generally, and, as such, does not strictly come within the purview of the present enquiry which is primarily intended to include only the classes of persons or associations which work solely for the utilisation of the spare time of the workers, or for the amelioration of their conditions of living.

4. It will be noted that no reference has been made to returns of welfare work conducted by labour organizations. It is known that some local trade unions have, from time to time, tried to initiate, or have actually succeeded in initiating, schemes for the welfare of their members. Funds have been started for specific benefits, such as death benefit or marriage endowment, but such activities are ancillary to the main purposes of the associations, which are to take combined action for the purpose of negotiating better terms with employers. It cannot be said at the present stage that any of these labour bodies has had marked success in its efforts, but trade unionism in India is at present young and finding its way. In due course, with the introduction of the Indian Trade Unions Act in June next, full official information on the welfare activities of trade unions will become available in the ordinary official course, so that all that is necessary at the present stage is to call attention to the fact that a small number of such organizations is attempting to take up work such as is covered by the present enquiry.

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8. Several features stand out prominently. One is that there is in the Presidency of Bengal almost an entire lack of organized welfare work on the lines on which such work is conducted in the west. The individual returns from which the general results have been compiled show that in a great many instances, in almost every variety of activity, attempts have been made at some time or other to start schemes which would properly fall within the category of the phrase of the International Labour Office: "the utilization of workers' spare time." Educational schemes, particularly night schools, have been started, sometimes by the industrial concern on its own initiative, sometimes in consultation with an outside body, but the great majority of such schools have failed from the lack of interest shown by employees. A number of attempts have been made to encourage sport amongst employees. In some instances they have had a fair measure of success, but on the whole the results have not been sufficiently encouraging to persuade industrial establishments, as a whole, to imitate the examples which have been recorded. In other cases—this is particularly the case in the coal mines area—attempts have been made to provide amusement either by indigenous games or by cinema entertainments, and these, again, have had very moderate success. In all these cases, of course combined with the desire to ameliorate the conditions of the workers, there has been the common economic motive of either increasing the efficiency of the worker or providing attractions sufficiently strong to prevent him going to other concerns or into other lines of industry or agricultural activity. It is well known that recruitment for some types of work requires much more organization and the expenditure of much more money than others, e.g., in the tea industry the labour problem is one of the chief cares of the industry, and not only have attempts been made to settle the imported labour in the area, but the various medical activities, which are now so common in the tea garden district, have as their object not only the preservation of the health of the imported employee, but the encouragement of infant welfare with a view to raising a healthy labour force on the spot. In the mining area of Bengal—but it is understood that this is more true of the Bihar and Orissa coalfields—attempts have been made to cultivate new needs in the simple-minded workers of Chota Nagpur with a view to encouraging them to earn more money to satisfy those needs. The typical collier works only so long as is necessary to give him a wage sufficient to meet his immediate needs. This wage earned, he refuses to work until more money is necessary to meet his increased expenses. Anything which would raise his expenses has been calculated in some quarters to be an incentive to longer work in the mines and, therefore, to greater production. In all industrial concerns, as also in mines and municipal services, welfare activity is affected by the floating nature of the population. Apart from the tea garden areas, where the labour settles down either for life or for a definite spell, the annual turnover of labour is very heavy, and the lack of continuous settlement, from the very nature of the case, militates against the organization of activities which require a certain amount of permanence.

9. The general results outlined in the previous paragraph summarize what seem naturally to follow from the present economic and cultural status of the Indian working classes. Welfare activities, such as are conducted in highly organized factories of Europe and America, presuppose a certain cultural basis, which, in its turn, largely depends upon literacy. The preponderating majority of the Indian workers is illiterate, and it is not to be expected that they can appreciate benefits

which presuppose a certain standard of education, even although the standard may not be very high. The social conditions of the working classes, moreover, militate against combined organization and common action, which is requisite for welfare schemes. The labour force is not only, in many cases, of a temporary and floating character, but also is often mixed linguistically, racially and in religion. In the chief industry of Bengal, for example, the jute mill industry, the workers come from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, and Madras. There are Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians and Animists. Workers of one community tend to form groups within their own community; hence general welfare schemes, which presuppose a general homogeneity among the workers, are not likely to succeed till education is much more advanced. Not only is there a mixture of race, creed and religion in the jute mills, but there is also a considerable amount of difference in the economic position of the actual workers employed. In the mills north of Calcutta, for example, the labour is very largely imported. A very big proportion of it, at one period of the year or another, leaves for its own home districts, to be replaced temporarily by substitutes. In the south of Calcutta, however, a very considerable proportion of labour is recruited from the surrounding agricultural districts. The workers come in from the villages in the morning and return at night, often cultivating their own land in their spare time. In the former case, i.e., in the case of imported labour, were that labour more or less homogenous, there would be some *a priori* possibility of welfare organization. Yet such organization has not developed in spite of the fact that other circumstances have been favourable. For some years the majority of the jute mills have been working on a four-day week, leaving to the workers a free balance of three days. Such circumstances would seem to argue for the growth of activities to utilize the three extra days, and they might be expected to take the form of energetic exercises, such as football or hockey. This, however is not the case. In the latter case, i.e., in the case of jute mills situated in the south of Calcutta, where the four-day rule is in operation, the workers leave the mills on the last working day of the week, return to their own homes, do their home work and return to the mill again on Monday morning.

10. It is unnecessary to go further into local conditions such as are outlined in the previous paragraph. Enough has been said to show that, before judgment is passed on the returns which accompany this letter, the particular nature of the labour involved must be borne in mind. From the side of employer a very large amount of material has been collected to show that attempts have been and are being made to encourage efficiency among the workers. In engineering concerns, for example, it will be seen special vocational classes are in some cases provided for the training of artisans willing to take advantage of them; in one case, promising youths are helped to take recognized professional courses. It will be seen that attempts have been made in several groups either at maintaining or subsidizing schools, either night or day; but the results have not been encouraging because of a lack of response on the side of the workers. In some lines of activity, e.g., municipal work, it is hardly to be expected that special schools should be provided, as the workers may avail themselves of the facilities provided in the public educational system. Progress along such lines can only be slow, as it depends on the general appreciation of literacy among the classes affected. The same is true of clubs and reading-rooms. The limited scope of this side of welfare activity—one of the most prominent features of such work in the west—is not surprising; but even in the few instances shown in the returns it will be gathered that reading-rooms, libraries and clubs are provided in such cases as are likely to be appreciated, e.g., in railway workshops and shipbuilding and engineering works, in which the standard of professional attainment in the artisan classes is relatively high. The returns, indeed, give a sound basis for assuming that employers in India are likely to be ready and willing to meet such demands for welfare work as the growing standard of literacy of their workers may justify.

11. The information provided in the attached abstracts on the subject of health is so complete that little additional comment is necessary. As regards the concerns from which returns have been received, it would hardly be wide of the truth to say that practically cent. per cent. provide some sort of medical attention. In organized private industry medical relief is usually provided for each unit; in public services the medical facilities are provided for the workers and other classes of population at the same time, as in municipalities. The medical attention varies considerably in kind from group to group. In some big groups of industry, such as tea gardens and jute mills, practically every unit provides a self-contained staff, with a hospital, or dispensary, or both. A considerable number of cases provide special segregation huts or wards for infectious cases; creches and maternity benefits are common in the tea gardens; and there are several notable examples of these in the jute mills. Reference to this has already been made in the Government of Bengal Letter to the Government of India in the Legislative Department,

No. 4912 Com., dated 4th July, 1925. In the preponderating majority of cases medical attention and also medicines are provided free. Two or three further points in this connection require mention. One is that, in addition to the staff and the facilities provided in individual concerns, there are, in cases, public boards supported entirely or mainly by industrial concerns. In the coal area, for example, there is the Asansol Mines Board of Health concerning the beneficient activities of which reference is invited to the annual reports of the board itself and also of the Chief Inspector of Mines. In the tea district there is the Darjeeling District Medical Association which has done a great deal of useful work, and it is not out of place to mention here the contributions which the jute mill industry has made to the public health schemes in the jute mill area. Particular mention may be made of the contributions to the Bhatpara and Titagarh sewerage schemes. Another point requiring note is that, as shown from the reports from the smaller industries, particularly those in which mechanical power is used, first-aid appliances with stocks of ordinary medicines are kept to meet emergencies. This, it may be remarked, is a statutory obligation now on employers in England, and it is satisfactory to note that progress is so general in this Presidency. A third point requiring remark is the quality of the attention provided. In the large industries the medical services are well organised under well qualified men. The hospitals, segregation huts, and other buildings necessary for medical care are well-built, well-found, and, as a rule, kept scrupulously clean. In quite a number of cases—and this is particularly true of the tea garden area—medical care is supervised under either European doctors or Indian doctors with European qualifications, and much care is exercised not only in the cure of disease but in its prevention. On the whole, it may be said that employers in India have amply recognized the economic consequences of bad or indifferent health, and have always been ready, either by direct organization or through contribution towards special schemes, to do everything in their power to increase the physical efficiency of their workers. The prevalence of various epidemic and endemic diseases in India is, of course, responsible for this almost universal organization of medical relief, but at the present stage of development, it may be said that concentration on the physical well-being of the workers is a pre-requisite for an increased productive efficiency which in its turn will be reflected in a general rise in the standard of life. There is an obvious irony in including such activities in a return bearing mainly on the utilization of workers' leisure ; but the various elaborations of welfare work, common in the west, can be imitated in India only if the workers have sound bodies necessary for continued and sustained effort in production and for the consequent enjoyment of leisure which their added emoluments may justify.

12. The returns under the head " Housing " may be viewed with satisfaction. In coal mines, for example, it will be seen that a hundred per cent. of the concerns covered by the returns provide housing for their employees. Although the actual returns do not show the same percentage in tea gardens, it is known that pratically every tea garden does provide housing accommodation. The same is, in the main, true of jute mills and of cotton mills. The proportion is different in the case of engineering workshops and shipbuilding, but this is accounted for by the fact that these concerns are either in or close to Calcutta, which means that either the employees do not require the houses or that the land is so expensive that it is beyond the limits of financial possibility on the part of the concerns to provide the houses. The provision of housing accommodation for conservancy staffs of municipalities, it will also be seen, is very general ; while the other returns, with exceptions which are explicable by local conditions, tell very much the same tale. Adequately to explain the housing returns would require a long commentary, as practically every case has to be examined in the light of particular conditions prevailing in the area in which the concern is situated. In the Bengal coalfield, for example, although the returns show a big proportion of houses provided for the colliers, there is not the same necessity for such provision as in the Jharia area, for the reason that in the latter area labour comes in from much further afield than in Bengal and has to settle down for longer periods at the mines. In the Raniganj area of Bengal it is quite a common thing for labour to come from villages surrounding the individual mines ; sometimes the distance is fairly considerable, but the colliers prefer to go to their homes for the night to staying at the mines. Again, in jute mills the provision of accommodation must be considered in the light of the expense of making the provision. Where land is easily obtainable and fairly cheap, the provision is usually on a larger scale than in congested areas where the land is either not obtainable or is exceedingly dear. It cannot reasonably be expected, for example, that housing provision should be so extensive in the very congested town of Howrah as in the opener agricultural areas on the same side of the river opposite Budge Budge. On the whole, the housing accommodation provided by the jute mills is worthy of considerable praise. In one or two instances, indeed, it may be said that the quality of the housing and also the layout are models of their kind. In almost every case it would be true to say that the housing provided is much superior to that in the

villages from which the workers are recruited. The returns show also that the great majority of houses in all groups are provided either at a nominal rent or free. In very few cases are the workers charged an economic rent. Combined with the housing, there are, in many cases, well-organized bazaars managed under the direct supervision of the manager of the mill who takes pains to see not only that the quality of the provisions is good, but also that the prices are regulated to prevent imposition on the workers by traders. Some of the bazaars are utilized by the superior staff of the mill as well as by the coolies, and this, in itself, is a guarantee that the bazaars are kept clean, and that the food is fresh daily. Mention must also be made of the drinking-water arrangements, whether provided through municipal supply or through special supply arranged by means of artesian wells or otherwise by the mills. Much of this, of course, comes within the purview of the factory department.

13. Considerable interest attaches to the returns showing the number of concerns providing extra land for gardening, agricultural, or other purposes. Returns of this kind are naturally not to be expected from municipal areas, but attempts have been made in some cases near Calcutta to encourage the growth of small communities of workers with small patches of land given over to them for their own use. The idea behind this is largely to encourage the growth of a settled factory population near the factories, and to encourage the workers to bring their families to settle in the industrial areas. It will be seen that in the coal mines no less than 76 concerns out of a total of 104 make some sort of provision for garden or agricultural land. In the tea gardens such provision is practical universal, both agriculaural and garden land being provided in a large number of cases. It is not uncommon in the more congested areas to give, where possible, small plots for gardening purposes, although the grant of agricultural land is out of the question. Generally speaking, it may be said that where the grant of such land is possible and where it encourages labour to settle down permanently in a given area, such grants are made. In the case of the tea gardens, in particular, the idea behind such settlement is not only to encourage the immigration of labour but to foster the growth of a new settled population which in time may solve the perennial labour difficulties from which the tea gardens suffer.

14. In actual recreational activities progress has been slight and disappointing. Attempts—and repeated attempts—have been made at encouraging sports and games, but the response has been poor. Facilities for outdoor and indoor games are provided only in a relatively small number of cases. Special arrangements are made in a number of instances for Puja festivities, and for gramophone or cinema entertainments. Sports clubs are financed in a number of concerns either by the grant of subscriptions or by the provision of sports accessories. The absence of the sporting instinct amongst the workers of Bengal or of India is rather remarkable, particularly in the more congested areas where the opportunities for competitions are so numerous. The absence of such games is all the more worthy of comment in view of the extraordinary popularity of association football amongst the population in general. The contrast in respect to sporting proclivities between the eastern and western worker is very obvious, and rather inexplicable. The reason probably is a multiple one. *First*, the margin of pay saved by the workers is usually sent to their homes, *second*, their physique is not equal to the two-fold strain of a full day's work and a full day's play. This may be due to low vitality caused by such diseases as malaria or ankylostomiasis. In due course, probably when the general effect of the medical facilities which are so common is more felt, the workers may be more ready to take part in sport, particularly where the necessary provision for the sport is made by the concern which employs them. It may be noted in this connection that the development of sport in works clubs, as distinct from general clubs, in the west is mainly due to the activities of special welfare organizations. In this country there are practically no works officials whose duty it is to conduct welfare activities alone. In one or two cases, special Labour Advisers have been appointed the duties of whom include welfare work, among others, and it is probable that, if special organizations are set up the particular functions of which are welfare work, sports activity may receive the necessary impetus to make it as marked a feature of factory life in India as it is in the west.

15. In forwarding the accompanying summaries, the Governor in Council is satisfied that, having regard to the social composition of the working-classes in Bengal, and also to their economic status, there has been considerable advance in those activities which most nearly concern the working-classes as a whole. Much energy has been expended on physical well-being, and the advance that has been made in this direction gives good grounds for hope that, with the gradual development in literacy and the growing recognition of their status and common purposes, the institutions necessary to meet their new needs will gradually develop on sound, if distinctive, lines, with the full co-operation of, and encouragement from, the employers.

Industry.	Number of concerns where Educational facilities are provided.			Number of pupils or workers attending.					Number of concerns providing libraries, etc.
	(*a*) For children employed.	(*b*) For children of employees.	(*c*) For adults.	In the case of (*a*) previous.	In the case of (*b*) previous.	In the case of (*c*) previous.	In the case of (*a*) and (*b*) together where combined figures are given.	In the case of (*a*) and (*c*) together where combined figures are given.	
Coal Mines	Nil.	5 School maintained 4 Only schoolroom furnished 1	Nil.	Nil.	96	Nil.	—	—	Nil.
Tea Gardens	20 Maintained 14 Subsidized 6	27 Maintained 17 Subsidized 10	14 Maintained 10 Subsidized 4	36 Total for 4 concerns.	206 Total for 10 concerns.	101 Total for 7 concerns.	394 Total for 15 concerns.	84 Total for 4 concerns.	In the case of one estate, it is stated that a library was started but had to be closed, as the books were stolen. In another case a beginning is said to have been made by free circulation of vernacular newspapers.
Jute Mills and Presses	8 Schools maintained by all.	31 Maintained 20 Subsidized 9 Schoolrooms furnished 2	5 Maintained 3 Subsidized 2	27 Total for 1 concern.	1,154 Total for 14 concerns.	61 Total for 3 concerns.	246 Total for 6 concerns.	150 Total for 1 concern showing combined figures for (*a*) (*b*) and (*c*).	5 Library for Europeans only .. .. 1 Library for all .. 4
Cotton Mills	2 One of these is a night school meant also for adults.	2	2	53 Total for 1 concern.	150	30 Total for 1 concern.	—	—	In only one case it is mentioned that there is a well-equipped library with a reading-room, but that it is not taken advantage of by the workers
Shipbuilding and General Engineering Works.	3 Theatrical training 2 Evening school 1	3	2	122 Total for 2 theatrical classes.	402 Total for 1 concern.	88	—	—	4 All provide libraries.
Printing Presses	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	—	—	—	—	—	Nil.
Railway Workshops	5 Includes 4 concerns providing only apprentice training classes.	9	3	—	1,340 Total for 8 concerns.	—	—	307 Total for 6 concerns.	9 All provide libraries.
Other (Misc.) Industries	5 Schools maintained by all.	7 Maintained 6 Subsidized 1	6 Maintained 5 Apprentice training 1	—	—	230 Total for 4 concerns.	320 Total for 5 concerns.	—	3 Library and reading room 1 Club rooms 2

Industry.	Number of concerns providing medical facilities.					Number of concerns where charges are made.		Average number of persons treated daily.
	Doctor and dispensary maintained by	Doctor maintained and free supply of medicine arranged by	Dispensary kept and free medical attendance arranged by	Free attendance and free medicine arranged by	Total of concerns providing medical facilities.	(*a*) For medical attendance.	(*b*) For medicine supplied	
Coal Mines ..	56 Including provision also of hospitals .. 4 Segregation huts .. 5 Free diet .. .. 4 Special conservancy arrangements .. 1	37 Including provision also of segregation huts .. 2	5	6	104	Nil.	Nil.	339 (approx.) Total for 54 concerns.
Tea Gardens ..	18 Including provision of hospitals .. .. 7 Special supervision by European Medical Officers .. .. 9 Maternity or other sick allowances .. 5	42 Including hospitals .. .. 27 Supervision by European Medical Officers .. 26 Maternity or other sick allowances 17 Creches .. 1	4 Including hospitals .. 2 European supervision .. 2	18 Including arrangement of hospital accommodation 4 Maternity or other sick allowances 4	82	Nil.	Nil.	582 Total for 37 concerns.
Jute Mills and Presses	70 Including provision of baby creches .. 3 Hospitals .. .. 2 Subsidizing local hospitals .. .. 12 Laboratories .. .. 1 Segregation wards .. 2	—	—	—	88 Including 18 concerns contributing to local dispensaries.	1 (Except in the case of menials)	1 (Except in the case of menials).	2,035 Total for 61 concerns.
Cotton Mills ..	5	—	—	—	9 Including 4 concerns maintaining doctor only.	Nil.	Nil.	174
Shipbuilding and General Engineering Works.	9 Including provision of hospitals .. .. 2 Hospital treatment by regular contribution 2	—	—	8 (Occasionally)	36 Visiting doctor .. 9 (including free medicine 4). Only first-aid appliances or stocks of medicines for free distribution 10	Nil.	1	193 (approx.) Total for 13 concerns.
Dockyards ..	2 Including provision of hospitals 1	—	—	—	2	—	—	88 (approx.) Total for 1 concern.

II.—HEALTH (*Abstract*)—*contd.*

Industry.	Number of concerns providing medical facilities.					Number of concerns where charges are made.		Average number of persons treated daily.
	Doctor and dispensary maintained by	Doctor maintained and free supply of medicine arranged by	Dispensary kept and free medical attendance arranged by	Free attendance and free medicine arranged by	Total of concerns providing medical facilities.	(*a*) For medical attendance.	(*b*) For medicine supplied.	
Paper Mills ..	4	—	—	—	4	—	—	74
Flour Mills ..	—	—	—	—	3 Doctor.. .. .. 2 Dispensary 1	2	Nil.	15 per month. Total for 2 concerns.
Rice Mills ..	—	—	—	2	8 Including medical attendance in serious cases occasionally .. 4 Medicine paid for occasionally 2	—	—	No information available.
Printing Presses ..	4	—	—	1	9 Including medical attendance only .. 3 First aid requisites only 1	Nil.	Nil.	Figures for 2 concerns only. 40 annually and 40 monthly.
Railway Workshops	9 All providing hospitals under expert supervision	—	—	—	9	Nil. In 4 cases charges are said to be made for treatment of employees' families.	Nil.	680 Total for 2 concerns. 1,088 monthly, Total for 5 concerns.
Other (Misc.) Industries	10 Including provision of hospital facilities .. 6	—	—	17 Including provision of hospital facilities 2	29 Including medicine only 2	2	Nil.	132 Total for 13 concerns.

III.—HOUSING, ETC. (*Abstract.*)

Industry.	Number of concerns where houses are provided.	Number of employees living in such houses.	Number of concerns providing accommodation			Number of concerns providing extra land.
			(*a*) Rent free.	(*b*) At favourable rent.	(*c*) At full economic rent.	
Coal Mines ..	104 In two cases, it is stated that house building material and the necessary cost for repair are allowed to workmen living away from the mines.	22,259 About 59 per cent. of the total employed. Concerns giving total numbers living in houses .. .. 80 Numbers living per room 19 No figures 5	104 This figure includes 1 mine where provision is also made for houses at concession rates of rent.	1 Included in the figure in previous column.	Nil.	76 Garden and agriculture land .. .. .. 19 Only garden plots .. 6 Only agriculture land.. 46 Concerns having spare lands for this purpose but not actually granting any 5
Tea Gardens ..	84	29,178 This figure represents the total for 36 concerns. In the remaining 48 cases it is stated that each unit of accommodation is used by a family of 4 persons on the average.	84	Nil.	Nil.	82 Garden and agriculture land (of these 2 also concede grazing grounds) .. .. 30 Only garden land .. 8 Only agriculture land (of these 1 also provides grazing land and 1 seeds) .. .. 42 Only pasture land .. 1 Only land for cattle-keeping 1
Jute Mills and Presses.	87	126,254 About 45 per cent. of the total covered by returns. This figure represents the total for 80 concerns. Of the remaining 7, 1 gives the number living per room, viz., 4, and the rest give no figures.	35 (i) Number providing one kind of accommodation, viz., rent free 25 (ii) Providing two kinds of accommodation, viz., rent free and at concession rates .. 9 (iii) Providing all three kinds of accommodation viz., rent free, at concession rates, and at full economic rates1	61 This figure includes (ii) and (iii) under (*a*) and also (i)Number providing one kindof accomodation viz., at concession rates .. 48 (ii) Providing two kinds of accommodation, viz., at concession rates, and full economic rates .. 3	5 This figure includes (iii) under (*a*) and (ii) under (*b*) and also :— (i) Number providing one kind of accommodation, viz., at full economic rate .. 1	8 Grazing land .. .. 3 Paddy field .. .. 2 Land for miscellaneous purposes .. .. 1 Garden only to superior staff 2
Cotton Mills ..	8	5,711	4	4	1 Included in the figure under (*b*).	Nil. In one case, it is mentioned that there is a square in the premises for common use and that the question of granting small plots for gardening is under consideration.

III.—HOUSING, ETC. (*Abstract*)—*contd.*

Industry.	Number of concerns where houses are provided.	Number of employees living in such houses.	Number of concerns providing accommodation			Number of concerns providing extra land.
			(*a*) Rent free.	(*b*) At favourable rent.	(*c*) At full economic rent.	
Shipbuilding and General Engineering Works.	17 This figure includes 7 concerns which furnish houses, only to the menial staff, e.g., Khalasis, watchmen, etc.	8,386 About 34 per cent. of the total covered by returns. Total for 16 concerns.	15 One of these also provides accommodation at a concession rate to menials only.	3	Nil.	3 Garden land .. .. 1 Garden land for superior staff only .. .. 1 Garden and agriculture land and also for private dwelling .. 1
Dockyards ..	2	9,044	2	Nil.	Nil.	—
Paper Mills ..	3	985 About 30 per cent. of the total employed.	3 One of these also provides houses at favourable rent.	1 As shown in previous column.	Nil.	—
Rice Mills ..	9	121 About 16 per cent. of the total covered by returns.	9 In one case there is accomodation only for the office staff. In another only for seasonal occupation.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Printing Presses..	2 Both for only the menial staff.	22	2	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Railway Workshops	9	5,432 About 13 per cent. of the total covered by returns.	7 In 4 cases for menials only.	8	4 For the superior staff in all these cases.	5 Plots of land are said to be attached to quarters for gardening purposes.
Other (Misc.) Industries	28	2,883 This figure represents total for 20 concerns. In the remaining 8 cases 5 give figures per unit of accommodation, and 3 give no figures.	26 This includes 1 case where houses of all the three types are provided.	3 This figure includes the case mentioned in the previous column, and another where houses of the two types, viz., at concession rates and at full economic rent, are provided.	2 This figure is also included in two previous columns as indicated therein.	5 Garden land .. .. 4 Agriculture land .. 1 In three other cases it is stated that land is available for gardening, but that the workers are not interested in that sort of occupation.

B.

REPORT ON HOUSING AND HEALTH CONDITIONS BY Dr. G. L. BATRA, M.B., Ch.B. (EDIN. & D.P.H., ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, BASED ON THE DATA OBTAINED FROM 23 TO 28 JUTE MILLS NEAR CALCUTTA DURING THE LAST SEVEN YEARS, 1922 TO 1928.

. . . . . .

III.—Housing.

(16 to 22 in the list of subjects).

All the jute mills sending their returns to the Public Health Department provide, to their workers, rooms constructed in the neighbourhood of the mills at rents varying from eight annas to one rupee per month per room. The sizes of the rooms vary from 8 ft. by 8 ft. to 10 ft. by 10 ft.; in few cases the dimensions are 12 ft. by 10 ft. In nearly all cases the rooms are made back to back and in most pucca floors and tiled roofings have been provided with narrow verandahs, generally 4 ft. wide used for cooking purposes by the workers. No electric *light* is provided inside the rooms, and very often the rooms are dark and *in none of them sunlight can penetrate through*.

Regarding *ventilation*, it is unsatisfactory being *back to back* houses, and the only openings in the rooms are the doors and if there are windows, they are kept shut. There are no chimneys or openings kept for escape of the smoke in majority of houses.

Each room is usually occupied by three or four workers. i.e., 25 square feet of space are usually available for each worker. Very seldom he sleeps in the open. Good many workers live in the neighbouring basties of the mill area under conditions of housing worse than those described above as the drainage, water supply and conservancy arrangements are *far worse* there.

IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Condition of Workers.*—(iii) *Working conditions*—(*a*) *at work places* are fair on the whole, except where the jute is being sorted and carded; there is not adequate arrangement for taking off the dust and this is specially important as mostly women are employed in this department; usually these women bring in their young infants and children who toddle about and live in that dust-laden and hot atmosphere during the working hours of the mills.

(b) *At Home.*—The condition of the average worker's home (dwelling place) near the factory, I have already described under "Housing," above, and the condition prevailing in his own native village or town would be better than what has been stated above, as there is sure to be more sun and air.

(iv) *Dietary.*—It varies according to the labourer's class and the province he is imported from; as persons coming from Bihar and U.P. usually take hand-made bread at least once a day and use ghee oftener; whereas flesh diet is taken oftener by Muhammadans than Hindus. The worker near Calcutta spends more money on food, but the one in the mofussil lives cheaper. I will give the details, as stated directly to me, by the workers of the Clive Jute mills, on the 5th September, 1929 "Diet varies among Bengali and non-Bengali workers regarding hours and quality. Among Bengalis, it is cooked in the morning at 5 a.m. and eaten at 7 a.m. before going to the mill; the quantity usually taken at each meal is rice (*rice-water is thrown away*)—1½ *powa* (16 ozs.), dal (pulses) ½ *powa* (4 ozs.), ghee (fat) ¼ *chhitak* (½ ounce) and fresh vegetables taken are potatoes and *patals*, etc. Flesh is taken once a week, and fish 2 chhitaks (4 ozs.) cooked in portions of ¼ chhitak (½ oz.) of mustard oil on alternate days for each meal; the same kind of meal is repeated in the evening at 9 p.m. being cooked at 7 p.m. In the middle of the day at 1 p.m. some parched rice or other light thing is taken. The non-Bengalis (Behari and U.P. workers) take at 6 a.m.—atta 4 chhitaks (8 ozs.), ghee ½ chhitak (1 oz.), sugar 1 chhitak (2 ozs.), milk (when obtainable) or tea; at 11 a.m.—atta 4 chhitaks (8 ozs.), dal 2 chhitaks (4 ozs.), fish 2 chhitaks (4 ozs.), flesh 4 ozs. or 2 chhitaks, once a week. Fresh vegetables taken are potatoes, *patals*, etc. Weavers take something light at 4 p.m. and at 7 p.m. the same meal is repeated as taken at 11 a.m." The average monthly expenditure on food in the case of both Bengali and non-Bengali workers is said to be Rs. 16 per mensem per head, besides expenditure on light meals and chewing "pan" (betel-leaf) and tobacco, etc. A very simple diet of dal and rice only costs Rs. 8 per mensem per head. The average monthly expenditure on food, as stated above, is said to be Rs. 12 per head, but the following rates of food articles per seer, given below, will show that it is not possible if the articles of diet, stated above, are taken twice; as each meal will then cost 6 annas at least, and no workman, earning on an average Rs. 15 to

Rs. 35, can afford it. Atta or rice per seer is 4 annas, fish Re. 1–8 annas per seer, oil 12 annas, dal 5 annas, ghee Rs. 2–8 annas, and vegetables 3 annas. It will be seen from the above that there is very little of fresh vegetables, proteid, fat, milk or milk-products taken by the workers and their children ; thus there is great deficiency of *proteids*, *fats* and *vitamins* in the diet menus of workers resulting in a gradual deterioration in health particularly of workers who cannot afford to go to their native villages for a part of the year, as I think that workers going to their native villages every three months should be encouraged and made obligatory ; because they recoup their health quickly there by getting more sun, air, milk and milk-products, fresh vegetables, less dust and no machinery noise ; more money should be spent by employers in this direction to keep them fit, and it would pay the employers in the long run. This is the only remedy when there is not much land or space to spare near the mills. It may sound " utopian," but, after all, I am repeating the same cry, as in England for the last 20 years—" Back to the country."

(v) *Physique.*—Physique of the workers is gradually deteriorating as I have noticed this carefully during the last 10 years, but I have no accurate scientific data to offer in support of my statement, *e.g.*, weight, height, chest measurement, etc.

(vi) *Effects of Disturbance of Sex Ratio in Industrial Cities.*—There is a great disturbance as there are fewer women and no privacy is possible in the present condition of housing. There is practically open prostitution near the workers' houses, and most of the workers do not bring their women folk for these reasons.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided.*—(i) *By employers.*—In the jute mills (numbering 28) in the neighbourhood of Calcutta all the employers have provided for the medical treatment of their workers by opening dispensaries within the mill compounds and placing them in charge of doctors at their own cost, but most of these doctors are not registered medical graduates.

(ii) *By Government and* (iii) *by other agencies.*—Nothing is done, as far as information is available at present.

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29. *Disease.*—(i)—*Prevalence of Industrial Diseases.*—I came across a particular kind of rash which the workers get all over their bodies in the beginning of their employment in jute mills, especially in the sorting and carding section, where there is lots of dust, but very seldom seen in the spinning and weaving sections. To establish its pathology it requires further investigation and it might be of interest to note that the application of turmeric has a soothing effect.

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C.

REPORT ON THE HOUSING AND HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE EIGHT COLLIERIES IN THE ASANSOL COAL MINING AREA VISITED BY Dr. G. L. BATRA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, IN THE END OF JULY, 1929.

General Remarks.—The Asansol Mines Board of Health, constituted under (Bengal) Act II of 1912, was brought into active existence by Government during the War in the early part of 1916 to prevent " the outbreak and spread of dangerous epidemic diseases " in the Asansol Mining Settlement.

The Mining Settlement with an area of 413 sq. miles situated in the district of Burdwan comprises the greater part of the subdivision of Asansol, the most western subdivision of Bengal.

Within the settlement are included about 265 collieries (only 165 working at present), two big iron works, a large brick and tile works, and a paper mill, 490 villages and the two municipalities of Asansol (population 21,727) and Raniganj (population 14,536) ; the total population of the settlement, according to the census of 1921, being 329,353 besides a floating colliery population of 100,000.

The Board's sanitary staff consists of 6 sanitary inspectors in charge of 13 sanitary assistants, 3 anti-malarial investigators, 3 midwives, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of school hygiene. The unit of administration is the " Circle " of the sanitary assistant which is about 36 sq. miles. The duties of each sanitary assistant are —(1) notification of epidemics ; (2) suppression of epidemics ; (3) vaccination ; (4) collection of vital statistics ; (5) supervision of burning ghats and burial grounds ; (6) improvement of water supplies ; (7) lectures on elementary hygiene to school children.

Anti-malarial investigation, medical inspection of school children and aid to women in child-birth, are carried on by the other staff.

The chief epidemic diseases in the Asansol Mining Settlement are cholera and small-pox.

The following statements (1) to (4) are self-explanatory :—

(1) *Cholera.*

Year.	Total number of deaths from cholera during the year.
1918	225
1919	1,901
1020	170
1921	617
1922	169
1923	183
1924	317
1925	89
1926	570
1927	120
Average annual number of deaths in the Asansol Mining Settlement during the last 10 years (1918–1927)	425

(2) *Cholera cases and deaths during the year* 1927–28 *in the Asansol Mining Settlement.*

	Number of cases.	Number of deaths.	Case mortality.
Collieries	93	35	37·6
Villages	141	74	52·5
Asansol Municipality	40	12	30·0
Raniganj Municipality	21	4	19·1
Total	295	125	42·4

(3) *Small-pox.*

	Number of cases.	Number of deaths.
1923–24	50	6
1924–25	202	28
1925–26	1,129	126
1926–27	361	51
1927–28	1,374	162

(4) *Small-pox cases and deaths in the Asansol Mining Settlement during the year* 1927–28.

	Number of cases.	Number of deaths.	Case mortality.
Collieries	79	7	8·9
Villages	256	38	14·9
Asansol Municipality	15	3	20·0
Raniganj Municipality	11	3	27·3
Total	361	51	14·1

During the year 1927–28, Rs. 1,70,881 was the total expenditure incurred by the Asansol Mines Board of Health, and cess was levied during the year on mineowners at Rs. 2 per 100 tons based on the average raising of coal during the past three years and on royalty received 26 per cent. of the annual average road cess payable for the past three years. The total assessment of cess on mineowners for the years 1926–27 and 1927–28 was Rs. 1,19,562 and Rs. 98,446, respectively ; while the assessment on royalty receivers was Rs. 20,841 and Rs. 16,892 during the years 1926–27 and 1927–28, respectively.

Statement showing the general condition of coal trade for the ten years 1918 *to* 1927, *in the Asansol Mining Settlement.*

Year.	Number of working collieries.	Average daily number of labour employed in collieries.	Raising of coal in tons.	Estimated floating population.
1918	174	31,051	5,300,589	—
1919	171	31,304	5,747,163	—
1920	180	31,627	4,197,029	—
1921	217	31,564	4,250,305	—
1922	233	30,971	4,268,934	100,000
1923	204	29,936	4,589,296	100,000
1924	216	30,071	5,004,439	100,000
1925	210	28,787	4,885,554	50,000
1926	187	28,628	5,128,280	100,000
1927	165	27,928	5,509,248	100,000

Quarters are provided for the Chief Sanitary Officer and also for sanitary assistants and sanitary inspectors stationed in the 13 " Circles " in the mining area. A well-equipped laboratory and a highly qualified bacteriologist are being maintained by the Asansol Mines Board of Health since five years assisted by a grant from the Indian Research Fund Association.

III.—Housing.

18. *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*—The Chief Sanitary Officer mentions in his report that in the year 1922 the Asansol Mines Board of Health issued standard plans and specifications for the construction of miners' dwellings of different designs and materials, e.g., thatched, tiled and pucca roofing—with the proviso that all future constructions and renewals must conform to those standards. A census taken in March, 1925, showed that 14 per cent. of the houses conformed to the standards and all the new constructions and renewals undertaken since have been completed according to the standards the Board has laid down. A house now consists as a rule of a sleeping room not less than 10 ft. × 10 ft. × 10 ft. and of a covered verandah 7 ft. wide, the latter serving the purpose of an open living room in which the occupants ordinarily reside, cook their food, etc. There is no window provided in the standard plan and this defect should be removed at an early date. I saw new huts, 100 in number, made according to the new designs in Ninga colliery which is a new colliery. They have pucca flooring, arched pucca roofing and each block made in a row of ten huts arranged on four sides of the square except on long block of 30 huts. Of the other seven collieries visited, Jambad colliery of North Adjai Coal Co., Ltd., showed the best housing condition where floors were dry and attempts for better housing have been made since 1924 ; the rooms could have better light and ventilation, but the rules of the Asansol Mines Board of Health regarding standard houses as they stand at present do not permit ; these should be changed at an early date. There were 30 single tiled rooms and the miners (specially Santhals) prefer to live in detached houses. The condition of housing was the worst in Deshagarh colliery belonging to the Equitable Coal Co., Ltd. I found all the floors kacha, roofs leaking, and most of the huts unrepaired and uncared for ; even in the new ten rooms built two years ago there were no doors and floors kacha—the excuse given was that the miners would not have pucca flooring and roofing. There is no rent charged for the houses. There is water supply from wells, but they are at long distances, and very few in number. Recommendations for the construction of wells for provision of drinking water supply in the collieries is made by the Chief Sanitary Officer and the construction of such wells has to conform to the standard sanitary plan laid down by the Board. On the recommendation of the Chief Sanitary Officer, the Asansol Local Board has constructed wells for the supply of good drinking water in the villages. More than half the villages now possess local board wells.

The conservancy arrangements are far from satisfactory ; there was a good deal of refuse lying about and not much attempt seemed to be made at proper drainage or roads.

IV.—Health.

23. *General health conditions o workers.*—(i) During the years 1926–27 and 1927–28, there were 6,086 and 5,646 deaths with a ratio of 18·48 and 17·14 respectively per mile of the population—329,353 in the Asansol Mines Board area.

Cause of death.	1927–28.	1926–27.	1925–26.
Respiratory diseases..	1,045	1,101	1,107
Fever	922	722	667
Cholera	125	462	206
Dysentery and Diarrhœa	167	77	193
Influenza	—	—	—
Small-pox	51	162	126
Other causes	3,335	3,562	3,245

The above statement shows that respiratory diseases account for more than one-fifth of the total deaths. I went down underground in Minga colliery 1,300 ft. With all its new machineries and new appliances, there even the difference between the wet and dry bulb was less than one degree.

(ii) The following statement shows the number of births during the last six years, but it should be noted that very few births take place in the collieries as most women workers go to their homes at the time of delivery.

Year.	Number of births.	Number of deaths.	Excess of births over deaths.
1922–23	9,303	6,091	3,212
1923–24	8,655	5,897	2,758
1924–25	8,570	6,103	2,467
1925–26	9,945	5,544	4,401
1926–27	8,733	6,086	2,647
1927–28	8,156	5,646	2,510

During the years 1926–27 and 1927–28 the birth rate was 26·16 and 24·76 respectively. The number of still-births reported during these two years was 69 and 70. Of 856 deaths which occurred among adult married women, 47 were due to child birth giving a death rate (due to child birth) of 5·8 per 1,000 births. During the two years 1926–27 and 1927–28, 1,208 and 1,123 infants (under one year) respectively, died, giving a ratio of 138 per thousand births for both the years. There are said to be 400 indigenous dais in the mining area, and arrangements are being made for training them by opening classes and giving them fully equipped midwifery bags.

(iii) *Working conditions*—(a) *at work places*, i.e., collieries, the conditions depend upon the sympathy shown by the management, and, in my opinion, should be improved a good deal by better ventilation underground, shorter and regular hours of work, better housing, liberal water supply and efficient conservancy arrangement combined with good roads and drainage. The labourers usually work underground in 8 hours shifts without taking any food there, but there is two hours' rest in 10 hours shifts on the surface. A man usually supplies two tubs of coal of 30 cubic ft. each equal to 13 cwts., and each tub is paid at the rate of 7·annas 6 pies ; a loader gets 2 annas 3 pies per ton, a trammer, 1 anna 9 pies per tub, and the daily labourer on surface gets per day—unskilled, 9 annas, and skilled, 12 annas ; while a woman gets 5 annas a day. Woman labour underground has been reduced from the 15th July, 1929, according to the Act. The percentage employed at present is 71 men to 29 women, and will gradually be reduced to nil in the case of the latter in ten years.

(*b*) *At home.*—The workers live the lives of poor agriculturists.

(iv) *Dietary.*—Mostly consists of rice, dal and occasionally vegetable, ghee very seldom, oil once a week ; atta is taken by very few, and rice water is thrown away by non-Santhal labourers. A labourer usually spends Rs. 8 per mensem on his food when single, and Rs. 6 per mensem if living with his family. Men usually earn Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 per month, and women Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per month. The miners usually take an early meal—6–7 a.m., and then in the evening at 7 p.m. According to most of the mines' managers, miners live from hand to mouth, and in one of the mines the indebtedness among the labourers was 50 per cent. and in another 5 per cent. of the labour employed ; the colliery managers usually advance them from 8 annas per head to Rs. 5 per head ; in some exceptional cases Rs. 20 are advanced. I have given the economic conditions and daily earnings in detail of the labourers in the mines as the question of their dietary depends greatly upon their earnings. I consider the present diet taken by them to be insufficient in quality and quantity for the amount

of physical work done and specially when no fat or milk product, or fresh vegetable is taken, the results on the physical bodies of the labourers ultimately must be disastrous. Another factor standing in the way of savings of labour is the *presence of "Grog shops,"* and their situation and the method of payment, i.e., daily or weekly, because where daily payment is made, as in the case of collieries under European management, both men and women drink daily; while in the collieries where weekly payment is made, drink is taken by the labourers once a week, on Sundays or Mondays usually.

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The Government allows Rs. 6 for buying a maund of rice and Rs. 5 to the contractor for making liquor out of it, and the balance of Rs. 9 goes into the Government treasury. Children below the age of 12 are not allowed inside the grog shop, but their parents give to them as they wait just outside these shops.

One shop inspected sells liquor worth Rs. 3,000 per mensem, and about 200 to 250 persons attend daily. The income of the Government from this shop alone is Rs. 2,000 per mensem.

(v) *Physique.*—There were very few men, women or children whom one could call physically fit for hard work as mining.

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Most of the labourers go home to their fields for ploughing from the 15th June to the 15th September, and again for harvesting from the 20th October to the 20th January. January is the healthiest month, while September and October are the worst from a sickness point of view, and the percentage of sickness is about ·66 a day, i.e., one person is sick among 160 workers a day, which shows a very high percentage of physical fitness, but the actual inspection does not bear this out.

(vi) *Effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities.*—Usually the proportion of men and women employed in collieries varies from 2 : 1 or 3 : 2, and the classes employed mostly belong to the aboriginal races of Sonthals and Bauris where free love plays a great part and ethical standard according to civilization is not high.

24. *Extent of medical facilities provided.*—A medical man's advice and medicines are provided free by the employers and nothing is done by Government or other agencies. In three out of eight collieries inspected, the medical man was a qualified one and mostly he is engaged by 2 or 3 collieries so that usually he is only a part-time man.

26. *Sanitary arrangements.*—There is no latrine provided in any of the collieries and pigs act as scavengers.

29. *Diseases.*—No attempt or enquiry has been made by the Asansol Mines Board of Health during the last 12 years of its existence to find out anything on the lines done in this direction by the other countries. Some attention should be paid to this important work in the immediate future, and it will prove more profitable to the employers and employees than the research on cholera carried on at present in the Asansol Mines Board laboratory.

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A NOTE BY DR. G. L. BATRA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, DATED THE 16th FEBRUARY, 1922, ON THE SANITARY CONDITION OF PRINTING PRESSES IN CALCUTTA PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO "LEAD POISONING" AS INVESTIGATED BY HIM IN 39 PRINTING PRESSES OUT OF 506 PRESSES EXISTING IN CALCUTTA AT THE TIME.

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There are 506 presses in Calcutta; of these 27 come under the Factories Act. All the printing presses under the Factories Act were inspected and another 12 were selected from the balance and inspected.

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2. *Description of Buildings.*—(*a*) Generally speaking all the presses coming under the Factories Act have got decent buildings, though some of the presses have got unsuitable buildings to be used as printing presses, e.g., Model Printing Works, Indian Daily News, Trail & Co., City Printing Press, Metcalfe Press and the Exchange Printing Press; it will be difficult to improve their sanitary condition unless a lot of money is spent on the buildings.

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(*b*) Regarding the other 14 smaller presses, on the whole the buildings are suitable for the present staff employed and here also I will defer my remarks about lighting and ventilation under the head No. 6.

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3. *Kind of Energy Used.*—(*a*) Electric power is used in all coming under the Factories Act except in Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons and Government of India Presses, Temple Street and Hastings Street, where the energy is produced by steam. Edinburgh Press and the Calcutta Corporation Press and the Indian Daily News Press have an oil engine each as reserve.

(*b*) Energy used in the remaining 14 presses inspected was electric in seven and the rest seven were worked by hand and feet machines only.

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5. *General Condition of Men Working.*—General condition of men working is fair on the whole with a few exceptions, but the main thing one is concerned in is the question of lead poisoning among the compositors, linotype men and type-casters. In the textbooks it is shown that the lead poisoning in indicated by the blue line on the gums, gastro-intestinal disturbances ("colic" arising from the navel combined with alternative diarrhœa and constipation is typical of lead poisoning), pain in joints, general neurasthenic symptoms in the preliminary stage and leading to lead paralysis and the main change in the blood is the basic granulation of erythrecytes. To be positive about a case of lead poisoning one should examine for the presence of lead in urine by quantitative analysis combined with the examination of blood for the presence of the basic granulation of erythrecytes. These last two tests will mean a lot of laboratory work and other assistance besides the time required to examine a few hundred cases.

Compositors.—When I started looking for lead poisoning I examined a few compositors in each press, examined their gums and asked about their general history of pain in joints or colic. With this method of examination for lead poisoning and with the statement made above regarding definite diagnosis of lead poisoning it will be seen that my conclusions regarding lead poisoning will require corroboration by more laboratory work.

The blue lines on the gums were noticed in a larger percentage among the compositors in a badly ventilated press than in a well lighted and ventilated press as will be seen in the comparative statement.* Besides this I noticed that the condition of teeth was invariably bad among all the classes of compositors and worse among the Muhammadans as compared with the Hindus and again worse in the younger generation as compared with the older generation (due, I believe, to the fact that the older generation was particular to use the teeth-sticks and observe strictly the washing of hands before meals, etc.). Holding the type in the mouth, while changing, may have also something to do with the blue lines on the gums.

The habit of tobacco and betel-chewing has little to do with the condition of the teeth as I saw on several occasions that the condition of bad teeth did not always correspond with the betel and tobacco chewing. The blue lines on the gums were observed also among the binders, readers and pressmen working in the press—though the percentage was far less and this was noticeably observed in the readers' room in the Government of India Press, Hastings Street, which is in the same hall as in the compositors' divided by an open wire gauze partition and the partition does not go right up to the roof. I state this with a view to show the possibility of inhalation of lead dust by others not actually employed in the handling of lead.

The condition of teeth among the compositors I divide under three stages as observed by me. The first stage is the blue line on the gums, the second is the erosion of the gums at the roots of the incisors combined with the deposition of tartar and pyorrhœa in general and the third is falling off of the teeth.

The percentage of bad teeth and blue line on the gums is less among the binders, pressmen and the readers as can be seen in the comparative statement,* e.g., in the Government of India Press, Hastings Street. Forty per cent. with blue gum lines among the compositors, 10 per cent. in the readers, 14 per cent. in clerks, 19 per cent. among binders and two out of four linotype men examined had blue lines with history of arthritis, colic and cardiac condition. Four out of 8 type-casters had blue gum lines. In Messrs Thacker Spink & Co.'s Press 20 per cent. compositors had blue gum lines. Two out of four linotype men and one of these had arthritis. Two out of two monotype machine men had blue gum lines; both of these gave history of arthritis and colic and 20 per cent. in the readers' room. Pyorrhœa is very frequent among all classes. In the Statesman Press, 12 out of 15 linotype men had blue gum lines and 10 gave history of arthritis and colic. Fifty per cent. of compositors had blue gum lines and 20 per cent. of these gave history of arthritis and colitis.

In the Calcutta Corporation Press, pyorrhœa is present among nearly 80 per cent. of workers, 25 per cent. with blue gum lines among compositors and in the Government of India Press, Temple Street, among the typecasters, 13 out of 18 had blue gum lines and amongst the bookbinders there were more cases of blue gum lines, due, I think, to the fact that the refreshment rooms and the taps are situated in the main buildings on the top storey, which means that men at lunch time from the bookbinding department do not care to wash their hands before taking their food. The difference was so

* Not printed.

noticeable in the two classes of compositors that even the Deputy Superintendent noticed this, and as we had been to this building at lunch hour we noticed that the compositors were at their work and did not break up for lunch.

This fact is a proof to my mind to show the desirability of making the compositors wash their hands before taking their food and I may point out here that nowhere, not even in the Government presses, any attempt is made to provide soaps, towels, etc., for washing the hands of the compositors and other operators.

It will be seen from the above remarks that in the persons observed by me the blue gum lines are not quite typical of lead workers only, but it was seen also among the binders, pressmen, readers, etc.—though in a very much lesser degree. Besides pyorrhœa, deposition of tartar and erosion of gums, etc., were not so frequent among binders, etc., as among compositors and other lead workers; therefore one is driven to the conclusion that lead must have something to do with the teeth of the compositors. Immunity from lead poisoning among the Indian may be due to the fact that the Indians, as a rule, being vegetarians are not so susceptible as the people in the other parts of the world where flesh is taken more commonly. To support this theory, I quote the following from Osler and McCrae's book on "A System of Medicine" —page 86, 1907 Edition.

"It is of interest to note that some of the lower forms of life seem to be more or less immune to the action of lead, and the higher types of animals differ greatly in their susceptibility. In the latter, it is probably largely a question of the facility with which they make the soluble and absorb the more insoluble forms of lead. For example, Mr. Menell states that he has observed that dogs and cats live but a short time about the mine where he is at present while the cows in the neighbourhood came regularly to drink the turbid water below the place where the ore is washed, and although the sediment from this water contains as much as 3 per cent. of lead sulphide, the cows show no alterations of health. Similar observations have been made before. The explanation probably is that herbivoras have a relatively small amount of hydrochloric acid in their stomach contents, while carnivoras have a relatively large amount; the latter, therefore, can get much larger amounts of insoluble lead salts into solution as chloride."

Another factor may be playing its part in the condition of bad teeth in the case of Bengal generally—"Urban Bengal particularly"—i.e., the taking of soft food all the time and in all the forms, because there is very seldom any bread or hard thing taken requiring the exercise of teeth and the same thing applied to the flesh; as whatever form of flesh diet is taken it is eaten in a softer form which does not require any mastication.

Betel-chewing, tobacco-chewing and the lime taken more than usual with betel-leaf may cause a certain amount of decay of teeth. Betel (ready for chewing), as usually sold in the bazaar, is not sold in a hygienically clean form, and no attention is paid from what source and from whose hands it is taken.

Very few compositors were noticed wearing glasses, but anæmia was very common.

Linotype Workers.—This class of workers is generally well paid and better equipped with education than the compositors. He appears to be very well paid, but if a little attention is paid to the kind of work he had to do, one will see that it requires a great concentration of mind for 8 to 10 hours a day continuously in typing; he has to work at a very rapid rate and look to the proper running of the machinery. He is more likely to inhale the fumes from the lead pot, which has no cover over it to carry away the fumes, though linotype machines are kept near the windows to have good ventilation. Among the linotype workers I noticed, besides the blue gum lines, cardiac conditions, arthritis, gastro-intestinal disturbances and anæmia very common and nervous system highly strung. I think a closer and careful examination of this class of worker should form a subject of separate enquiry as I am convinced from a cursory observation that the linotype workers' lives are very short-lived ones.

Type Casters and Monotype Men,—The type casters suffer from the effects of lead fumes in a very short time, as shown in the enclosed comparative statement, e.g., in the Government of India Press, Messrs. Thacker Spink & Co.'s Press, Alliance Printing Press, etc.

Pressmen and the Binders.—Pressmen seem to do well and are well built, due to the nature of their work, but some of them have got the blue lines on their gums, though they have nothing to do with lead. Same remarks apply to the binders. This fact will prove that the blue lines on the gums are not positive signs of lead poisoning in this country and the matter requires further study. I may state here that I have got myself a blue line on the gums and so has my child, for which I cannot account for.

It was noticed among the binders that they are well dressed and they look after their hygienic conditions better than the other classes of men employed in the presses, and they all come from Dacca, especially those employed in the big presses seem to have the monopoly.

6. *Approximate Dimensions showing Lighting and Ventilation and Flooring in each Room individually.*—Approximate dimensions of all the rooms are given in the annexed comparative statement,* and it will be seen from the statement* that the ventilation is fair on the whole, except in one or two cases. But when we come to the question of lighting there are a good many presses which have artificial lights.

The compositors' rooms are generally placed in well-lighted rooms, but the press rooms are sometimes the darkest rooms, e.g., the Edinburgh Printing Press, Trail & Co.'s Press, City Printing Press, Metcalfe Printing Press, and the Calcutta Corporation Press.

The binders' rooms are generally well lighted and well ventilated, but the binders love to sit with windows shut and keep out all the air they can.

Flooring was fairly good on the whole.

7. *Provision of Water, Latrines, Urinals, etc.*—Water taps are generally provided in all the presses, but most of them have connections with the mains, i.e., water runs from 6 to 10 a.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.—which is a defect, especially in the summer, considering that the usual working hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Latrines and urinals are provided in all, except that the latter are not provided in the smaller presses. Only one press, viz., Sakha Press, had no urinal or latrine. A few urinals and latrines were found in an unsatisfactory condition and in some of them even the flush was not working.

Rest rooms, refreshment rooms and tea shops were found only in Messrs. Lall, Chand & Sons' Press, Government of India Presses, Temple Street and Hastings Street, and the East Indian Railway Printing Works; but there is always some open space or quadrangle belonging to the presses utilized by the workmen.

8. *Hours of Work.*—Hours of work are generally from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an interval of half an hour.

9. *Shifts or Overtime.*—The overtime everywhere is generally from 7 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. and the shift system is seen in the newspaper presses.

10. *Payment.*—There are generally monthly payments made, except in Government Presses and among a certain class of workers in private printing presses.

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12. *Conclusions and Suggestions.*—(i) After seeing 39 printing presses out of 506 in Calcutta I conclude that only a few printing presses are situated in insanitary positions and not all, as can be verified from the comparative statement.

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(iii) Regarding the advisability of compelling the proprietors of printing presses to introduce messes, hostels, etc., all the 41 presses seen by me have water taps and latrines (except one, viz., Sakha Press), but tea shops and refreshments are only in four big presses, viz., two Government of India Presses, Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons' Press, and the East Indian Railway Press. Water arrangements can be improved by compelling the proprietors to have reservoirs for filtered water and thus ensure a constant water supply.

The conditions of urinals and latrines will improve quickly if inspected regularly by the Health Department of the Calcutta Corporation.

The bigger presses should have refreshment rooms and sweetmeat vendors' attached to them. The definition of "bigger presses" should be when they employ more than 35 persons (including clerical staff and peons).

(iv) There should be printed notices placed in prominent places showing "the evils of lead poisoning" and how to avoid them.

(v) Soap and towels should be provided in a suitable and convenient place for workmen to wash their hands, and it should be made compulsory for the compositors to wash their hands before leaving for lunch time and home. The manager should take an intelligent interest in his employees and explain to them the advantages of good health and how to preserve it. Special regard should be paid to the condition of teeth and gastro-intestinal troubles.

(vi) Linotype workers and other lead workers should be protected from the fumes by suitable flues so made that they carry away the fumes. At present there are no flues constructed over the linotype machines—only their being placed near the windows is relied upon, and this very window ventilation may increase the danger instead of mitigating it if the direction of wind is such that fumes blow towards the operators. The same thing holds good for the monotype men and the type casters, although the flues are provided here; but they are above the level of the operator's

* Not printed.

head and face and before the fumes escape he is sure to inhale some of the fumes and the quantity will depend on the operator's method of standing and attending to his work, also the direction of wind.

The Caledonian Press has ordered flues for its 15 linotype machines and they are going to work it by an exhaust fan.

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E.

Extracts from the Report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, with his letter dated the 5th August, 1929.

III.—Housing.

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18. *Nature of Accommodation Provided in each class.*—(i)—Originally the coolies were given thatch and bamboos and they built for themselves their traditional type of house, the employer paying them for their labour.

The coolies thoroughly appreciated this as it enabled them to have just the kind of house that they wanted and were accustomed to.

(ii) In recent years houses with iron frames and corrugated iron or asbestos roofs and walls made of ekra with mud plastering, bricks, or wood, have been constructed partly from health considerations and partly because with the growth of the coolie population and the decline of the amount of waste land in the Duars not under cultivation thatch is not so plentiful in the tea garden area as it used to be.

These are sometimes erected for the coolies by the engagement of contractors.

The question of the best material for the sides of a house from the health point of view is still undecided although some of the medical officers are strongly of opinion that walls which can be destroyed and renewed annually are very much healthier than more substantial ones as germs and insects which might live for long periods in the latter are destroyed every year.

19. *Utilization by Workers of Accommodation available.*—As might be expected, the workers use no other accommodation than that which they construct themselves at the garden expense.

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21. *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing, e.g., Subletting; occupation of Employers' houses by Tenants in other employ; Eviction.*—No problems arise regarding subletting as all accommodation is free, nor do coolies who live on one garden work on another. All the gardens have signed a labour agreement not to entice the labour of other gardens so that if a coolie gets tired of his garden for any reason he migrates to another garden and lives there, but the manager will only take him on after informing the previous garden.

There is no eviction.

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IV.—Health.

23. *General Health condition of Workers.*—The general health condition of the workers, in spite of the fact that they live in a tract which was a malarious death trap 25 year ago and is still very malarious is extremely good. They lead a healthy open air life, do not have to work at high pressure and nobody is forced to work if he does not want to.

On wet days, for instance, the labour musters are a quarter or less of normal, and in the busy season the average number of hours worked is eight with 1½ hours' rest at mid-day.

(i) The death rate has shown on the whole a steady decline, the following being the figures for the decade ending 1928:—

Year.	Labour population.	Deaths.	Rate per mille.
1918 ..	.. 216,000	6,080	28·07
1919 ..	.. 255,000	12,199	47·86
1920–21	.. 190,000	5,547	29·15
1921–22	.. 184,000	4,595	24·93
1922–23	.. 196,000	5,007	25·54
1923–24	.. 206,000	6,012	29·21
1924–25	.. 205,000	5,497	26·27
1925–26	.. 206,000	4,774	23·19
1926–27	...217,000	4,984	22·91
1927–28	.. 228,000	5,119	22·40

These figures compare very favourably with the provincial figures which for 1927–28 were 25·6 per mille and with the figures for the thanas of this district which do not grow tea where the average death rate at present is about 35 per mille.

(ii) The birth rate for the same period is as follows :—

Year.	Births.	Rate per mille.
1918	8,547	39·48
1919	7,521	29·51
1920–21	7,396	38·87
1921–22	7,331	39·78
1922–23	8,570	43·72
1923–24	9,074	44·09
1924–25	8,915	43·34
1925–26	8,830	42·90
1926–27	8,907	40·94
1927–28	8,081	39·73

The provincial birth rate in 1927–28 was 27·7 per mille so that these figures also compare favourably.

Infant mortality (children under one year of age).

Year.	Deaths.	Ratio per 1,000 births.
1918	763	91·26
1919	828	110·09
1920–21	689	93·15
1921–22	601	81·98
1922–23	955	111·43
1923–24	—	—
1924–25	877	98·37
1925–26	800	90·60
1926–27	812	91·16
1927–28	727	80·05

This again compares favourably with the provincial ratio for 1927–28 which was 178 per 1,000 births or more than double the figures for the Duars.

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(iv) The staple food of the workers is rice, but this is supplemented by maize, pulses, fresh fruit, meat and vegetables, large numbers of cattle, goats and pigs being killed weekly in the various bazaars.

Most families have small gardens round their houses in which they grow vegetables and such fruit as pineapples and plantains.

The tea garden also buy paddy land in the vicinity which is let out to the coolies for growing their own rice.

(v) The physique of the labourers is on the whole very good, and that of old residents compares most favourably with that of newly imported labourers.

(vi) Detailed enquiries show that there is little or no disturbance of the sex ratio.

I give the figures for three typical gardens for 1927–28 :—

1927–28.	Men.	Women.	Children.
Gopalpur Tea Estate (Indian managed) ..	614	609	758
Dalgaon Tea Estate (European managed) ..	1,043	1,118	974
Karballa Tea Estate (European managed) ..	982	976	1,037

It will be seen that on two of the gardens the men and women are practically equal in number while in the third the women are in excess.

Prostitutes are unknown, and the morality of these simple folk is, as usual, very strict.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided.*—(i) Groups of, from 6 to 15 gardens under European management, are under the charge of a fully qualified British medical officer.

There is a dispensary on each garden with a Doctor Babu and staff in attendance.

All attendance and medicine is given free and on many gardens there are sick wards for in-patients. The Doctor Babu goes round the coolie lines daily with medicines and treats any coolie who is sick and comes forward.

The Chief Medical Officers visits each garden in his group periodically, generally once a week and inspects the garden dispensary and is on call at any hour of the day or night to attend serious cases.

Sick pay is usually given in the case of an illness which lasts more than a few days.

Government and the local self-Government authorities do not provide any dispensaries on the tea gardens themselves, but there are public dispensaries at various places in the tea garden area, more especially in centres where there are large *hats* (weekly markets).

25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are Utilized.*—(i) There is a considerable reluctance among the coolies to avail themselves of the medical facilities provided, though this is gradually disappearing.

They prefer to use their indigenous medicines and methods, many of which are primitive and harmful in the extreme, and only to go to the dispensary when they have become really ill.

Sometimes caste prejudices prevent a man from subjecting himself to treatment, on Western lines.

(ii) Women are especially loath to come to the dispensary for the treatment of female diseases, but the Doctor Babu and even the Chief Medical Officer is called in sometimes in difficult confinement cases.

For ordinary ailments they show no more reluctance than do their men folk.

26. *Sanitary Arrangements.*—Latrines have been provided on several gardens, but the labourers absolutely refuse to use them, nor is there any need from the public health point of view for latrines in this rural area.

More might be done in the way of chlorinating wells as bowel troubles form a considerable part of the sickness.

The beneficial results of chlorination may be seen from the figures of Karballa Tea Estate where since this piece of sanitation was started in 1925, the dysentery and diarrhœa cases have been :—

1925—636; 1926—444; 1927—320; 1928—258.

27. *Extent and Nature of Official Supervision.*—(i) There is no Board of Health, but there is a health centre in 13 out of the 17 police stations in this district with a staff consisting of an Assistant Health Officer or a Sanitary Inspector, a Health Assistant and a medicine carrier which carries out general sanitation duties in any area where an epidemic threatens, such as vaccinating, giving cholera inoculations, chlorinating water supply, etc. They also inspect the food for sale in bazaars, and markets to make sure it is fit for human consumption.

(ii) It is one of the duties of the civil surgeon to inspect tea gardens, but he has not got much time for this work and the average number inspected annually in the last decade is about eight.

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29. *Disease.*—There are no industrial diseases due to work on tea gardens, no soreness even is caused to the fingers of the pluckers but large numbers of the coolies suffer from ulcers on the legs, commonly called Hill Sores, the cause of which is not known, but is not attributed to tea bushes.

Malaria is the commonest cause of death in the Duars, and accounts for 6 deaths per mille of the labourers, chest complaints cause 3·47 per mille, dysentery and diarrhœa 3·76 per mille, and phthisis 1·42 per mille.

No other disease causes more than ·3 per mille of deaths. Dispensary figures show that very nearly half the labour force is treated for malaria during the year.

31. *Maternity Benefits.*—There is no scheme in existence, but as already mentioned the competition among gardens to attract and keep labour makes conditions very uniform, and enquiries show that almost universally expectant mothers are given full pay for some time before delivery, and this is continued until fully recovered after the birth, and also a bonus which varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12.

Very often she gets a small allowance weekly until the child is one year old which ensures that the child is seen frequently by the manager and is consequently kept clean.

If necessary, free milk is given and an attendant is paid by the employer to look after the mother and child.

It must be remembered that the husband is capable of earning very good wages all this time and that the coolies are able to save considerable sums of money even when they are idle and work short hours so that a mother on a tea garden is by no means an indigent person. Also, she is of hardy aboriginal stock, and her period of incapacity is very short both before and after child birth.

If the mother dies an attendant is employed by the garden and paid three annas per day to foster-mother the child, the hope being of course that the child will in time be a recruit to the labour force of the garden.

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H.

IV.—Health.

30. *Sickness Insurance.*—The Government of India addressed local governments on the subject of sickness insurance in their letter No. L-1518, dated 20th September, 1928.*

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* *Vide* Appendix V to the Memorandum of the Government of India.

The Government of Bengal took no action on this letter, as it was anticipated that a detailed questionnaire on the subject would be issued by the Royal Commission. When, however, it was ascertained that no such questionnaire would be issued, the local Government consulted commercial bodies, registered trade unions, divisional and district officers, and the departments of Government interested in the subject on both the letter of the Government of India and the corresponding items in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission.

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The replies indicate considerable diversity of opinion on the subject. The preponderating majority of opinion is to the effect that the time is not yet ripe in India for the introduction of any scheme of sickness insurance. Several district officers have shown considerable sympathy with the underlying principles of such insurance, and interesting comments have been made on the introduction of voluntary schemes, the utilization of the Co-operative Department for such purposes, and the compulsory provision of medical facilities in factories of a certain size. There is, however, practically unanimity of opinion that no comprehensive scheme of social insurance should be introduced in India. The local Government are in entire agreement with this view. The application of the Geneva Draft Conventions and Recommendation is entirely out of the question in India at the present stage of industrial development.

The Government of India, while recognizing that the general introduction of sickness insurance is impossible, think that the possibility of introducing sickness nsurance within well-defined limits should be further explored. The question under consideration is therefore whether it is desirable or possible to introduce any scheme of sickness insurance within such limits. The local Government have carefully considered this suggestion in the light of the views expressed by the Government of India, and also of the various opinions which they have received from their officers and local commercial and labour bodies, and the first point which they desire to make is that, were sickness insurance applied within such limits as would probably be regarded as workable, then the result would be that the benefits of insurance would be accorded to the class of workers in least need of them. There would be no difficulty in prescribing the " well-defined limits " mentioned by the Government of India, were it considered desirable on general grounds to introduce sickness insurance. The great majority of factory workers are already within the official cognizance of the Factories Act, and the organization of railway transport, dock transport, lascar, plantation and municipal and government labour is probably already sufficiently good to make workers in these industries susceptible of treatment on a sickness insurance system. Organization or the potentiality of being brought within an organized system, however, seems to the local Government to be the least of the issues involved. The question is whether it is advisable on grounds of public policy to introduce compulsorily a scheme or schemes which would benefit a very small proportion of the population at the expense of the rest.

In paragraph 5 of their letter, the Government of India enumerate certain factors which must receive attention in connection with any system of sickness insurance. These are :—(1) The extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities ; (2) the extent to which medical facilities are likely to be acceptable to the persons insured ; (3) The extent to which insured persons suffering from sickness are likely to remain within the area within which the organization applicable to them can effectively operate ; (4) The proportion which the expense of administration (which includes the provision of some machinery for the settlement of disputes) is likely to bear to the total cost of the scheme ; (5) the extent to which the classes whom it is proposed to insure are willing and able to meet the charges falling upon them ; and (6) the extent to which State assistance can be granted.

The first of the above factors has to be considered from two points of view. One is the extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities for workers remaining in the area of their work. The other is the extent to which such facilities can be provided in the workers' own homes. So far as the former point is concerned, the bigger industries in Bengal already undertake medical treatment for their workers, in many cases on a very generous scale. In tea gardens and the jute mill industry, for example, doctors, medicines, dispensaries, in fact medical attention of every variety, are generally provided free. To this extent, therefore, employers may be reckoned to have contributed amply, in some cases handsomely, towards a system of sickness insurance. So far as medical attention in the workers' own homes is concerned, the Government of Bengal are not in a position to formulate an opinion, for the reason that the great majority of industrial workers in the presidency come from other provinces. The provision of medical attention under an insurance system to such workers would, therefore, not primarily be the concern of the Government of Bengal.

It is, however, the concern of the Government of Bengal that such medical facilities as can be provided should be so apportioned that they give the maximum benefit to the population of the presidency as a whole. To expend resources, whether of government or of industry, on part of a class which is already much better provided for than many other classes is not sound policy. Factory workers, indeed workers in organised industry have already been accorded safeguards not available for unorganized workers. They are safeguarded from accident by the Factories Act and from the results of accident by the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Government of Bengal have recognized that, in the case of those Acts, the criterion of organization must apply to some considerable extent, otherwise the Acts would be unworkable. The same argument does not apply, however, in the case of sickness insurance, for the provision of resources for medical aid can be made applicable to all classes through other means than sickness insurance. The first line of progress in this respect is not legislation for organized workers, who form a very small percentage of the population, but for all workers, irrespective of organization, and all persons whether workers or not, who have not yet been given adequate medical facilities.

As regards the second factor mentioned by the Government of India, exact information as to the extent to which medical facilities are likely to be acceptable to the persons insured is not available. Dispensaries based on the western practice of medicine have been provided in the past 50 or 60 years by both government and employers in all parts of India, and labour has gradually become accustomed to western modes of treatment. The large number of patients that are annually treated in government and private hospitals and dispensaries conducted under the western system of medicine is ample proof that the existing medical facilities are appreciated. There is not yet, among the working classes, however, that universal trust in the prevailing modes of treatment on western lines, which would justify the introduction of a system of compulsory sickness insurance. In the jute mill areas of Bengal, for example, where it is the rule of employers to provide well-equipped dispensaries, it has been repeatedly reported that patients under treatment have sought independent advice in the bazaars from practitioners who have no registerable qualifications. The same is true of the tea garden areas. Moreover, it is the prevailing custom in the case of serious illness for persons to leave for their own homes, where, although possibly there are few or no facilities for treatment on the lines given in the mill dispensaries, the patients hope to recover by the use of indigenous methods and the care bestowed upon them by their own family circle. It has been argued that patients leave for their homes not for sentimental reasons, but because they cannot afford to live in the area of work without wages. This is not the case, as it is well known that they often insist on leaving in spite of wages being paid. The migratory habits of the workers would, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, be fatal to the introduction of any system of compulsory insurance, at least without a far more elaborate organization than the present circumstances of industrial and medical development warrant.

Another vital objection to the introduction of compulsory sickness insurance at the present stage in India lies in the fifth factor enumerated by the Government of India, viz., the willingness and ability of the persons to be insured to meet the charge falling upon them. Were a scheme of compulsory insurance introduced, requiring half the cost of the system to be contributed by the workers, there is no doubt that the workers would strongly object to the contributions. This is practically the unanimous opinion of all those who have replied to the local Government's reference on the subject. Even were the contributions on the most modest possible scale of, say, one pice per every rupee of wages, there would almost certainly be strong objection and consequent labour unrest, and, at the present stage, such objection would not be without reason, for workers in the bigger industries have become used to the free provision of medical facilities, and also to freedom of choice on their own part as to whether they may utilize these facilities or seek treatment from private practitioners. So far as employers are concerned, it is anticipated that there, also, would be strong objection to paying separate contributions for an insurance scheme, especially on the part of those who already provide medical facilities or who contribute to such hospitals and dispensaries in their own areas as are attended by large numbers of their workers.

The introduction of any compulsory scheme of sickness insurance is, therefore, considered premature in India at present. Sickness insurance is not one of the first rungs in the ladder of amelioration of the workers' conditions in India. In its own interests, industry has already done much to safeguard the workers' health, and the Government of Bengal do not consider that it would be in the best interests of voluntary effort in this direction to compel contributions for sickness benefits in an organized system. Such compulsion indeed might have unfortunate reactions on all voluntary welfare work. From the workers' point of view, also compulsory contribution to a sickness insurance scheme is to be deprecated till the workers have

received some measure of general education, and can be better organized. Sickness insurance, even in a state system, is not a project to be lightly undertaken with big masses of illiterate people. Its success requires a certain appreciation of the ends to be achieved, which appreciation is not prominent in Bengal, as is obvious from the very primitive state of workers' organizations.

For the above reasons the Government of Bengal have not taken into serious consideration the framing of any scheme on which they could make an estimate of the proportion which the expense of administration would be likely to bear to the total cost of the scheme. So far as the final factor, mentioned by the Government of India, viz., the extent to which state assistance can be granted, is concerned, they can give a definite reply. The Government of Bengal could not undertake to give any contribution to any sickness insurance scheme so long as the present financial settlement continues to exist. Since the introduction of the reformed scheme of government, the Government of Bengal have been unable to undertake any major scheme of public betterment, because of the inelasticity of the financial settlement made as the result of the reforms, and during the last 10 years the number of schemes which have been prepared and which await financing has been so great that the likelihood of the Government being able to make any contribution towards a system of sickness insurance is negligible, even did they consider such a scheme workable at the present stage of development. Moreover, as already indicated, on general grounds of public policy, they could not accept any financial responsibility for a scheme aimed at the advantage of a class which is in a very large minority in the province while the question of the provision of medical facilities for the population as a whole remains both urgent and unsolved.

The Government of Bengal would welcome an extension of voluntary effort on the part of employers in combating sickness, and would gladly encourage the institution of simple schemes of sickness insurance as between employers and workers. Were official supervision required, probably the Co-operative Department could be utilized; that department might also be utilized for advice. It is anticipated, however, that the provision of provident and pension funds would appeal more to the workers than insurance for sickness, and there is already legal provision for such funds. Industry in India, however, has of its own volition responded well to the call for medical relief, and before legislative sanction should be given to what even in the west have been later elaborations of industrial welfare, it is considered that more emphasis should be placed on more elementary necessities, such as the extension of the safety and hours provisions of the Factories Act to small factories, the general diffusion of compensation for accidents, and the provision of a measure of elementary education.

While the Government of Bengal consider the institution of any scheme of sickness insurance premature at present, they recognize that, in due course some measure of the nature contemplated by the Government of India will have to be undertaken. When such a measure is contemplated, they consider that a special public enquiry should be held into this subject alone. In every country where health insurance has been undertaken, much time and money have had to be expended in preliminary enquiries, and such enquiries are more necessary in India because of the relatively unorganized character of the material to be dealt with and the lack of precise information on many of the main issues bearing on social insurance of all kinds. Legislation, when undertaken, should also be central as the Government of Bengal consider it very undesirable that in a country where inter-provincial migration is so common, there should be any differences in law or administration between the various provinces in a social measure of such importance as sickness insurance.

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I.

31. *Maternity Benefits*—(i) *Extent and working of existing schemes.*—The first enquiry into the conditions of women's labour in Bengal industries, with special reference to maternity benefits was held in 1921–22 by Dr. Dagmar F. Curjel (Mrs. Wilson), whose report was published as Bulletin No. 31 in the series entitled "Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour," published by the Government of India. In 1924, the Government of India asked for a report showing how far employers had voluntarily undertaken maternity benefit schemes, and the Government of Bengal in their letter No. 6888 Com., dated the 16th December, 1924, furnished the required report. The substance of the report was reproduced in Bulletin No. 32 of the Industries and Labour Department of the Government of India entitled "Indian Maternity Benefit Schemes."

The following extracts from the annual reports of the chief inspector of factories for the years 1924, 1926 and 1928, show what has been done since :—

Extract from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, for the year 1924.

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A charitable dispensary for women and children was started a few years ago by the Bhatpara municipality. It is in charge of an Indian lady doctor and, considering the limited funds available, has done much good amongst the workers in the district, the average daily attendance during the year having been 16·3 women and 33·3 children.

Extracts from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, for the year 1926.

Maternity clinics on the lines of that of the Tittaghur jute mills have been started by the Kankinarrah and Angus mills and trained nurses appointed to organize and carry out the work.

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Baby Nursery or Creche.—An enclosure has also been erected in one of the departments (of a jute mill) as a creche for small children within easy access of the mothers when working in the mill. At the time of the inspecotr's last visit, 12 small children were found within the enclosure where they had been placed by their mothers without compulsion on the part of the mill manager. This is a decided encouragement and other mill managers who had attempted such isolation but without success have now promised to renew their efforts on similar lines.

Extract from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, for the year 1928.

A fully qualified nurse from England and a certified midwife from the Eden hospital, Calcutta, have been added to the medical staff at the Angus Company's jute mill and engineering works at Bhadreswar. The staff, excluding clerks and menials, now consists of a European physician and surgeon-in-charge, a European nurse, an Indian midwife, five qualified Indian doctors, two trained compounders, two electrical assistants for the operating theatre and laboratory work, two dressers, two hospital assistants and four general assistants. Improvements have been carried out in the dispensary building, the treatment and dressing rooms, the operating theatre and the electrical treatment room. The medical relief and attention obtainable by the employees of this company has no equal in the province and, it would be safe to say, no superior in any industrial concern in India. It is not possible in this report to deal adequately with the splendid work which this fine staff is doing, not only among the employees of the company but also in the surrounding district. Expert medical and surgical treatment of almost of almost every form is available to all comers free of charge.

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(iii) *Possibility of legislation.*—In 1924, the Government of India circulated for opinion a Maternity Benefit Bill introduced by Mr. N. M. Joshi in the legislative assembly on the 23rd December, 1924. The Government of Bengal consulted the usual local industrial and labour interests on Mr. Joshi's Bill, and their opinion was sent to the Government of India in their letter No. 4912 Com., dated the 4th July, 1925, relevant extracts from which are given below :—

Mr. N. M. Joshi's Maternity Benefit Bill, 1924.

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Mr. Joshi's Bill revives the discussion which took place on the same subject in 1920–21, when the League of Nations invited the Government of India to report whether the provisions of their draft convention on the employment of women before and after childbirth made at Washington in October, 1919, were applicable to conditions in India, and if not, whether they proposed adopting measures to any similar effect. The main provisions of Mr. Joshi's Bill are the same as the main provisions in that draft convention. His proposals regarding the financing of his measures go beyond those of the convention inasmuch as they would make Government the agency for paying benefits, and would institute a Government levy on employers ; but in 1920–21 the feasibility of financing such a scheme by a compulsory Government levy was among the points discussed ; and there is, in effect, no important constructive element in Mr. Joshi's Bill that is new to the controversy.

The Government of Bengal in 1920–21 expressed sympathy with the intention underlying the draft convention, but considered that the measures proposed would fail in this country to serve that intention, as some would prove unworkable and

others would be circumvented by labour itself. The grounds given for this conclusion were substantially the same as those stated in the assembly on the 3rd February, 1925, by the Hon. Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra in his description of the Government of India's report to the League of Nations in 1921, and need not again be set out here. His Excellency in Council considered that the only course likely to prove useful would be the working out by employers of private maternity benefit schemes suited to the varying conditions in each industry; no action by legislation of any kind was deemed practicable; and the conditions in respect of childbirth in Bengal industries, though not ideal, were not considered to be a matter for very grave concern.

His Excellency in Council adheres in general to the views expressed by him in 1920–21, and in some items holds them with more definition. Since that date he has had before him the published report of Miss Curjel, a sympathetic student of the conditions of women in industry in several countries, who made a twelve months' tour of the major industries of Bengal in 1921–22, and recorded findings on various aspects of women's work. Miss Curjel's report distinguishes the regular domestic state in which women workers live in tea gardens and in coalfields from the abnormal social conditions in which most women work in jute mills. In tea gardens there appeared to her to be no need for special regulations regarding women's employment before and after childbirth; while in the coalfields it appeared that mothers had adequate support during childbirth in their own homes and absented themselves from work for an adequate period during childbirth; a woman's employment in neither case being jeopardized by the fact of absence for childbirth. In jute mills the non-domestic character of most of the women employed rendered maternity conditions unsatisfactory, but at the same time constituted an obstacle to their improvement; and in particular, no endeavour to achieve an improvement was likely to succeed if it consisted in the provision of monetary benefits. The account given of conditions in coalmines and tea gardens is borne out by other enquiries instituted by Government and by recent controversy: and His Excellency in Council now holds the conclusion that, whatever be the case with jute mills, there is no case for legislative interference with maternity conditions in coalmines or tea gardens in Bengal. That there is scope in these industries for private welfare measures (the existence of such measures is acknowledged in Miss Curjel's report, and further specified in the assembly debate on the Bill) is a fact apart from this conclusion.

The case of jute mills calls for more particular attention. For the reasons already referred to, the Bengal Government hold that Mr. Joshi's Bill, if passed, would prove a dead letter in that industry. They consequently oppose the Bill *in toto*, but in so doing their attitude is that they would agree to legislative interference in the case of jute mills, if any measure having an appreciable chance of success, and not improperly burdening the industry, were devisable. Among the conditions of success, in the opinion of this Government, are the following: (1) the benefits given should be in kind and not in money; (2) the agency should be the employer and not an outside functionary or organization; (3) the methods adopted should be primarily educative in character, a leading defect of existing conditions being the absence in the women concerned of a sufficient desire for the welfare aimed at; and (4) the immediate contact in the work both of doctoring and educating, should be that of a woman of qualifications with the gift of winning the affection and respect of the work-women; and not hampered in this direction by any official status.

His Excellency in Council feels that nothing to this effect is at present achievable by legislation. The measures that might succeed in present conditions will depend mainly on goodwill and the exertion of personal influence on the side of the employer; a legislative direction that such and such steps shall be taken would, pending a considerable excursion in experiments, be premature; and the interference involved would forfeit personal enthusiasms.

The interest in this subject evinced by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and the evident willingness of many employers to spend money in seeking a solution, are the hopeful features of the case. Three experiments in maternity welfare schemes have, in fact, been made in jute mills since Miss Curjel wrote her report; one in the Kelvin mills, another in the Barnagore mills and the third in the Titagarh mills. Those in the two former were experiments in the granting of monetary benefits to women during absence before and after childbirth, and they proved a failure owing mostly to evasions of the condition that a woman should not work during the receipt of the benefit. The Titagarh scheme was more elaborately conceived and substituted benefits in kind for benefits in money. The benefits include an institution in the nature of a clinic on the mill premises, classes for indigenous *dais*, for each attendance at which they receive 2 annas, and general classes for women and girls at which they are taught mother-craft and sewing. The experiment achieved little at first, but has recently met with

growing success. Experiments of this kind are the thing needed in present circumstances, and their conduct by employers themselves is the condition of their feasibility. The Bengal Government will do all they can to encourage their extension and it may well be that eventually assistance from public funds will be called for and made available.

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce draw attention to the promising results that have attended the Titagarh experiment and recommend that Mr. Joshi's Bill should be recast so as to provide for compulsory " clinics " in industrial concerns, or in groups of concerns, financed by Government with or without a compulsory levy on employers. For the reasons already given His Excellency in Council considers such a proposal premature and is unable to support it.

Most of those consulted, including the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, are of opinion that legislation on such a subject, if taken, should be central and not provincial. The only pertinent reason given, in the opinion of this Government, is that given by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, namely that if the matter were left to provinces to deal with, there might be unevenness of legislation between province and province, and consequent trouble with labour in the provinces that proved conservative. On more important items of control of labour conditions, such as those which constitute the body of the Factory Law, His Excellency in Council holds that legislation should be uniform *ab initio* for the whole of India, but he is inclined to think that in this particular subject the variety of conditions obtaining between province and province (conditions differ considerably within Bengal itself) make it expedient that legislative action should be left to the provincial Governments under the general control of the Government of India, and he is unable to share the Bengal Chamber's apprehension that such a procedure in this particular subject is likely to have unsatisfactory results.

Conditions in tea gardens in Bengal are similar throughout, and it would have been proper that the legislation proposed, had it been warranted, should apply to all organized tea estates in the province. His Excellency in Council is not sufficiently aware of conditions in other provinces to give an opinion regarding estates outside Bengal.

This letter has discussed the Bill in terms of the three industries in which the large majority of industrial women are employed in Bengal; but the conclusion that no legislative action on the subject is practicable or desirable applies also to the industries in which the residue are employed. The Bill has been opposed in its main provisions on general grounds; several pertinent criticisms of detail will be found in the replies which are enclosed*; but on such ancillary points His Excellency in Council has deemed it unnecessary to touch.

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J.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR BY J. M. MITRA, REGISTRAR OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, BENGAL.

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V.—Welfare.

Co-operative work on a scale sufficient for us to deduce any conclusion has not been tried, but there is scope for co-operative effort in organizing supplies of necessaries of life and also for co-operative banks amongst labour force and co-operative benefit societies. They often have to raise money at high rates of interest.

There are excellent co-operative stores attached to Ichapur Rifle Factory and Kanchrapara Railway Workshop. As regards co-operative banks the work amongst scavengers and sweepers lead us to think that extensive co-operative work leads to some improvement in moral tone resulting in less borrowing for wasteful purposes, in more steady outturn of work, but want of staff has prevented me from extending this line of work.

Recently a society amongst the labourers in Chittagong has been started with a view to encourage mutual assistance and savings on their part and also to make provision for the grant of loans for repairs of their implements and for other necessary purposes. The society also proposes to put up a workshop to provide work for those who do not easily find employment and also for those who are thrown out of employment. The response so far received from the labourers has been very satisfactory.

Want of staff has hitherto prevented us from taking up intensive work among labouring population. Another factor which has operated against the formation of co-operative societies is the impermanency of labour force in big labouring areas,

* Not reprinted here.

and the fact that the majority of the labour force do not belong to this province; but these ought not to be a bar to the introduction of extensive experiments. In view of the fact that the labour force is not permanent it would be necessary to obtain the full co-operation and assistance of the managing staff.

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XII. Wages.

108. *Indebtedness.*—I have had some enquiries made into the question of indebtedness among the labourers employed in :—(1) Colliery districts; (2) metropolitan jute mill area; (3) jute-baling firms in the interior; (4) engineering firms in Howrah, and also among (5) scavengers and sweepers employed by the Calcutta Corporation and Dacca Municipality; (6) railway labour at stations and railway labour employed at workshops.

From enquiries made it appears that the labourers almost universally borrow money from their own particular moneylenders and they are either the mill sirdars, mill durwans, local grocers and the Kabuli (itinerant moneylenders from the Frontier and Afghanistan).

The people generally borrow money on what is called "hatchitas" (pro notes) and in cases of loans of fairly heavy amount the moneylenders insist on the borrower to find some personal security. It has also been ascertained that the moneylenders who do business amongst the labourers rarely have recourse to the law courts. Wages are paid weekly and the creditors contrive to realise interest and as much of the principal as they can on pay days. The up-country people who come to work in the jute mills frequently slink away home when they cannot escape the rapacity of the moneylenders.

Colliery districts.—From enquiries made I find that the labourers in the colliery areas are the least indebted. Santhals and Bowries living near about the colliery areas work mainly in the collieries. These generally supplement their income by cultivation. Another reason for their being better off than the labourers in the jute mill areas is that they work regularly and earn regular wages. Unfortunately these people are very addicted to liquor and much of the indebtedness is due to this vice The grocer is the supplier of credit amongst this class of labour but credit is given in the shape of foodstuffs and very rarely in cash.

Labour in the jute mill areas.—Enquiries have been made from amongst the labourers of several jute mills. It is reported that as many as 75 to 90 per cent. of the labourers are in debt.

The rate of interest on borrowing is between 72 to 150 per cent.

Generally speaking, loans up to the extent of four weeks' wages are given by the Kabuli and the mill durwan without any additional security but in cases when a large amount of money is taken, personal securities are insisted on. Weekly payments are insisted on as I have noted before, by the creditors doing business amongst this class of people. Among the causes of indebtedness are impermanency of labour, sickness and infrequently intemperate habits. It is a significant fact that this class of people annually remit several lakhs of rupees to their homes. The remittances are mostly for the maintenance of their relations to meet cultivation expenses of the fields in their native villages and sometimes for purchase of lands.

It should be noted that these people have no other source of income, besides their wages in the jute mills. The average debt per head of a labourer amongst 30,000 was found on a rough calculation to be Rs. 18·9.

Scavengers and sweepers (Calcutta).—Enquiries have been made from amongst the scavengers and it is reported that 95 per cent. of them are indebted. It is also reported that once a scavenger or sweeper gets into debt he can hardly ever get out of it. The Kabuli is the principal creditor of those people.

Intemperate habits, absence from work for some months at a time are the main causes of debt amongst these people. To these causes may be added exorbitant funeral expenses, marriage expenditure and the average income per head is about Rs. 15 per month. Amongst these people males and females and even grown up children earn wages.

It has been ascertained that these people spend anything between Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 in a marriage or sradh ceremony.

In Dacca town there are about 200 scavengers and sweepers and they earn from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a month. They have got supplementary income as they work part time in the houses of private people. It has been reported that they are in debt to the extent of Rs. 25,000, and the average debt is Rs. 125 per head. The rate of interest paid by them is about 12½ per cent. per month. The main causes of indebtedness are drinking, uneconomical habit of living and exorbitant expenses for ceremonial purposes.

Seamen.—From enquiries made it appears that in the deck department, 85 per cent of the employees are in debt and the average rate of their indebtedness is Rs. 25. In individual cases it ranges from Rs. 15 to Rs. 700. The wages range from Rs. 60 per month in the case of deck serang to Rs. 18 to Rs. 25 in the case of laskers.

In the engine-room department, 95 per cent. of the employees are in debt and the average rate of indebtedness is Rs. 30, whereas in each individual case it comes up from Rs. 20 to Rs. 1,000. The wages range from Rs. 60 in the case of an engineer to Rs. 18 in the case of a trimmer.

In the saloon department, 75 per cent. of the employees are in debt and the average rate of their indebtedness is Rs. 35, whereas in each individual case it comes up from Rs. 25 to Rs. 1,000. The wages range from Rs. 80 in the case of a butler in charge to Rs. 16 in the case of a mess-room mate.

The cause of the indebtedness of the seamen is mainly due to the fact that there is no permanency of appointment. The seamen are appointed for 12 months with an option of 3 months' service and as abuses exist in recruitment they gradually run into debt. To obtain employment, the seamen have to pay premiums to licensed shipping brokers and ghat serangs and in some cases to the serangs who make the appointments. The serangs have to pay exorbitant amounts which in their turn they realize from the poor and helpless crews.

The average rate of interest paid on loans varies from 75 to 150 per cent.

Most of the Indian seamen live at Taltolah and Kidderpore. There are about 25 private moneylenders living at Kidderpore and Taltolah quarters who carry on moneylending business at an usurious rate of interest. From a rough calculation it appears that the total amount loaned out will amount to Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs.

Labour in jute-baling firms.—Labour imported from up-country are generally in debt to the contractor who imports them. These people generally have two homes to run at a time one at the labour centre and one in their native village. The money they earn is barely sufficient to keep their family at home and therefore they are always in debt. The rate of interest amongst these people also is between 37 per cent. to 150 per cent.

The local labourer is naturally better off inasmuch as he generally has some other source of income, however exiguous it may be.

Labour in the tea gardens.—In tea gardens it appears that the managers of the gardens advance money to the coolies free of interest for marriage, *sradh* and other expenses. The management only take into consideration the number of working members of the family when the advances are made.

Engineering firms in Howrah.—From enquiries it appears that not less than 90 per cent. of workmen is indebted at a usurious rate of interest. Most of the workmen live in rented houses in a very wretched condition. Most of the workmen are Bengali Hindus and Musalmans. Very few have got subsidiary income, and with the exception of a few, nobody owns any house or any land for cultivation. The average indebtedness is more than Rs. 150 and the rate of interest varies from 37½ to 300 per cent. The office durwan or similar person in the office meets urgent requirements for which 300 per cent. is charged but the most usual rate appears to be 75 per cent. Handnotes are executed generally though cases of pledging silver ornaments are noticed. A labourer's income varies from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 a month. A labourer is required, generally, to maintain from 5 to 7 persons. Loans are incurred for various purposes such as illness and ceremonial occasions, e.g., marriage, sradh, etc. Indebtedness does not appear to be due to immoral habits and most of the labourers maintain their own relations and friends when in helpless condition.

Railway coolies.—Enquiries are made at Santahar a most important railway centre in Northern Bengal. The labourers are employed by the contractor, who employs sardars for the purpose of recruitment, and for supervision of work. The contractor advances money to the sardars, and all labourers get their payments through sardars. The sardar advances freely to the labourers, and on an average each man owes from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30. The labourers all take loans from Kabulis at a high rate of interest. After payment of their dues there is hardly any balance left for them to maintain themselves in comfort. They are very suspicious about outside people and the enquiring officer reports that whenever they are asked anything they say they know nothing and everything is done by the sardars for them.

Railway workshops at Dacca and Kancharapara.—In Dacca railway workshop there are about 500 employees, and most of them are local Bengali Muhammadans. Their average debt amounts to Rs. 100 per head. The rate of interest varies from 6¼ per cent. to 12½ per cent. per month.

In Kancharapara workshop the indebtedness is not very high. About 60 per cent. of the labourers are members of the co-operative society. Still some of the members have to borrow from outside. It is reported that owing to the joint family system they are unable to meet their expenses from their income.

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K.

REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN OF LABOURING CLASSES IN BENGAL.

What the preliminary report said.—In my preliminary report, after quoting census figures for the number of operatives in the various forms of industries, I gave a short history of the past efforts in the matter of provision for educational facilities for the children of labouring classes, mainly employed in the jute and cotton mills around Calcutta. We saw how the enactment of factory legislation as a result of the recommendations of the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908 was followed by an enquiry made by Mr. Maclear, Inspector of European Schools. The direct result of this enquiry was the establishment of a single school at Tittagarh for the children of labourers at the two jute mills in the place.

The preliminary report next dealt with the present position as obtained chiefly in the industrial centres round Calcutta. We saw there that though facilities for the education of mill-hand children were not as abundant as one would like to see, there were indications of a genuine attempt being made in many quarters to make the life of the would-be workers in mills a little better than before, by giving them some elementary education.

The scope of the present report.—Since I submitted my preliminary report in July, 1929, I have had occasion to see many of the schools attended by mill-hand children in the industrial area round Calcutta and managed—(1) by municipalities as free primary schools under the Biss scheme; (2) by mill authorities; (3) by private individuals or agencies.

I also saw from Asansol some schools meant for colliers' children in the Raniganj coalfields. I next went to typical tea garden schools in the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts and to the railway school at Pahartali, Chittagong. As the trading centres at Chandpur and Narayanganj were reported to have no school primarily meant for the children of labouring classes, I did not visit them. When visiting schools I availed myself of the opportunity of discussing the question with the gentlemen whose names appear in Appendix B.* In the present report I shall try to give a faithful picture of what I saw at different centres and to formulate the ideas which I gathered from my conversations with the various gentlemen whom I met in the course of my tours of inspection.

Division of labour centres.—The various labour centres in Bengal may conveniently be divided into four well-defined groups :—

(1) *Industrial areas* round Calcutta—what is called the Industrial or Metropolitan belt comprising the districts of Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly and including the mills and engineering works on both sides of the river Hooghly.

(2) *Collieries* in what is known as the Raniganj coalfields in the Asansol subdivision of Burdwan district.

(3) *Tea plantations* in the hilly and *Terai* (plains) portion of Darjeeling, and in the Dooars of Jalpaiguri.

(4) *Railway centres* at Kanchrapara (E. B. R.), Lillooah, Howrah (E. I. R.), Kharagpur (B. N. R.) and Pahartali, Chittagong (A. B. R.). There are other minor railway centres at Asansol and Ondal (E. I. R.), Saidpur (E. B. R.) and Bhairab (A. B. R.) but the labour force employed there is not very large.

Problem of each centre separate.—On account of different reasons the problem of all the centres is not always the same—for instance, the tea industry is primarily an agricultural pursuit and the labourer is more or less attached to the soil, living with his wife and children and cultivating in his spare time the plot of land given to him by his employer for raising his rice or maize crop. He is thus in a majority of cases a permanent dweller on the estate, whereas the worker in a jute mill lives at best in a rented tenement along with many others of his type, without the amenities of a home life, for a few months of the year only, and leaving his work for home, up in Bihar or the United Provinces, after having saved some money towards this holiday. Again, the miner in the coalfields is in most cases an unskilled labourer, whereas the workers in the various railway workshops are mostly skilled men doing work which requires quite a fair amount of expert knowledge and intelligence. Further, labour in tea gardens consists more of women than men, while it is contrariwise in the case of jute mill areas. Thus, when dealing with the question of education of the children of labourers the different centres will require different treatment.

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* Not printed.

Some important points to be kept in view.—Before, however, we proceed to deal with the question of education in each centre, we have to keep in view a few important factors. They are as follows :—

(1) In order to make better provision for primary education there is just now a Bill before the Provincial Legislative Council called the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Bill, 1929, which contemplates the ultimate introduction of free and compulsory primary education in the Province.

(2) Labour employed in industrial centres is (i) skilled and (ii) unskilled. According to the census of 1921, of the skilled labourers only one-fourth were born in Bengal while of the unskilled labourers only 2/11 are Bengalis. The rest of the labour force, both skilled and unskilled, are immigrants from outside Bengal.

(3) Among immigrants to industrial centres there is always a large excess of males over females. In fact the female population is seldom more than 50 per cent. of the male labouring population. In other words, quite a large proportion of the male labourers live without wife and children. This is not the case, at least to such a marked degree, in tea plantations and railway centres where the male labourers have mostly their wives and children with them, and thus have some sort of a home life.

(4) There is a marked change in the attitude of the employers of labour towards their employees getting elementary education. From an attitude of actual hostility to the introduction of compulsory primary education among labourers in the days of the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908, there has been a salutary change to one of sympathy and co-operation. There is a considerable amount of feeling among the employers that perhaps elementary education may keep the labourers away from the influence of the professional agitator, as ignorance and illiteracy often lead to wild rumours and bazaar gossip gaining incredible currency, within a very short time, in places where large numbers of labourers are congregated. There is also the feeling that no welfare work among operatives is possible until they have been able to neutralise their native superstition by some amount of enlightenment following a knowledge of the three R's.

(5) Unlike England and other European countries where the father is, in the majority of cases, the only breadwinner in the family—the wife and children being dependents on his earnings, out here in India, the father, the mother and also the child are winners of the bread by the sweat of their brow. Thus in the tea industry, nine-tenths of which is agricultural and thus not within the purview of the Factory Act, children's labour is very largely requisitioned among the tea bushes and those who should have been at school are required to bring money to the common till by working on the garden.

(6) An unlimited supply of good teachers is always a problem for every stage and department of education. It is specially so in the case of schools for workers and their children. If broad-minded sympathy, a wide outlook and a fair amount of general knowledge be the *sine qua non* of a good teacher in a school attended by children of the *bhadralok* class, how much more so are they needed for one dealing with the children of such primitive people as the *Oraons, Mundas and Santals.* There is actually a great dearth of teachers for tea garden schools and no improvement is possible unless that question is satisfactorily tackled.

(7) There is very little of effective supervision of the schools in labour centres. In most cases the schools, particularly those imparting a rudimentary knowledge of three R's, languish for want of proper guidance and sympathetic encouragement. An Inspector with imagination and a zeal for his work can possibly make education more popular with these unsophisticated people than anybody else. In order to be able to do his work efficiently he must be tactful, smart, young and intelligent enough to impress the employers.

Two types of schools in labour centres.—Schools in labour centres naturally divide themselves into two types, namely (1) those for the children of skilled labourers, e.g., machinemen, carpenters, weavers, turners, vicemen, etc., and (ii) those for the children of unskilled labourers.

It has been found that *sirdars* (overseers) in mills and tea gardens, and other skilled labourers, besides being financially better off than those who are unskilled, are of a more ambitious character and solicitous of bringing up their children in their own line and if possible, better equipped for life than themselves.

Syllabus of studies, technical or non-technical.—Following the above differentiation, there is a difference in the syllabus of studies followed in the two types of schools, those for the children of skilled labourers following in many instances a syllabus more or less of a technical character, e.g., those at the Ichhapur Rifle Factory, Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory, Ludlow Jute Mill,, Kanchrapara Technical School, Kharagpur Technical School and Pahartali Apprentice School.

The others are of a non-technical character giving only a rudimentary knowledge of the three R's, e.g., those at the Bally, Tittagarh and other mills, the free primary schools under Mr. Biss' scheme in Municipal areas, and the tea garden and colliery schools.

We now come to a treatment of the question of education in the different centres mentioned in the earlier part of this report.

Education in the Industrial Belt.—As has been previously noted, a very large proportion of the labour force in the industrial belt is immigrant. The greatest numbers come from Patna, Gaya, Arrah, Monghyr, and Shahabad in Bihar and from the adjoining districts of Ballia, Ghazipur, Benares, Azamgarh and Jaunpur in the United Provinces, Cuttack and Balasore also send a large contingent. Of late years people of the depressed classes from the Telegu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency and from Bilaspore and neighbouring places in the Central Provinces have also come in appreciable numbers to the jute mills on the banks of the Hooghly. The jute mills are the largest employers of labour. Of the other industrial concerns employing imported or local labour, cotton mills, jute presses, iron foundries, engineering works, brick-fields, oil and flour mills are the most important.

The peculiar characteristic of this large labour force is that the majority of them come to stay in the mills for comparatively short periods of time and have, therefore, little or no stake to lose in case of a conflict between capital and labour.

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Again, apart from the broader question of education being found necessary to create a feeling of mutual understanding between labour and capital, it has been the experience of many who had to deal with the coolies that no kind of work conducive to the welfare and uplift of the masses is possible unless there be some education in them. For instance, I was told at the Bansberia Jute Mill that the workers would not much appreciate any health, hygiene or educational films in the cinema shows, often exhibited at the mill, for the benefit of the workers, simply because they could not follow the printed texts on the screen, giving the purport of the films. Thus the only things that could amuse and exhilarate them were pantomine and comic sketches shown on the screen. The Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal and Assam, than whom there is no greater authority to speak on the subject, says in his report for the year 1928, "The development of welfare work must necessarily be slow, primarily on account of the illiteracy which prevails among factory labour as a class. Want of education prevents them from taking advantage of activities started for their benefit, and besides, there are age-long jobberies and corrupt practices which place insuperable difficulties in the way of many much-needed reforms. The first step, therefore, towards real progress must necessarily be the introduction of a free and compulsary education." This is a direct challenge to the policy enunciated by the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908, and if after the lapse of about a quarter of a century there is a call for a change of policy, it is necessary that the call should be responded to with alacrity.

In my preliminary report I have given an account of the different authorities which manage schools in industrial areas. So far as the employers are concerned, though the management and maintenance of schools has been undertaken by a very limited few, still there is a decided inclination towards making provision for educational facilities for the workmen and their children. The fact is, in almost every case, it is a question of personality. Wherever the manager of a mill or some other officer connected with the mill, takes a lively interest in educating the workmen and their children, there is a thriving school. For instance, in the Ludlow Jute Mill a scheme of education ending in the training of qualified young adults as apprentices, has been drawn up at the personal intervention of the Manager, Mr. F. T. Washington. Again, at the Angus Mill, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. J. H. B. Norrie, Ch. M., F.R.C.S., who is the guiding spirit of everything beneficent for the workers and their children—fully equipped and quite up-to-date hospitals and operation theatres, well-furnished and well-staffed schools (for boys and girls), gymnasium, including outfit for boxing, etc., equipment for boy scouts and girl guides, lending libraries, cinema shows, good roads, pure drinking water, anti-malarial works, etc., has not only taught the labourers to live a decidedly better life than before, but has actually transformed the whole place into an ideal station. Such a humanising influence cannot but have an effect for the better on the labour force. Similarly, the two schools at Ichhapur Rifle Factory and at Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory are doing excellent work in the matter of preparing their boys for the sort of work that they will be called upon to do in the factories later on. On the other hand, there are the mill schools at Bauria (Fort Gloster) and Bally where the responsibility of the management ended with the provision of a brick-built house, in each case, and a certain number of teachers, more or less qualified for their work. That there was practically no effective supervision of the Manager, in each case, was quite apparent even from a casual glance at the schools. It thus depends so much on the personal interest of the manager to make a school successful or otherwise.

In the matter of spreading education among the workers' children, the Howrah Municipality has been doing some substantial work under the Biss Scheme. Some of the schools started under this scheme have been placed in close proximity to mills and engineering works and I have seen some marked result of the civilizing influence of education. I do not speak of the schools attended chiefly by children of machine-men, carpenters, vice-men, etc. These would have gone on to ordinary schools had there been no Free Primary School in the locality, but I speak specially of those schools which are attended by children coming from the lowest rung of the social ladder, e.g., *Chamars, Doms, Lallegis, Kahars, Pasis, Mehtars, Gonds,* etc., all depressed classes. I was struck by the amount of neatness and general culture exhibited by these boys, most of whom had not been under tuition for more than three years. If this is possible with the help of good teachers, the social worker need not despair of reclaiming these dregs of human society.

The Champdany and Bhadreswar Municipalities in the Hooghly district have also begun to start these Free Primary Schools and their work also is proving beneficial to the mill-hand children.

In the Howrah Municipality there are two night Muktabs (Muslim primary school) managed by a private agency, the Muhammadan Educational Board, consisting of some energetic young men who work in mercantile firms in the daytime and look after these schools in the evening. I inspected one of these night Muktabs and I was very favourably impressed by the good work that was being done to give some elementary education to the large number of Muslim boys and young men who were otherwise engaged during the daytime. They were divided into :—(1) Those who work in mills as wage earners ; (2) Those who work as apprentices in engineering and other works ; (3) Others.

Their age varied between 8 and 35 and the average income of their parents was about Rs. 20 per month. The departmental curriculum for primary schools on an Urdu basis *plus* a rudimentary knowledge of English was being taught to the boys. Here is an example of social service which many others may with great advantage to the country and the industries follow.

In my rounds through the industrial towns I went over some of the coolie lines built by the employers of labour and some by private persons. Though there is an insufficiency of light and air in both types of houses, the latter are far worse than the former and it was often a marvel to me how the men (in some cases with wife and children) could manage to live in such surroundings. I daresay these surroundings were much inferior to what the labourers had in their native homes. It is no wonder that the squalor and filth prevailing in such surroundings bring in their wake, drink, disease and sometimes, death. To my mind the only remedy to all these ills is a wide extension of compulsory education among the mill-hands.

Education in Collieries.—The coal-mines are situated almost exclusively in the Asansol subdivision of the Burdwan district. The mines are worked by immigrants from Chota Nagpur and Santal-Parganas and to some extent by a local depressed class called the Bauris. The immigrant coolies live in coolie lines built near the mines, but the Bauris generally come from their homes in neighbouring villages. Of the colliery schools mentioned in my preliminary report, the one at Damodarpur was found to be abolished. Of the others some are located in villages and some near the mines. I went over the coalfields with Mr. J. A. Beale, sub-divisional officer, Asansol, and saw some of the schools. The one at Sanctoria has a fine three-roomed brick house, recently built by Rai Sahib Upendra Nath Mandal, himself a colliery manager in the service of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. The school has a roll strength of 56 pupils, 50 per cent. of whom are in one way or other connected with the collieries, The Ghusick Colliery Upper Primary School near Kalipahari Railway station is on the estate of Messrs. Martin & Co., and has 50 pupils on the rolls. Of these 21 are actually miners' sons. The others are also in some way connected with the collieries. My impression of the coalfields was that there had never been any organized attempt to bring the miners' children to school, either by employers or any other agency. The chief inspector of mines in his Annual Report of 1927 also complains that " generally speaking facilities for education are poor in the vicinity of mines."

Education in Tea Plantations.—In Bengal the tea plantations are divided into three groups—those in the hills of the Darjeeling district, those in the Terai or plains portion of the same district and those in the Dooars of the Jalpaiguri district. There are some stray gardens in Chittagong, but they do not count much. The tea garden schools in the hill portion of the Darjeeling district are mostly managed by the Church of Scotland Mission, Darjeeling, of which Reverend H. C. Duncan is the superintendent. The schools get a Government grant of Rs. 12 and from the gardens Rs. 8 per mensem. The managers of the tea gardens are absolved of all responsibility after the school house is provided and the monthly contribution is paid. The language taught is Nepali and the teachers are supplied, in most cases, by the Mission.

The arrangement is incapable of future expansion as the Mission is unwilling to be burdened with the management of any more schools. If, therefore, an expansion of the scheme is desired the management will have to be shifted on to the garden managers. In the Terai portion the schools are managed by the garden authorities as a general rule. Similar is the case with the Dooars schools. It may be noted here that the scheme of education for the garden coolies formulated by Captain Kennedy and adumbrated in my preliminary report, has been in force in the Jalpaiguri Dooars only, there being no such scheme for Darjeeling.

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It is felt by almost all the managers of tea gardens whom I have met that an elementary education would help to wean these primitive people from their superstitious and improvident habits and make them still better labourers. But they would deprecate the idea of immediately making primary education compulsory in tea-gardens and suggest that for the present if every garden be made to run a primary school for the education of its labourers and their children the problem would be largely solved.

It is argued that tea being largely an agricultural pursuit there is no bar to the children being employed in the gardens. Their labour is necessarily cheaper than that of the men or women, but if they have to be compulsorily detained at school, their place will have to be filled by adults who must be paid much more than the children would earn. Thus the cost of production would mount up, causing a further loss in the already depressed tea industry. It is difficult to ascertain how far this view is tenable but at any rate, the demand for compulsory primary education in tea gardons will require another decade to gain in strength and insistence. Tea plantations cannot, perhaps, come advantageously within the purview of the approaching legislation for another decade or so. The same cannot, however, be said about collieries where the areas are not marked well enough to exclude those not connected with collieries and consequently it may not be necessary to exclude areas of collieries from the operation of any future compulsory Primary Education Act.

Education in Railway Centres.—In railway centres the very nature of work presumes a certain amount of skill and expert knowledge to deal with machines, etc. There is thus congregated a generally better class of men in railway centres than is found in mills and tea-gardens. The demand for education, therefore, is decidedly greater here and consequently we find not only large primary schools at such centres but also schools of a higher status. On the top of this higher class of schools or, at least, parallel to them are technical schools of a more or less specialized type to train up mechanics, fitters, turners, carpenters, electricians, etc., for their ultimate absorption in the different railways. The problem in railway centres is not so much to bring pupils to schools as to cope with the daily growing demand for larger educational facilities. Thus at Kharagpur there is not only a big high school with a population of 770 boys but also a primary school of 181 boys. A scheme is under discussion for a second large primary school at this centre and there is also a technical school here. At Pahartali the railway high school (roll—330) was till lately a middle English school and the pressure on accommodation in the building is already too great to permit of efficient teaching. The apprenticeship training classes at this centre take in not more than 40 apprentices, who are put through a course of training extending over four to five years. Boys between the ages of 16 and 18, who pass a qualifying admission test, are taken in and paid the following wages for each working day :—

	Rs.	a.	p.	
1st year	0	8	0	per day.
2nd ,, ...	0	9	4	,,
3rd ,, ...	0	12	0	,,
4th ,, ...	1	0	0	,,
5th ,, ...	1	4	0	,,

Workshop attendance is from 8.40 to 11.30 in the morning and 12.30 to 4 in the afternoon. Evening classes are held for taking the boys through a course of mensuration, arithmetic, geometrical and machine drawing, estimating, free-hand sketching and applied mechanics.

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At present there are 38 apprentices on the rolls of whom 25 are sons and wards of railway employees.

These training classes represent more or less the technical schools at other centres. Kanchrapara has a high school (roll—327) and also a technical school, besides primary schools for both railway employees' sons and outsiders. Lillooah is midway

between Howrah and Bally and has no educational institutions for Indians. The numerous schools at Howrah and Bally cater for the sons of railway employees working at Lillooah.

There are schools at the minor railway centres at Asansol and Ondal, Bhairab and Saidpur.

40.† *Facilities for General Education in Industrial Areas.*—(i) *For children not in employment* such facilities are abundant at every centre. The information is given in a tabular form below :—

District.	School.		
	High.	Middle.	Primary.
24-Parganas	8	4	33
Howrah	15	7	49
Hooghly	5	3	24

So far as educational facilities for the general public are concerned, there has never been a want, as the supply always keeps pace with the demand. Private enterprise in the matter of providing educational facilities has always been commendable in Bengal.

(ii) *For children employed in factories* the following institutions exist in the different industrial areas :—

District.	Middle.	Primary.
24-Parganas	1	21
Howrah	4	17
Hooghly	—	24

(iii) *For adult workers* three primary schools have been returned from 24-Parganas and five from Hooghly. The schools for adult workers are generally held at night to suit their convenience. Some of them also attend boys' primary schools held at night. For instance, in the night Muktab I visited in Howrah Municipality, I found quite a number of grown-up young men reading with the boys. As a rule, however, there is great apathy in the adult workers for any kind of instruction.

41. *Facilities for Industrial and Vocational Training.*—Except for the facilities for technical training that are provided at the Ichhapur Rifle Factory, and the Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory, and the Government Weaving School at Serampore, there is little or no organized provision for industrial and vocational training in the industrial centres. The Calcutta Technical School aims at "imparting theoretical training with laboratory practices in technical subjects to those actually employed in trades and industries in Calcutta and neighbourhood," but for new candidates for an industrial or vocational career the only course open is to get themselves apprenticed to some engineering or other industrial concern, often after paying heavy premiums. This course is also possible for those only who have some relatives or supporters already in the employment of such concerns.

42. *Effect of Education on Standard of Living and Industrial Efficiency of Workers.*—As I have already noted in the earlier part of my report, I was agreeably surprised to see the effect of education on the children of certain municipal free primary schools in Howrah. That this could not be said of all schools visited by me was due to the absence of enthusiasm and imagination in the teachers entrusted with the work of educating the boys. I am more than ever convinced that the formation of habits can very largely be influenced by the personality of the teacher. But the improvement noticeable in the children of some schools could not possibly be expected to create much impression on their parents immediately, and we can only hope for a better state of things when these children will be fathers of families. It will really take years to bring home to the average worker the benefits of a clean, healthy and sober life.

With regard to industrial efficiency it only stands to reason that education would improve it. In fact, Mr. Washington, of the Ludlow Jute Mill, as well as Dr. Norrie, of the Angus Mill, emphatically endorsed the view that the educated worker was more efficient than the illiterate. Amongst skilled workers there is a strong desire to see their children sufficiently educated to take their place when they retire. With the ambitions amongst the unskilled the desire is to make a better provision for their children in life than they could do for themselves. Thus the level of industrial efficiency rises in proportion to the spread of education.

†This figure and those in the subsequent headings refer to the final list of subjects.

With the tea garden, coolies' children, however (especially in the Darjeeling hills), the effect of education has been to make them look down upon the work of their parents. After a year or two at school they will be anything other than a tea garden coolie—a *chokra* in a hotel, a motor-driver, a shopkeeper, a hawker, or simply a loafer. Many a garden manager complained to me about this, but they think that when education becomes universal or more general than at present, this phase will disappear.

Conclusion.—From what I have seen of the schools and their pupils, and from my discussions with the various gentlemen whom I have met, I am inclined to think that there should be :—

(1) A definite policy behind a progressive and well-thought-out scheme for extending primary education among the labouring classes and their children by means of—(*a*) Free night schools for adults ; (*b*) free day schools for children. Attendance should be made compulsory for those in industrial areas.

(2) A separate inspecting agency, composed of young, energetic and resourceful officers who could make a favourable impression on employers and could get things done by them.

If, however, the attendance at night schools for ordinary instruction of workers in jute and other mills be found irksome and distasteful after a hard day's work (and it is very likely that this will be the case), I should suggest that steps be taken at every important mill, or group of mills, for the provision of ocular education by means of organized cinema shows and magic lantern demonstrations. This is bound to be popular with the adults and may help in keeping them away from the grog-shop. For adult workers in tea gardens, where labour is more or less of a leisurely type, the ordinary night schools may perhaps do with occasional shows of cinema films and magic lantern slides.

With regard to day schools for boys, I should also suggest that as a connecting link to them, each mill should be made to have a *creche* for babies and young children, where, besides being properly looked after by nurses and attendants they may be instructed according to kindergarten methods. This preparatory training will easily induce them to come to schools when they reach the proper age.

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VII.—Safety. VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

Extract from a letter from the Government of Bengal, dated 3rd December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of the papers noted as follows :—(1) Memorandum on " Safety " (43) to (50) ; (2) memorandum on " Desirability of Legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880 " (54) ; (3) letter No. 3954 Com., dated the 2nd August, 1929, on Workmen's Compensation except (54) ; being the memoranda of this Government on VII—Safety, and VIII—Workmen's Compensation, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Commission.

2. The opinion of the Government of Bengal on all the items under " Workmen's Compensation," except No. (54), was forwarded to the Government of India in letter No. 3954 Com., dated the 2nd August, 1929, and that Government was requested in paragraph 2 to communicate copies to the Commission.

VII.—Safety.

A.—*Factories.*

43. *Existing Regulations in Factories, Mines, Railways and Docks.*—All establishments registered as factories under Sub-section 2 (3) (*a*) and (*b*) of the Factories Act are regulated, as regards safety, by the provisions of Chapter III of the Act, and Part IV of the Bengal Factories Rules.

All sections of Chapter III of the Act receive the proper measure of attention from the Factory Inspection Department, but the principal means of enforcing safety measures are those provided in Sections 18 and 18A of the Act. Where industries are well established and types of machinery standard, fencing and safety devices are standardized in a Departmental Order Book of the Factories Office, and inspectors are responsible for the enforcement of the orders. The principal industries dealt with in this manner are jute mills, tea gardens, cotton mills, oil mills and match factories.

Other authorities operating within factories for the purpose of ensuring the safety of workers are electric inspectors for accidents arising out of the generation and transmission of electricity, fire brigade inspectors who function under the provisions

of the Licensed Warehouse and Fire Brigade Act of 1893, and boiler inspectors. The existing safety provisions of the Factories Act are considered adequate. No difficulty has been encountered by the Factory Inspection Department in their enforcement, and the powers they confer for securing safety are ample.

B.—*Docks.*

Apart from the Board of Trade regulations applicable to sea-going vessels, the only regulations at present in force for the protection of dock workers against accidents are those of the Calcutta Port Commissioners. The Government of Bengal quite recently had under consideration the question of the protection of workers employed in loading and unloading goods and coaling ships at docks, wharves, etc., and their views were communicated to the Government of India in their letter No. 445 Mne., dated the 24th January, 1929, the pertinent paragraphs of which are reproduced below :—

" On the general question of the desirability of protecting workers engaged in loading or unloading ships, the Local Government have already expressed their views in their letter No. 969 T. Mne., dated the 17th October, 1928, which contained their views on the questionnaire issued by the International Labour Office, which was forwarded with the Government of India, Department of Commerce's letter No. 319 S (27), dated the 1st September, 1928. From the letter referred to above, it will be seen that the Government of Bengal are prepared to support legislation for the protection against accident of such workers. The only regulations at present in force in the Port of Calcutta are those which accompany the enclosed reply of the chairman of the Calcutta Port Commissioners. The local government agree with the Calcutta Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the present position, under which regulations are issued under an Act of the local legislature, is unsatisfactory, and that regulations should be framed on an all-India basis.

With regard to the form such legislation should take, I am to say that the local government support the British precedent, whereby regulations for the safety of dock workers are framed under the Factory and Workshop Acts. Both the Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce are opposed to this on grounds which are not made clear in their letters. The local government do not consider that the Indian Ports Act is a suitable place for the inclusion of such regulations, nor do they think that the passing of a special Act enabling the port authorities to frame regulations for the protection of dock workers is necessary. Amendment of the Ports Act, or the passing of special legislation, would require the creation of new departments to enforce the regulations, whereas each local government has already a suitable inspecting agency for such work in their factory departments. These departments are conversant with safety work in factories and mines, and safety work in docks, wharves and quays does not differ from that in factories ; indeed, especially in Bengal, where a large number of factories are situated on waterways, the Factory Inspection Department has already to undertake many duties which would devolve upon it under docks regulations. The creation of a new department or new departments to enforce docks regulations would thus be entirely unnecessary ; they would also in all probability be much less efficient than the existing factory departments, the officers of which are already safety experts."

The local government are of the opinion that the legislation should apply to all classes of dock workers whether employed on board ship or on shore. Workers in dock workshops are, of course, subject to the safety provisions of the Factories Act, and those employed in the generation and transmission of electricity come under the provisions of the Electricity Act. It is reported that in the case of dock labourers, not under statutory regulations at present, the dock authorities constantly impress on serangs and others in charge of labour that all necessary safety precautions should be taken. Departmental inquiries are held in all serious cases of accidents, and, as a result, the supervising staff are impressed with the necessity of taking proper precautions against accidents.

44. *Incidence of Accidents in Factories, Mines, Railways and Docks* (*Note.*— No figures are available for accidents in docks).—In all factories covered by the Factories Act, managers are compelled to submit returns of accidents in a prescribed form, according to rule 62 of the Bengal Factories Rules. The particulars in this form ensure full information, with a view to the classification of accidents as " fatal," " serious," or " minor " on an " absence-from-employment " basis.*

The more severe type of accidents occur in districts in which the more important industries are established. This indicates not so much the greater hazards in those industries, such as jute and engineering, but the greater precision with which the law is observed in respect of the reporting of accidents as the result of better management

* For statistics of accidents in Bengal *vide* page 332.

and control. The increase in the total number of accidents year after year is an index of the increased efficiency of the department, not only in securing the registration of new and long established factories, but also in enforcing the safety provisions of the Act, for, although the total number of accidents has increased, the number of severe accidents has diminished.

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46. *Accident prevention (including "Safety First" propaganda).*—The chief influences in the prevention of accidents are :—(*a*) the powers of inspectors under the Factories Act to compel managers to erect fencing and to take precautions against accidents ; (*b*) the voluntary interest of managers in safety measures and safety precautions ; and (*c*) the interest of insurance companies, as the result of the operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Measures under (*a*) form the principal routine work of inspectors of factories. Orders issued under the safety provisions of the Act and Rules, and the prosecutions which follow from disregard of them, are the most positive and effective influences in the prevention of accidents in Bengal. In several of the larger jute mills and engineering concerns, especially railway workshops, a considerable amount of "safety first" work is carried out voluntarily by managers or welfare committees.

As an item in the departmental work of the factories office, no "Safety First" propaganda has yet been inaugurated. Railway workshops have devised posters of their own, directing the attention of employees to dangers arising from certain circumstances, but the factories department doubt whether these measures have any real merit in preventing accidents. The experience of the department is that notices, verbal orders, and warnings of that nature are always ineffective, because of the prevailing illiteracy of the workers. The one effective method of securing safety is the enforcement of safety devices under the Act. The utility of "Safety First" propaganda, however, is not discounted, but it is likely to be much more effective when the workers as a class become literate and more amenable to factory discipline. A certain fatalistic outlook on the part of the workers is also said to be a barrier to "Safety First" propaganda as undertaken in the West.

47. *Accidents in non-regulated Establishments.*—No definite information is available regarding accidents in non-regulated establishments, because apart from fatal accidents, the managers of such establishments are under no compulsion to report to any authority.

On the average, about half a dozen accident reports per annum are sent in to the factories department in connection with serious and fatal accidents to workers in such establishments. These reports are generally sent in by the police as the result of arrangements made between the chief inspector of factories and the police authorities many years ago. All accidents thus reported are investigated by an inspector, who recommends measures to the police or to the district magistrate in order to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. If the inspector considers that there has been negligence on the part of the manager or other persons, he lends his experience and opinion as an expert, if necessary, for prosecution under the Indian Penal Code. From the number of accidents so reported it seems clear that the majority are not brought to notice, especially as it is known that many of the smaller establishments from financial or other reasons do not provide proper safety devices. This suggests an extension of the Act under sub-section 2 (3) (*b*), a subject which has been dealt with elsewhere, but in many small concerns drastic application of the safety provisions of the Act would lead to serious financial complications. The Government of Bengal do not regard this as a reason for not extending either the Factories or the Workmen's Compensation Act. The chief difficulty in Bengal is the extension of the factories department to cope with small establishments. In the immediate future, probably, some sort of half-way control may have to be adopted, whereby regulations may be framed for the purpose of gradually applying the Act to various classes of smaller factories, with a view to securing the installation, in the first place, of proper safety devices. There are however, other classes of employment which call for some sort of control, e.g., dock workers, which have been dealt with above, and, persons engaged on the construction of buildings and bridges. The Government of Bengal have already expressed their opinion that dock workers should be protected by means of regulations framed on the British model. Similar regulations should be framed for bridges and buildings and for other classes of workers, who are sufficiently organized to be brought within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The principles hitherto observed in the application of the Workmen's Compensation Act have been organization and hazard, and if, as the Government of Bengal have separately reported, these two principles should be widely extended in the case of the Workmen's Compensation Act, it seems logically to follow that they should also be extended in the case of the safety provisions of the Factories Act.

48. *First-aid and Medical Relief.*—There is no provision in the Factories Act, equivalent to the British provision, that managers of factories should provide and maintain first-aid apparatus of any description. In practice, however, the larger

industrial concerns in this Presidency, as well as plantations and mines, provide medical facilities which can be quickly utilized by workers in the case of accidents. Smaller factories and factories established in congested areas, such as Calcutta, rely largely on local hospitals and dispensaries, to the funds of which, in some cases, they subscribe. In many cases, however, workers are reluctant to avail themselves of medical attention provided in hospitals and, it is reported that in the case of large factories they are inclined to stop attending the dispensaries before they are cured and to seek advice from unqualified persons in the local bazaars, often with serious consequences.

In the case of dock workers, special arrangements exist both in Calcutta and Chittagong. In Calcutta, first-aid appliances are kept in all the vessels at Taktaghat, in the Dock Master's Office, and in the workshops, and further treatment is available at the dock dispensary or the nearest hospital. Two hospitals, viz., the Mayo Hospital in the north and the Sambhunath Pandit Hospital in the south, receive subscriptions from the Commissioners. In Chittagong, first-aid materials are kept on dredgers and in the workshops and stores. No special first-aid staff is employed.

The subject of medical facilities in general is discussed elsewhere.

49. *Stringency of Inspection and enforcement of Regulations.*—(i) *In industry generally*—The following figures, to which reference is also made elsewhere, show the steady progress of inspection arrangements and the results during the past six years:—

Year.	Chief Inspector.	Inspectors.	Assistant Inspectors.	Number of registered factories in Bengal and Assam.	Number of employees in registered factories in Bengal and Assam.	Visits to registered factories by wholetime Inspectors.		Number of factories visited by Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners, etc.	Factories unvisited.		Prosecution cases.
						Bengal.	Assam.		Bengal.	Assam.	
1928	1	6	3	2,062	618,921	2,478	82	271	21	292	135
1927	1	6	3	1,984	608,453	2,969	90	309	160	267	120
1926	1	5	3	1,888	599,042	2,460	81	243	243	311	157
1925	1	5	2	1,810	600,039	1,632	76	248	297	318	187
1924	1	5	1	1,685	592,574	1,162	47	188	315	536	28
1923	1	5	—	1,524	567,284	1,137	60	50	750 (Includes both Assam and Bengal).		16

The increase in the inspection staff in recent years, compared with the increased number of registered factories, is in itself sufficient evidence that the enforcement of the Act had been much more stringent in recent years. The provisions of all chapters, with the exception of those of Chapter IV (Employment), have, as regards enforcement, presented little difficulty to the Factories department. The Act may be said generally, to meet existing requirements in those directions. The only difficulties that have been encountered in respect of the Act have arisen from the hours of employment of workers, a subject which is dealt with separately.

(ii) *In seasonal industries.*—Seasonal industries in Bengal include rice mills, tea factories, and jute presses, and all of these have been given certain relief from certain sections of Chapter IV of the Act. Precision in the enforcement of these sections is, therefore, not of the same importance as it is in the case of the manufacturing industries concentrated in the metropolitan manufacturing area. With regard to such factories, the main concern of the factories department has been with the safety provisions, but, even in this case, a certain amount of latitude has had to be allowed on account both of the inaccessibility of many of the factories and the lack of skilled labour for carrying out fencing orders. The attitude of the department has also been to some extent determined by the capacity of such factories to bear the burden of rigorous enforcement, but, in general, inspection work in such factories in all its aspects has kept well abreast with developments and improvements in industries. Every care has been taken by the inspectors to encourage voluntary effort on the part of managers, and, wherever possible, premature demonstrations of force have been avoided.

The difficulties of inspection work in tea-garden factories are shown in the report of the chief inspector of factories for 1927.

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To overcome these difficulties, the Factories Department compiled a special pamphlet in which were explained the most important provisions of the Act which were applicable to different factories. Managers were given a clear indication of what was expected of them, and the opening of a branch office at Jalpaiguri has secured the requisite progress in the enforcement of the appropriate provisions of the Act in the tea industry. Similar results have been secured in other seasonal industries by inspectors touring from headquarters or from Barrackpore, although in the case of these industries no special instructions have been issued.

An important factor with regard to the rigour of enforcement of the Factories Act in industry generally is the adequacy of fines imposed for offences. This has been dealt with separately.

50. *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*—There are no statistics to enable a proper computation of the effect of these factors on safety. Intensive enquiry is necessary on the part of both the Factory Inspection Department and employers. The first step is the proper recording of accidents, and this is possible only in up-to-date and well organized establishments, and, in the first place, can be undertaken only on a sample basis by the Factories Department, working in voluntary co-operation with managers.

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VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The Government of Bengal agree with the following opinion of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, and consider that no legislation is necessary at present :—

54. *Desirability of legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act*, 1880.—I have less qualification to speak upon this subject, which is outside my special province. The reasons for the passing of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, are well known, and I need not dwell upon them. The effect of this statute is thus stated by A. L. Smith, J. " The workman when he sues his master under the provisions of the Act for any of the five matters designated in it, shall be in the position of one of the public suing, and shall not be in the position a servant theretofore was when he sued his master; in other words, that the master shall have all the defences he theretofore had against the public suing him, but shall not have the special defences he theretofore had when sued by his servant." It was subsequently decided that there was only one defence, that of common employment, of which the Act deprived him, and that to a limited extent.

The most usual of the defences which could be set up by an employer against a member of the public and therefore left to him by the Employers' Liability Act, are given by Ruegg. (Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation, 8th Edition, page 45).

(*a*) That the act of the servant causing the injury was committed wilfully, (*b*) that the servant when he occasioned the injury was not acting within the scope of his employment, (*c*) that the injury was avoidable, or not caused by negligence, (*d*) that the injured person was a trespasser or mere licensee, (*e*) that the injured person voluntarily took the risk of that which caused the injury. " *Volenti non fit injuria.*"

Since the passing of the Workmen's Compensation Act the value of the Employers' Liability Act is mainly in that it enables a workman to obtain a larger sum as damages if he can prove negligence, than he could obtain as compensation. With this object no doubt in view, two clauses on these lines were included in the original draft of the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. I propose to examine the reasons given for and against the inclusion of these clauses. In the " Notes on clauses " circulated with the Bill, it is stated that the majority of injuries probably arise from the act or default of a fellow employee. I very much doubt if this statement can be supported. From an examination of the reports of accidents received by the Chief Inspectors of Factories and Mines and enquiries made by them and from my own experience it would appear that on the contrary only a small proportion of accidents in India are due to this. The proposed sections were generally criticized as unnecessary, and the Joint Committee, in deciding to eliminate them, finally reported as follows :—" The majority of us are not satisfied that it is either necessary or wise to retain these provisions in the Bill. It has not been demonstrated to our satisfaction that the Courts in India will apply the judge-made doctrines of common employment and assumed risk. If these doctrines are accepted by the courts in India, legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880 (43 and 44 Vict., Cap. 42), will have to be considered. But in that event the defences of common employment and assumed risk, if they are regarded as inequitable, should be removed not merely for

the very limited classes of workmen to whom this Bill will apply, but for all workmen. On the whole, therefore, we are of opinion that it is wiser to restrict the scope of the present Bill to workmen's compensation and to avoid anticipating a difficulty which may not arise, and for which the Bill, as drafted, contained only a partial remedy."

In my opinion, the doctrines of common employment and assumed risk are inequitable, and the case for or against an enactment depriving an employer of these defences rests principally upon the answer to the question whether the Courts in India will apply them. The Deputy Legal Remembrancer informs me that he has only been able to find two reported cases on the point, both of the Allahabad High Court, in both of which the doctrine of common employment was applied. This seems to show that the courts will apply these doctrines but that the occasions on which they have been asked to do so are extraordinarily few. On the whole, it is doubtful whether there is any pressing need for legislation on the subject.

If it is considered necessary to legislate, I would make one or two recommendations.—(1) The proposed Act should not be in the vague form of the English Act the effect of which is to put the workman in the position of a member of the general public and to leave the courts to decide what that position is. The defences of which it is proposed to deprive the employer should be specifically and definitely stated, as was done in the draft clauses included in the Workmen's Compensation Bill. These clauses appear to be very suitable. Some commercial interests objected that the second which deprives the employers of the defence of "assumed risk" was unnecessary in consequence of recent decisions upon the common law, but even if that be the case it is a great gain to have the law set forth in definite and unmistakeable terms. If the position is left uncertain it will be a fruitful source of litigation and a great hardship to workmen. Litigation need not be greatly increased by the grant of a new statutory right, if the Act is well drafted, as was shown by the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act.

(2) Employers when consulted in 1922 pressed for a limit to be placed upon their liability as is done by the English Act. As, however, the only purpose of such legislation is now to supplement the Workmen's Compensation Act where the workmen can prove negligence, and to enable him to obtain a larger sum, it would be illogical to make the limit that in force in England, viz., three years' wages, which is less than the compensation payable under the Workmen's Compensation Act for permanent total disablement. If, however, the limit is to be higher, it is for consideration whether it should not be a sliding one having some relation to the extent of disablement. I doubt if there is any real case for a limit at all. The workman is only put into the position of a member of the public, upon whose right there is no limit. There was much misunderstanding of the scope of the English Act at first. It was regarded in some quarters as revolutionary, which of course was absurd, and the limit was probably introduced as a sop to employers. I can see no logical justification for it.

Extracts from a letter of the Government of Bengal to the Secretary, Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour.

No. 3954 Com., dated the 2*nd* August, 1929.

Proposed Amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.

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2. The scope and character of the amendments tentatively suggested by the Government of India, and the request contained in the last paragraph of their letter that any other amendments that may suggest themselves to the local Government or those consulted by them, should be forwarded with the local Government's reply, require, in effect, a review not only of the principles on which the original Act was framed, but also of its effects.

The Governor in Council has accordingly taken the opportunity of the Government of India's reference not only to reply to the specific issues on which he was asked to offer an opinion but also to review the working of the Act as a whole in the Presidency of Bengal. This letter may, therefore, be regarded as containing the official views of the Government of Bengal on the subject of workmen's compensation for presentation to the coming Royal Commission on Labour.

3. In reviewing the working of the Act during the five years of its currency, the Governor in Council would first remark that it has been an unqualified success. The principle of compensation for accidents was readily accepted by organized industry in this Presidency, a fact which suggests that the Government of India had correctly interpreted the prevailing opinion on the subject when they determined to introduce the measure. The success of the Act is due in the main, to the conservative principles on which it was framed, so far as the scope of its provisions and the scales of compensation are concerned, and to the procedure which was devised with a view to

minimizing litigation. When the original proposals of the Government of India were under discussion, doubts were expressed in several quarters as to whether, in the peculiar circumstances of Indian labour, legislation, which, in better industrially organized countries, had led to much troublesome litigation, could be applied in India with any success. These doubts have been effectively dispelled, for not only has the Act led to no major difficulties with respect to its scope, but the litigation arising from it has been trifling, both in volume and in character. The Act, indeed, so far as litigation is concerned, is perhaps the most successful in the whole range of workmen's compensation legislation, and, in the opinion of this Government the highest credit is due to its original framers for their foresight and sagacity. The ease with which industry has adapted itself to its new duties, and the smoothness with which the official agency of administration created by the Act has worked, are of inestimable value for the future, for, in a subject of this nature, the complications of which have made many employers in other lands so restive, the important stage is the initial one. The Governor in Council is happy to find that in India this stage has been successfully passed, and he trusts that the extension of the Act, which he recommends later in this letter, may be accompanied by the same harmony on the part of both employers and the administration.

4. The figures that have been forwarded annually to the Government of India in the Report of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation show how far the Act has been utilized in this Presidency. A summary of these figures, compiled from all the annual reports hitherto submitted, is appended to this letter, and from this it is clear that knowledge of the Act has spread very rapidly in the short period of its existence. Thus, one application for award of compensation under section 10 was filed in the six months during which the Act was in force in 1924, while the numbers in subsequent years have been: 1925, 26; 1926, 54; 1927, 111; 1928, 121. The total compensation deposited with the commissioner in 1924 was only Rs. 22,642–2 annas. In 1925 it was Rs. 1,05,714–13–9; in 1926, Rs. 1,28,566–1–7 in 1927, Rs. 1,55,340–13–7; and in 1928, Rs. 1,49,873–3–4. It appears clear, however, that knowledge of the Act has not yet spread to all the classes whom it was framed to benefit, and this is particularly obvious in the case of occupational disease. The first occupational disease, a case of lead-poisoning, was reported only in 1927. Three more cases were reported in 1928, and it is significant that all these cases were reported from the one concern, viz., the Bengal Government Press, which, perhaps, is one of the most finely-equipped in India. It is inconceivable that if four cases of lead-poisoning occurred in this press, similar cases should not have occurred in other presses in Bengal, many of which leave much to be desired so far as ventilation, safety and welfare generally are concerned.

5. The experience of the last five years indicates that the extent of the use of the Act depends on several inter-related factors. One is the class from which the workers are drawn; another is the degree to which workers are organized in trade unions; a third is the organization of industry, i.e., whether industry is concentrated or scattered, and a fourth is the extent to which employers voluntarily accepted liability in the early stages of the Act. Thus, in the Ranigunge coalfield, where a large number of the workers are aboriginals, the Act is even now not well known. The commissioner for workmen's compensation reports that the number of agreements presented for registration in the early stages of the Act, arising from accidents to workers in the Ranigunge field, did not approach the number of accidents in which liability was indisputable. Knowledge of the principles of the Act is now extending, partly, it is reported by the Calcutta Claims Bureau, owing to the influence of lawyers, who have been active in filing claims on behalf of clients. Thus, again, in concentrated industries, such as the jute industry, railway workshops, and stevedore labour, the Act has been fully utilized. In all these industries, also, liability was accepted at the very outset by the employers. In the jute industry, also, as in the case of lascars, trade unions have interested themselves in the Act, and have helped not only to secure its benefits for the members, but to spread knowledge of its principles.

6. Two other factors require mention with regard to the extent of the use of the Act. One is the interest which lawyers have shown in it. When the original proposals were under consideration in 1922–23 the opinion was freely voiced that a Workmen's Compensation Act would lead to the growth of a parasitic class of lawyers, who would devote themselves entirely to this type of work, and who would accordingly exert themselves not only to interest workers in their rights, but to initiate litigation. Experience has not borne out this expectation. Lawyers have not been active either in spreading knowledge of the Act or in encouraging litigation, although, as noted above, it has been reported that in the Ranigunge and Jheria coalfields, within the last two years, lawyers have helped in giving publicity to the Act by the filing of claims. The other factor may be termed "natural percolation". During the currency of the Act, hundreds of workmen have received compensation. Most of these, indeed, have at some time or other, appeared personally before the Commissioner, and in this manner not only have other workmen learnt their rights, but also

the method of securing them. It is anticipated that in due course natural percolation of knowledge of the Act will be more effective than any other factor. This, however, will take time. At the present stage, it may generally be said that workers in organized and concentrated industries do know all the circumstances of the Act, but that those employed in isolated areas or in industries, the units of which are small concerns, do not use the Act owing to ignorance. To ignorance, also, must be attributed very largely the fact that the occupational disease provisions of the Act have been so little used during the last five years.

7. A criterion of the efficacy of the Act would be a statistical comparison of the extent of claims actually made with possible claims. No such statistical comparison, however, is possible for the reason that, although it is in the interest of all employers who have insured their risk to see that all *bona fide* claims are paid, employers in a large number of small concerns, such as oil mills, rice mills, printing presses, and iron foundries, have not insured, and it is probable, as indicated above; that in these—particularly in the mofussil areas—workers either do not know their rights, or employers their duties, or that the full legal rights of workmen are compounded for small lump sums. Although no actual statistical comparison can be made, the Calcutta claims bureau has shown that, for insured industries, the percentage of cases in which compensation has been paid, as compared with the total number of possible claims, is steadily increasing, and that the percentage of cases filed as " no claim " is steadily decreasing.

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8. The Governor in Council has noted in the correspondence that has resulted from the reference of the Government of India that no voice has been raised against the existing Act as a whole. From this it is safe to infer that the burden of workmen's compensation has not borne heavily upon industry in this Presidency. The cost of the risks, whether insured or uninsured, has been insignificant, as compared with the total cost of production. No case has come to light in which a small concern has been financially handicapped by a large award of compensation. So far as insured employers are concerned, the premia have been based on past experience of risks. The Act has led to little or no increase of work to them, as they have been advised regarding the disposal of every claim by the insurance companies as organized in the Calcutta Claims Bureau.

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Uninsured employers have more responsibility under the Act with regard to both procedure and risk, and it is probable that, with increasing knowledge on the part of workmen of their rights under the Act, insurance will become much more general. One effect on industry which should be mentioned is that the safety rules in the larger factories have been more rigidly enforced. Steps have been taken to make it generally known among workmen that disobedience to rules, particularly those regarding the cleaning of machinery in motion, entails forfeiture of the right to compensation. How far this right should be forfeited on the plea of wilful disobedience to such rules is discussed later.

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10. Only one other subject has to be discussed in connection with this general review of the Act. This is the machinery of administration. Immediately after the Act was passed, the Government of Bengal decided to appoint a full-time Commissioner for workmen's compensation for the Presidency. They selected a judicial officer of the Indian Civil Service for the post, Mr. M. H. B. Lethbridge, and deputed him to study the subject in England prior to his joining the post. In the short interval between the Act coming into force and Mr. Lethbridge joining his post, from the 1st July to the 14th October, 1924, district judges in the chief industrial districts, the additional district judge of Howrah, and the chief judge of the Court of Small Causes of the town of Calcutta, were appointed commissioners. During this period, however, practically no case arose. Mr. Lethbridge has been in continuous charge of the office ever since, and the Government of Bengal have no hesitation in ascribing the smooth working of the Act to the system of appointing a full-time judicial officer as Commissioner; his work, they would also record with appreciation, has been facilitated by the ready co-operation of the Calcutta Claims Bureau in the disposal of all types of cases. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Calcutta Claims Bureau each has suggested an extension of the system adopted in Bengal in other provinces. The Governor in Council is not concerned with the organization in provinces other than his own, but he may be permitted to state that his experience of the Bengal system of administration entirely bears out the view expressed by these bodies.

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11. *The Scope of the Act.*—When the original proposals of the Government of India were under discussion, the Government of Bengal were in entire agreement with the view that the scope of the Act should be limited to those branches of industry which were both organized and hazardous. This limit, determined mainly by

administrative considerations, was regarded as a tentative one only, in view of the fact that the measure of 1923 was of an experimental character. The Government of Bengal have consistently been in favour of the widest possible application of the provisions of the Act. In theory, and this theory should be the ideal to which the Indian legislation should aim, every manual worker should be eligible for compensation for loss of earning power, and dependents for loss of the wage-earner by accident incurred in the course of employment. The Government of Bengal, therefore, think that every reasonable step should be taken as early as practicable to realize the ideal, and they are also of the opinion that, although the period over which the Act has operated is short, the experience of this Presidency, while abundantly justifying the prudence of the Government of India in the framing of the original measure, clearly points to the possibility of a very considerable extension of the classes of workmen to whom the Act applies. The fact that no major difficulty has been encountered in the administration of the Act in Bengal, and that its enforcement has neither borne heavily on industry nor created any disharmony therein indicate that expansion is both called for and possible. The principle of compensation for accidents to workmen has been definitely established in this country, and the very fact that it has been unanimously accepted as just encourages the Government of Bengal to believe that the Government of India would now be justified in extending the Act not only to every organized industry, whether hazardous or not, but also to all industries which, though not so fully organized as those to which the Act was originally applied, could without difficulty be sufficiently organized to bring them within the provisions of the legislation. The Governor in Council is inclined to think that too much emphasis has been laid on this element of organization in connection with workmen's compensation legislation. For the administration of the Act, the most essential procedure on the part of employers is the keeping of a list of names of their workmen. This, as a matter of fact, most of them do for the purpose of paying wages, although in many cases the actual lists are maintained by contractors or sub-contractors. On this assumption, it is regarded as not outside the bounds of possibility even at present to bring all manual workers within the scope of the Act, except agricultural labourers and domestic servants. Such wide extension, however, at one time might probably lead to confusion, and the Government of Bengal would prefer at the present stage to follow the very general criterion which the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which opposes further extension at present on the ground of limited experience of the present Act, has enunciated, namely, that Schedule II should be gradually extended to all workmen engaged in branches of industry which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension. This criterion is a wide one and susceptible of very elastic interpretation, but I am to suggest below a number of classes of workmen which in the opinion of the Governor in Council could, and should, be made eligible for compensation on the ground of " sufficient " organization.

12. Before giving these classes I am to say that His Excellency in Council is glad to note, that in the many replies that he has received on the subject, very little notice has been taken of one consideration mentioned by the Government of India, namely, that the employer in an unorganized industry is not, as a rule, in a position to pay compensation for serious accidents. This plea he entirely rejects ; he regards compensation for accidents, whether paid direct by employers or indirectly through insurance premia, as a normal charge on all industries, and the extension of the Act to small industries, he considers, would not only bring employers to a realization of their duties towards their employees, but would also encourage them to provide proper safety appliances and to learn wider lessons of business organization. The same arguments, the Governor in Council would point out, were used in the initial stages of factory legislation in India, when it was freely contended that limitation of hours or compulsory provision of safety devices would ruin industry in India, both great and small. Factory legislation has had no such evil result, and the extension of the Factories Act is no longer opposed on such grounds. Once the first Factories Act was passed in India, it soon became apparent that the worst abuses of labour were on premises not within the scope of the Act, and reputable employers learnt that the best safeguard to good conditions in their own factories was the extension of the Factories Act to smaller factories where unscrupulous employers competed with them on unfair terms. Similarly, with respect to compensation for accidents, His Excellency in Council is of the opinion that the plea that the small man cannot afford to pay his just dues to his workmen is not sustainable. The small employer has no superior claim to the large employer in respect to normal obligations towards his labourers ; his limited resources give him no prior right to force his employees to work in bad surroundings with unguarded machinery. He must, therefore, be prepared to pay such charges as the community prescribes to be just, otherwise he must stay out of or leave industry altogether.

13. With respect to the extension of Schedule II, I am to say that the Governor in Council has had some difficulty in reducing the many suggestions which have been communicated to him to workable limits, but he would note that the fact that

so many suggestions have been received is a very suggestive indication of the readiness with which the social consciousness accepts the inherent justice of the principles enshrined in the Act. After analysis of the suggestions, and an examination of the various classes of workers employed in Bengal, he recommends for insertion in Schedule II the following :—

(i) Workers on plantations ; (ii) dock workers ; (iii) all Government, municipal, district and local board employees, " employed " in the general sense of Section 2(*n*)(ii) of the Act ; (iv) all manual workers, not otherwise covered, engaged in connection with the generation or distribution of electrical energy ; (v) all persons engaged as drivers or conductors of motor transport, and all persons engaged in the repair of motor vehicles who are not otherwise covered by the Act ; (vi) all employees engaged in constructing, maintaining, altering or repairing aerial ropeways ; (vii) all employees engaged in the maintenance, repair or demolition of buildings more than one storey above ground level (as at present) or any permanent bridge ; (viii) employees on all inland steam vessels ; (ix) employees on flats, barges or other means of river transport, owned or used by registered factories, or public authorities or registered in the port of Chittagong or Calcutta, and of ferries, subject to the Bengal Ferries Act (No. 1 of 1885), or to the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884 (as amended up to 15th December, 1927) ; (x) employees in all printing presses, whether these presses are statutory factories or not ; (xi) employees engaged in earth works and excavations, exceeding 20 feet or more below the level of the adjacent ground, and in quarries ; (xii) employees in brickmaking works ; (xiii) employees engaged in the construction, maintenance and repair of canals, locks, sluices, regulators, head-works and siphons ; (xiv) employees in factories which are declared by local governments as factories under Section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Indian Factories Act.

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17. In summing up the above proposals, I am to say that the Governor in Council does not anticipate any insuperable difficulty in extending the Act to the classes of workmen recommended above. Such extension is not only just in itself, but it will also perform the useful social function of educating employers not at present covered by the Act in their duties towards their employees. It will also aid in the promotion of better organization of industry in general. His Excellency in Council has been impressed by the very liberal attitude which employers whom he has consulted have adopted towards the scope of the Act, and he is convinced that where unforeseen difficulties are met with in future, Government will meet with ready co-operation from employers in devising means to surmount them. He is not persuaded that as the Government of India say, the wide extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act depends on compulsory insurance. Were this the case, probably no extension would be possible for many years to come. On the other hand, he is of the view that only by extension of the Act will insurance become general, for, in the case of many small employers, only experience will compel them to insure. The lack of such insurance, moreover, he considers no reason for refusing to extend what is an accepted principle of elementary justice to manual workers as a whole.

18. One subject remains to be discussed in connection with the scope of the Act ; that is the inclusion of lascars. In this case, there is no dispute in principle. No one has doubted the injustice of lascars being under legislation, which, in the great majority of cases, they cannot use, and complete proof of this lies in the readiness with which the shipping companies have accepted the suggestion that the Indian scales of compensation should be included in the Articles of Agreement. The position, however, is still unsatisfactory, for the reasons given by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

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19. Two courses are possible to remedy this position ; one is that the British Government be asked to pass the necessary legislation to exclude lascars from British legislation, the other is to amend the pertinent sections of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act relative to agreements so as to give the lascar exactly the same position with relation to compensation as other Indian workers. The local Government prefer the second course, if it is within the competence of the Indian legislature. The fact that all shipping companies have voluntarily adopted the stipulation in the Articles shows that commercial opinion would readily favour this course ; moreover this solution would also guarantee to the lascar the benefits of the Indian Act when he was engaged on a foreign vessel.

20. The next question which the Government of India ask on the scope of the Act is " Should any provisions be introduced for securing workmen against possible loss by reason of the inability of their employer to pay any compensation that may be due ? "

This question has already been partially answered. The Governor in Council does not believe that the further extension of the Act, especially to the industries to which he recommends it should now be made applicable, depends on compulsory

insurance, nor does he agree that the extension of the Act even to quite unorganized industries should be limited by this consideration. He is of the view that, till the habit of voluntary insurance is fairly general, it would be useless to attempt to introduce compulsory insurance. Voluntary insurance is by no means general in India, but the general diffusion of a liability to pay relatively large sums of money, which liability can be guarded against by the payment of small recurring sums, would, in his opinion, do much to encourage the habit of insurance. Moreover, the Governor in Council is not prepared to admit that, till the various Governments of India and the Government of India themselves are prepared to administer insurance direct on a national scale, any system of social insurance should be made compulsory.

21. With regard to the specific issue before him, the great majority of those whom His Excellency in Council has consulted agree that the introduction of any system of compulsory insurance is impossible, although quite a number recommend that guarantees, similar to those already contained in section 14 of the Act, should be given. The most important fact bearing on this subject, however, is that, on the evidence of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in Bengal and of the Calcutta Claims Bureau, not a single case has so far come to light in this Presidency in which a workman has failed to get the compensation due to him. The statements of these authorities apply both to insured and uninsured employees. Hence, even though the Act has been in operation only five years, there appears to be no case for the introduction of special provisions to guarantee workmen. His Excellency in Council would particularly invite attention to the clean record of employers for these years, which, in his opinion, is a clear justification for recommending the widest possible extextension to the Act to other branches of industry.

22. The third and fourth questions asked by the Government of India arise from the scales of compensation. The first is to what extent, if any, should recurring payments be substituted for the lump sums at present payable under the Act. As The Government of India point out, the most striking feature of the Act is the preference it shows for lump-sum payments. Such payments apply in the case of both complete permanent and partial permanent disablement. In the case of temporary disablement, allowances are payable at intervals, but there are provisions for commutation. In the case of lump sums payable to a woman or to a person under a legal disability, the Commissioner is empowered to exercise his discretion as to the method of disposing of the compensation.

23. From the mass of opinions which have been submitted to him on the general issue, His Excellency in Council notes a very big majority in favour of recurring payments. In particular, the preponderating opinion of district officers is in favour of this principle, and in most of the instances where they have rejected it, they have been influenced solely by administrative convenience. The registered trade unions also favour recurring payments. In some cases, a half-way system has been suggested, that a proportion of the compensation be paid as a lump sum, and the remainder invested. Employers mainly favour the lump-payment system, though in their case, again, the main influence has been administrative convenience. Suggestions have been made on several sides, including employers, that commissioners for workmen's compensation should be given discretion to pay lump or recurring sums. The consensus of opinion is to the effect that periodical payments are theoretically desirable, but that lump payments are administratively more feasible.

24. The Governor in Council has been particularly impressed by the views of the commissioner for workmen's compensation and the Calcutta claims bureau on this subject. They declare with emphasis that the lump-sum system has been largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act. The commissioner says—"The system of lump-sum payment for permanent disablement is largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act, and the unexpectedly small volume of litigation to which it has given rise"; and the Calcutta claims bureau says—"Too much emphasis cannot be given to the fact that one of the main reasons why the present Act has worked so smoothly and has been so remarkably free from difficulty, is the principle of paying lump sum compensation as opposed to pensions. If this principle were changed, it is extremely likely that considerable difficulty and litigation would arise." The commissioner recognizes that recurring payments are a more efficient form of compensation, but the Calcutta claims bureau believes that lump-sum payment is quite suitable for the Indian workman, as it enables him to return to his village and buy land or engage in some form of business. The bureau does not agree with the usual charge of improvidence made against Indian workmen. The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation analyses with care the individual items on which lump payment is possible, and he comes to the following conclusion :—

"I am of opinion that lump-sum compensation should be retained in the case of fatal accidents. Though I have given much thought to the matter, I can devise no workable intermediate scheme between the present and a provision of the British type. For permanent partial disablement, I would also retain lump-sum compensation, but for permanent total disablement I recommend the introduction of pensions."

25. The Governor in Council has devoted much thought to the Commissioner's opinion, and while not opposing it entirely, he is not disposed to press it. He recognizes that in an issue of this kind it is exceedingly difficult to dogmatize, particularly as it involves some fine points of social philosophy with respect to the extent to and manner in which the Government should interfere with the allocation of what is the legal and just due of an insured workman, or the dependents of a workman who has been killed. At the present stage of the Act's existence, he thinks that the proof furnished regarding the lack of litigation merits great weight, especially as he considers that a considerable extension of the Act is desirable. He has carefully considered the suggestion that commissioners should be given discretion to give lump sums or to invest the proceeds in all cases, and not only in those which the amending Act of 1929 empowers them to do. He has, however, come to the conclusion that, in view of the limited currency of the present Act and of the desirability of extending it as far as possible in the shortest possible period, first regard must be paid to administrative convenience. It has been conclusively proved that the present system works well; he, therefore, favours its continuance, even although the form of compensation may not be in every case the most effective. He recommends that, in the case of death and permanent partial disablement, lump-sum payment be retained, as in the Act; he also prefers this course in the case of permanent total disablement, although he would not oppose a provision to the effect that the commissioner should be given discretion to give lump-sum payments or recurring payments, especially if other provinces were of this opinion. He recognizes the force of the commissioner's contention that it would provide some test of the feasibility of pensions in India, but he doubts if, on the present scales of compensation, the recurring payments would be sufficiently big to confer greater material benefit on the disabled workman than lump payments would. Whichever system is adopted, I am to emphasize, that, if pensions are permissible, the onus of distribution must in all cases rest on the commissioner, as it is essential for the smooth working of the Act that the liability of employers be discharged completely in the most expeditious manner possible.

26. The second question connected with the scales of compensation, which the Government of India have raised, is, "Should the scales of compensation be enhanced either for the more poorly-paid workman or in general?" In this connection, the Government of India invite attention to the Recommendation of the Seventh International Labour Conference, and point out that, were it adopted, the scales in India would have to be raised in the case of temporary incapacity; substantial enhancements probably would also result in the case of permanent incapacity or death. The Government of India think that probably an enhancement would be justified in the case of more poorly-paid workmen, and that, whether the scales in general were raised or not, the minimum scales of compensation resulting from the application of Schedule IV of the Act might suitably be raised.

27. On the question of the revision of scales, there has been much divergence of opinion among those who have replied to the reference of the local Government on the subject. District Officers, Government authorities, and trade unions generally favour enhancement of the scales on the lines of the Geneva Recommendation. The Calcutta claims bureau, a small number of district officers, and some of the commercial bodies, oppose any enhancement. The commissioner for workmen's compensation is inclined to think that, in the case of temporary disablement, the compensation might be raised to two-thirds of the pre-accident wages. This, he thinks, is justified on the ground that many employers already give full wages during temporary disablement. Were this accepted, proportionate enhancement of lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement would follow. The Governor in Council has been particularly impressed by the volume of opinion expressed in favour of raising rates for the more poorly-paid workman. It is clear that in this respect the Government of India have correctly interpreted the prevailing opinion on the subject. In particular, the local commercial bodies have expressed very liberal views and His Excellency in Council has no hesitation in accepting the Government of India's provisional opinion. The method of enforcement which he recommends is that suggested by the commissioner for workmen's compensation, viz., that the scale of assumed wages should be arranged in the following manner :—

	Assumed wages. Rs.
Wages less than Rs. 12	12
Wages not less than Rs. 12 but less than Rs. 20 ..	20
Wages not less than Rs. 20 but less than Rs. 25 ..	25

and so on by fives up to the present maximum. This scale not only provides more ample compensation for the more poorly-paid workmen, but also prevents the "writing down" of wages generally.

28. On the issue of general enhancement, I am to say that the views of the Governor in Council have been determined mainly by his recommencations regarding the extention of the Act. These views, more than once voiced in previous paragraphs, have been clearly enunciated in connection with the scales of compensation in the letter of Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Chairman of the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta, who says—" There would, however, appear to be a practical objection to any increase, if the extension of the Act to more workmen is held not to be feasible on account of the poverty of employers. Any increase in the amount of compensation would increase the difficulties of extension, and it is more important that the scope of the Act should be widened, and that more should benefit by it rather than that the benefits obtained by a few should be enhanced."

Were the scope of the existing Act to remain unaltered, His Excellency in Council would have no hesitation in recommending enhancement of the scales to the Geneva level, which, in his opinion, adequately represents what compensation for accidents should be, and to which, he considers, the Indian scales should gradually be raised. He is persuaded that employers who come under the Act at present would not object to general enhancement of the scales, as he has been informed that in many instances the actual scales prescribed in the Act result in smaller compensation being actually paid than what was paid on a voluntary basis before the Act came into force. At the present stage, however, he is more concerned with the general diffusion of benefits than with their increase. He would, therefore, confine enhancements entirely to the more poorly-paid workmen and leave the other scales as they are. He recognizes the force of the frequently voiced argument that the extension of the Act to small industries may cause hardships. This plea, as has already been pointed out, he does not accept as a reason for not extending the Act, but he agrees that the imposition of what is usually looked upon as a burden in the early stages should be tempered with reason. The existing scales are not unreasonable, and the benefits arising from them would be very appreciable in occuaptions where they do not exist at present. The view of His Excellency in Council, therefore, is that extension should come before enhancement, and he is persuaded that in presenting this view he is correctly representing the views of the informed public from which he has sought advice.

29. The next question on which the Government of India desire the views of the local Government is " Should the waiting period be reduced either generally, or in the case of those workmen who are disabled for more than ten days ; and, if so, to what extent ?"

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Various variations of the " dating back " systems have been recommended ; one district officer, for example, suggests a sliding scale, whereby a workman who joins his work on the 11th day after injury will get compensation from the 9th day ; if he joins on the 12th day, he will get compensation on the 8th day ; if on the 13th, he will get compensation from the 7th ; and so on, so that a man who is disabled for more than 19 days, will get payment from the first day. Several suggestions have been made regarding sliding scales of some kind, but if the temptation to malinger is the chief argument against " dating back," then it applies to all these systems. On the evidence before him, His Excellency is not persuaded that the Workmen's Compensation Act has led to malingering in India. Indeed, he has evidence to the contrary, but he objects to the " dating back " system not only because of the danger to malingering, but also because it would not be so simple to administer as the clear-cut waiting-period. The main body of commercial opinion also favours the shortening of the waiting- period, though a strong minority lends considerable support to the " dating back " system. The commissioner for workmen's compensation and the Calcutta Claims Bureau both support the shortening of the waiting-period, as does also the Chief Inspector of Mines in India. On reviewing the evidence as a whole, His Excellency in Council prefers the shorter waiting-period not only for the reasons given above, but also for the fact that the experience of Great Britain is against the " dating back" system, as also is that of America. He recommends that the period be reduced from 10 to 7 days—a reduction which, as is evident from the views he has received, will be accepted readily by commercial opinion. It will also bring the period into line wirh the waiting-periods adopted in a great body of European and American legislation.

31. The Government of India proceed to enunciate a series of questions on the subject of dependants, the first of which is " should the list of relatives entitled to claim compensation be enlarged ? " The second " Should proof of dependancy be required in order to enable a relative to claim compensation ? " And the third, " Should the compensation payable vary with the number of dependants and the extent of their dependancy on the deceased workman ?"

32. As the Government of India point out, the provisions of the Act relating to dependants were framed mainly to avoid administrative difficulties ; hence a certain

amount of arbitrariness in the operation of the provisions was not improbable. Experience in this Presidency has so far shown that the amount of arbitrariness has been negligible; hence, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, there is no urgent need to alter the existing provisions. His Excellency in Council considers that in this, as in other problems connected with the Act, the issue is between what is theoretically desirable and what is administratively convenient. In India a good theoretical case could be made out for amounts of compensation varying according to the number of dependants; administratively such a system would at the present stage of social organization be quire impossible; hence the Governor in Council has no hesitation in answering the third question of the series in the negative. As regards the first two questions he has also been guided by what in the view of his expert technical advisers is administratively feasible for, as has been already pointed out more than once, he is eager to secure extension of the existing benefits under a system which has already been proved workable before approaching the question of theoretical perfection. At present, the commissioner has full discretion to award compensation to any of the dependants, as defined by the Act. This discretion has in this Presidency been fairly exercised, and it may be assumed that it will continue to be fairly exercised future. The provision has led to no administrative difficulty; therefore, the local Government think that it should be continued, and they are of opinion that so long as the discretion at present vested in the commissioner continues, it is not of fundamental importance how many relatives are included in the definition of dependants. The limitation of their number, however, adds to the simplicity of administration. Hence, so far as the number of possible dependants is concerned, the criterion which, in the opinion of the local Government, should be adopted is the minimum number consistent with what experience proves to be just, having regard to the family conditions of workers and to the absence of proof of dependancy. On this basis, accepting the advice of the commissioner for workmen's compensation, His Excellency in Council recommends that widowed sisters and widowed daughters be included. This he notes is also the view of the Calcutta Claims Buresu, and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. He is doubtful about recommending the inclusion of step-relatives, as suggested by the commissioner; the single instance he quotes is not sufficient proof of the necessity of such inclusion, and His Excellency in Council while not absolutely opposing the recommendation, would not support its inclusion, unless the experience of other provinces in India justified it.

33. From what has been said in the preceding paragraph, it will be inferred that the local Government oppose proof of dependence. Theoretically, such proof is no doubt advisable; actually, it would lead to litigation and delays almost too alarming to contemplate. The Governor in Council unhesitatingly opposes the inclusion in the Act of such proof, not only in the interests of administration, but also on behalf of workers dependants. One of the main features in the life of the Act so far has been its freedom from litigation; in the interests of all concerned, every endeavour should be made to conserve this feature, even at the expense of what may seem to be theoretically desirable, for quickness in the disposal of cases and freedom from legal fees is much more in the interests of workers' families in India than technical judgments on degrees of dependence, and I am to add, this consideration is of vital importance to workers in this Presidency, a very large proportion of whom are immigrants from other provinces. In their case, proof of dependence, in all probability, would lead to complications which in many cases would render entirely nugatory the benefits which the legislation was brought into existence to confer. Were proof of dependence insisted on, the Governor in Council would commend the views of the commissioner for workmen's compensation, who suggest that, at least in the case of widows and children, dependence should be presumed, but that the presumption should be rebuttable. This would mean that, normally, women and children could be awarded compensation, unless the employers or others could prove that they were not dependent on the deceased workman. If proof were required in every case, much hardship would result to women and children, for, as the commissioner points out, they might think it necessary to engage lawyers to establish their claims. Were the onus of proof placed on the person denying a widow's or children's dependence, the probability is that there would be few contested cases. But, as already indicated, the Governor in Council is opposed to proof of dependence of any kind at the present stage.

34. In the succeeding series of questions asked by the Government of India on section 12 of the Act, there is no principle of compensation involved. The entire difficulty has risen through a decision of the Calcutta High Court to the effect that, while section 12 of the Act permits indemnification of principals by contractors, it does not permit indemnification from sub-contractors for compensation awarded for injury sustained by a sub-contractor's workman. The Government of India enquire whether section 12 of the Act should be amended :—(*a*) so as to place the

ultimate liability for compensation on the person directly employing the workman in every case; or (*b*) so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the principal; or (*c*) in any other manner.

35. From the opinions which have been expressed on this question, His Excellency in Council notes a preponderance in favour of making the principal solely liable for compensation, but I am to invite the attention of the Government of India very particularly to the carefully considered opinion of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, on this subject.

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The suggestion of the Commissioner His Excellency commends to the attention of Government of India, but, while it may be declaratory of the present law, so far as some contractors and sub-contractors are concerned, it does not cover cases of *bona fide* sub-contracts and, in such cases, the Governor in Council prefers placing liability on the principal, the workman being given no election in the matter at all. He also considers it just that the liability should be passed on, but in this case, as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce points out, the issue is not of material importance, as the conditions of contract are adjusted accordingly.

36. The tenth question asked by the Government of India refers to the returns to be submitted under section 16 of the Act. They enquire "Should any penalty be provided in the Act for failure to comply with the provisions of section 16?" They also enquire whether employers should be required to submit returns of accidents in respect of which compensation has not been paid, and, if so, to what accidents this provision should apply. The Government of India point out that at present employers, who intentionally fail to furnish returns, can be prosecuted under section 176, Indian Penal Code, although it has been urged that the difficulty of proving intention renders this section insufficient for the purpose. So far as the experience of this Presidency is concerned, there is no need for such a penal clause, but the Governor in Council considers that, though it has not been proved necessary in Bengal, the administration of the Act as a whole throughout India would probably be facilitated by a penal provision of the nature suggested in paragraph 11 of the Government of India's letter. He notes, indeed, that the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce support the inclusion of such a provision, although their support arises from an entirely different reason, that, as it is mostly uninsured employers who fail to send returns, a penal provision would form an inducement to such employers insuring against workmen's compensation claims.

37. So far as the second part of this question is concerned, the Governor in Council notes a general—indeed, an almost universal—expression of opinion among those he has consulted that such returns should not be required, except in the case of fatal accidents. He agrees that the submission of returns regarding all accidents would impose a tax on employers not commensurate with the results to be obtained. Employers are already under heavy obligations with respect to accident returns to several Government departments, e.g., the factory, electricity, and mines departments, and, though workmen's compensation extends beyond the industries covered by the Factories, Electricity and Mines Acts, nevertheless, the enforcement of general returns is open to the overwhelming objection already anticipated by the Government of India. On the other hand, the local Government support compulsory returns for fatal accidents—a course suggested by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, and supported by the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Fatal accidents are already reportable to various authorities, and little inconvenience will be caused by a copy of the report being sent to the appropriate Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

38. In paragraph 13 of their letter, the Government of India request the views of the local Government on the following question:—

"Should a dependant claiming compensation be relieved of the necessity of approaching the employer for the settlement of his claim?"

39. A minority of those consulted by the local Government think that the existing procedure should not be disturbed; the great majority, including the principal commercial bodies, agree with the opinion of the Government of India. In practice, no difficulty has been experienced on this score by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in Bengal, who reports as follows:—

"I have always read the section as meaning, in the case of fatal accidents, that the employer should be given an opportunity of depositing by consent without issue of summons, and have always endeavoured to secure this, either by referring dependants to the employer or by intervening informally before issuing summons."

As the Commissioner points out, the difficulty will disappear if fatal accidents are reported, together with an admission or denial of the employer's liability; but in order to make the matter perfectly plain, I am to say that the Governor in Council recommends that the Act be amended in the manner suggested by the Government of India.

40. The Government of India also ask what steps should be taken to ensure that dependants, who may have valid claims for compensation, do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights. They say that it has been suggested that the Commissioner might be empowered to institute proceedings where, through ignorance, no claim is made by an insured person or by his dependants. As against this suggestion, there is the obvious objection that it practically makes the Commissioner, who is a judicial officer, a party to the proceedings. The Governor in Council, agreeing with the majority of opinions expressed in reply to his reference on this subject, thinks that this objection is fundamental, and that the idea should not be further pursued. The solution of the difficulty appears to him to lie in the subsequent proposal of the Government of India, which has been generally approved by responsible opinion in Bengal, that fatal accidents should be reportable with the necessary particulars, and that, where no compensation is deposited, the Commissioner may be empowered to intimate to dependants that it is open to them to take action under the Act. Such intimation would not prejudice the judicial position of the Commissioner. I am in this connection to invite the attention of the Government of India to the views expressed by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, on the subject.

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(*Vide* remarks under "Question 13" in his letter).

I am to say that the Governor in Council approves of the views of the Commissioner, as regards both principle and detail; he does not, however, favour the intervention of other departmental officers, such as Inspectors of Factories and Inspectors of Mines, in workmen's compensation cases, as he considers it undesirable that these officers, whose functions with relation to employers are entirely different, should be brought into the administration of the Workmen's Compensation Act at all.

41. The fourteenth question asked by the Government of India is "Should employers be required to maintain a register of relatives of their workmen?"

42. The Governor in Council has carefully considered the point of view of the Government of India and has come to the conclusion that, at the present stage, it would not be wise to insist on registers of relatives. This conclusion he has come to reluctantly, purely on the ground of practicability. The maintenance of such registers is very desirable, for not only would they conduce to the better working of the Workmen's Compensation Act, but they would also lead to greater systematization in the control of labour personnel in general than at present. Employers unanimously and emphatically protest against the suggestion of the Government of India. Their protest has the support of many district officers and even of trade unions, but the opinion to which His Excellency in Council gives most weight is that of the department in this presidency which has had most experience of employment registers. The Chief Inspector of Factories writes :—"It is very doubtful if a register of dependants would, or could, be maintained in such a manner that it would be reliable and useful, particularly in respect of casual, contract, and migratory labour, and I consider, on the whole, that it would be impracticable."

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44. It is possible that the maintenance of addresses will gradually be adopted in the better regulated industries of their own initiative, but till a tendency towards such better regulation of labour personnel has definitely set in, the Governor in Council considers that the inclusion of a compulsory provision regarding registration would be unduly oppressive. He would not, however, oppose the inclusion of a reserve power in the Act, e.g., in section 32, for the purpose of requiring the maintenance of home addresses.

45. The fifteenth question asked by the Government of India is "Should Commissioners be empowered to call on employers depositing inadequate compensation for fatal accidents to make a further deposit?" The Government of India point out that at present, where the amount deposited in the case of a fatal accident is inadequate, the Commissioner cannot take steps till an application is made by a dependant. In practice, in Bengal, the procedure which has been followed is the same as that which is now suggested by the Government of India; the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, indeed, doubts if an amendment of the Act is necessary.

Practically everyone whom the Governor in Council has consulted accepts the principle that Commissioners should be empowered to call on a further deposit where inadequate compensation has been deposited, in cases of fatal accidents, and I am to say that he accepts the amendment suggested by the Government of India.

46. The final specific issue on which the Government of India request the views of the local Government is "Should provision be made for the suspension of distribution by the Commissioner, pending the disposal of an appeal against his decision?" The Government of India point out that section 8 (1) of the Act does not prescribe any particular period during which payment must be made by the Commissioner,

but that it is doubtful whether, without statutory authority, he can withold the payments for the period necessary for the decision of a disputed issue by the High Court. It is suggested, therefore, that the Act may be amended so as to empower the commissioner to withhold payments in cases where an appeal has been filed against the decision. Similarly, the Government of India suggest that High Courts might be empowered to order that, pending their decision on a particular case, distribution should be suspended.

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47. The views of the Government of India have been generally supported in Bengal; indeed, as in the preceding issue, their suggestions represent what has been the actual practice in Bengal.

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The Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce both support the suggestions of the Government of India, which are also accepted by the local Government.

48. The Government of India also ask that other amendments, which may suggest themselves to local Governments, or to those consulted by them, should be forwarded. Several such suggestions have been received from the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Claims Bureau, and the Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union.

Some of the proposals have been submitted by one or more of the above mentioned agencies, and the local Government would invite particular attention to the suggestion which has been made by the Commissioner, the Claims Bureau, and the Chamber of Commerce, with regard to the appointment of medical referees. The Commissioner points out that at present it is very difficult to settle claims in which there is any difference of medical opinion, without recourse to formal proceedings. If such proceedings are instituted, medical men have to be brought to court of examination, in some cases, a medical man has to be called on to sit as medical assessor. It is the opinion of the Commissioner, as also of the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, that disposal of cases would be much facilitated, were the Commissioner enabled to refer the parties to a medical referee on whose report the Commissioner could take action. The local Government support the Commissioner's views and recommend that the appropriate provision be made when the Act is amended.

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50. I am to invite the attention of the Government of India to the series of suggestions, some of them of a far-reaching character, which has been made by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation regarding the defences which an employer should be allowed to plead and the existing provisions of the Act bearing on disease. With regard to the defences which an employer may plead, a subject also raised by the Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union, the Commissioner makes out a very good case. He proposes to abolish the defences at present permissible under section 3 (1) (*b*) (i) (ii) and (iii), of the Act in the case of death, permanent total disablement and permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent. of the permanent total disablement. His proposals he supports from his own experience; in the cases where he has found wilful disobedience proved, he felt, although on the evidence he could not find otherwise, that at least in some cases injustice was done. For the actual details of the instances, I am to refer to the appropriate passages in his letter. The abolition of such defences is, as the Commissioner points out, in accordance with the trend of most modern legislation and in conformity with the general principle of occupational risk, that in the conditions of modern industry results of misconduct and negligence are often so terrible that it is unjust that the workman or his dependants should bear the whole burden. The Commissioner also points out that even were these defences abolished, an employer could still rely in cases on the defence that an accident did not arise out of the employment.

51. I am to say that the Governor in Council has had some difficulty in reaching a conclusion on the Commissioner's recommendations. He is doubtful about abolishing the defences of section 3 (1) (*b*) (i), i.e., the influence of drink or drugs; on the other hand, he is inclined to support the recommendation with regard to wilful disobedience to orders and wilful removal of safety devices, especially as the proposal restricts the abolition of the existing pleas to very serious cases. He feels convinced that wilfulness is not a just plea with respect to actions which may cost workmen their limbs, eyesight, or even their lives, and, though he has only the limited experience of the Act in this Presidency on which to form a judgment, he is disposed to think that the nature of accidents in this country would not, on grounds either of justice or of humanity, justify the rejection of compensation on the grounds given in section 3 (1) (*b*) (ii) and (iii). The Commissioner's views he recommends to the consideration of the coming Royal Commission on Labour.

52. The Commissioner's recommendations regarding disease are equally carefully presented. He points out that under section 3 (4) of the Act no compensation is payable to a workman in respect of any disease, unless the disease is solely and directly attributable to a specific injury by accident, and that, if the section is narrowly interpreted, the restrictions imposed by Indian legislation go far beyond those imposed by English legislation. He thinks that these restrictions might be relaxed without fear of administrative difficulties. In particular, he thinks that compensation should be made payable for exposure diseases to the extent it is payable in England, and also that compensation for infections should not be restricted to those solely and directly attributed to accidents. He points out that if a man suffers from extensive laceration, it appears unjust to deny him compensation for infection, simply because the germ did not enter the wound when the laceration was inflicted. I am to say that the Governor in Council is disposed to favour the above suggestions on general grounds. The experience in this Presidency of the occupational-disease provisions of the Act, has, however, as already indicated in this letter, been very limited, and the Commissioner's suggestions could more appropriately be considered by the Royal Commission.

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Letter dated the 1st May, 1929, from M. H. B. Lethbridge, Esq., I.C.S., Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department.

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Extension of the Scope of the Act.

Question 1.—(1) The language by which factory workers are included does not cover workmen employed on outside jobs, in particular workmen sent out to fit or repair machinery, drivers of lorries, and crews of steam launches attached to jute mills and presses. Workmen employed for the purpose of making earth works and excavations, such as docks, should be included and I should like to see the Act extended to cover all the coolies employed in and about docks transporting merchandise for import or export, but not actually loading or unloading ships. I understand that one firm in Calcutta employs no less than 10,000 and the work is certainly hazardous. The difficulty is this case is to frame a suitable definition.

(2) This opportunity should be taken to include lascars. The present position is most unsatisfactory. It is true that all firms employing lascars have agreed to insert in their articles of agreement the stipulation suggested by the Government of India. The Commissioner's position in dealing with cases under the stipulation, however, is that of a private arbitrator with no legal standing. His statutory jurisdiction cannot be extended by contract. He has therefore no power to compel attendance, to prosecute for perjury or to enforce an award. There has hitherto been no difficulty under these three heads, but there are two points which have caused some trouble. (i) It is very doubtful if, after a lascar has accepted payment, the Commissioner can object to the amount as insufficient, even if the lascar brings the question up. (ii) In fatal accidents where there is no dispute the employer is not bound to deposit. In both connections the lascars' rights are inferior to those of a workman under the Act, since the amount paid need not come under the scrutiny of the Commissioner, I strongly recommend that the matter be taken up again with the Home Government with a view to bringing lascars under the Indian Act.

(3) I agree that any wide extension of the definition of workman would be impracticable without compulsory insurance and I do not think a general scheme of compulsory insurance could be administered in India.

Question 2.—There has been no case hitherto in Bengal of a workman failing to obtain the compensation awarded to him by reason of the insolvency of his employer. Unless, therefore, the scope of the Act is widely extended, I do not consider it necessary to insert any further provision for securing the workmen's compensation.

Question 3.—The system of lump sum payment for permanent disablement is largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act, and the unexpectedly small volume of litigation to which it has given rise. On the other hand recurring payments are a more efficient form of compensation.

In the case of permanent total disablement and of dependants, I think it is a straight issue between these two considerations, administrative convenience versus efficient compensation, uncomplicated by any other factor.

In the case of permanent partial disablement there are two other factors which I submit require consideration. On the one hand, lump sum payment has a very valuable effect in discouraging malingering, and what is much commoner than wilful malingering, the lack of will to get well, dwelling on symptoms and unintentional aggravation of disability that so often accompanies a persisting right to compensation.

Doctors constantly recommend immediate settlement as the surest method of promoting recovery and minimizing permanent ill effects. This is especially the case with fractures, where use of the injured limb is all-important. Communication, unless both parties agree, cannot usually be effected soon enough for the purpose.

The disadvantage on the other hand of lump sum payment is that the healing period, during which the workman is totally disabled, is ignored. This period may vary greatly in length, but if the ultimate result is the same, compensation is the same. I think this is a very real hardship, but it seems to be a necessary feature of the system.

These two considerations unfortunately tend to neutralize one another. On the balance, however, bearing in mind administrative convenience, I think that the interests of both employers and workmen would best be served by a continuance of lump sum payment for partial permanent disablement though as regards workmen the question is by no means free from doubt.

Where the workman is permanently and totally disabled, I think a pension is much the most desirable form of compensation and administrative difficulties would not be serious. The number of cases is not large, and as liability ends only with the workman's death, an annuity could be bought for him. These considerations apply with even greater force where the workman is so disabled as to need the constant help of an attendant.

In the case of dependants the question is very difficult, and Question 3 cannot be discussed apart from Questions 7 and 8.

I should very much like to see pensions for widows. If the small sum at present payable be invested by the commissioner and monthly remittances sent, the whole capital is exhausted in a few years. If the whole sum be handed over to the widow there is no security that it will be used for her maintenance. Efficient compensation, particularly of a young Hindu widow, seems to me impossible by means of a lump sum.

On the other hand if pensions are introduced at all, or any differentiation made between classes of dependants, I can see no halting place short of a provision like that of the British Act, in which compensation varies with the number of dependants, and proof of dependence is required. The two desiderata as I have said are efficient compensation and efficient administration. A clear-cut provision with a well defined policy can be arrived at by concentrating on either. Concentration on the latter resulted in the present provision with its invariable lump sum and presumed dependence, which has worked very smoothly. There has been no difficulty or delay in awarding dependants what the law provides, though this may be an arbitrary amount which cannot be adjusted to individual needs and may be very generous or totally inadequate. Concentration on the former would yield a provision admirably adapted to meet individual cases, the compensation varying with the number and needs of the dependants, but almost impossible to administer in a country like India. The door would be opened to infinite disputes and probably to malpractices as well, and the present smooth working of the Act in fatal cases would be gone for ever. I am aware that prophets of evil have been proved wrong before in connection with the Act, but this was attributable to just such arbitrary features as would have to be abandoned. If the fact of dependence were disputed, the evidence for and against would be very difficult to test, and to assess the extent of dependence would be wellnigh hopeless, especially where the joint family system prevails. If every additional dependant meant more money, personation might become common, cousins being represented as full brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces as children, and so on. In such cases unless the employer undertook the trouble and expense of fighting the claim, there would be no opposition.

For these reasons I am of opinion that lump sum compensation should be retained in the case of fatal accidents. Though I have given much thought to the matter I can devise no workable intermediate scheme between the present and a provision of the British type. For permanent partial disablement I would also retain lump sum compensation, but for permanent total disablement I recommend the introduction of pensions. Incidentally this would provide some test of the feasibility of pensions with a view to future extension.

Question 4.—In the case of temporary disablement I think there is a fairly strong case for raising the compensation to two-thirds of the pre-accident wages. There is the outstanding fact that railways and many other employers were and still are in the habit of paying full wages during temporary disablement. I am informed by a railway official that they experience no difficulty from malingering in consequence. I do not think therefore, that the argument that malingering would be encouraged should stand in the way of such an increase.

If this is accepted the lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement will require to be proportionately enhanced. If it is not accepted, I still think that some special provision should be made for poorly paid workmen, and that this could best be done by manipulation of Schedule IV. My experience is that workers in receipt of less than Rs. 12 per mensem are almost all women or youths, while a very

large number of ordinary unskilled labourers draw between Rs. 12 and Rs. 20 per mensem. Such wages leave no margin for contingencies. Further I do not think it is right that a workman's assumed wages should be less than his actual wages. Applying this I would alter the scale of assumed wages thus : wages less than Rs. 12, assumed wages Rs. 12 ; wages not less than Rs. 12 but less than Rs. 20, assumed wages Rs. 20 ; wages not less than Rs. 20 but less than Rs. 25, assumed wages Rs. 25 ; and so on by fives up to the present maximum.

Question 5.—I think that the present waiting period of ten days is too long, and should be reduced to seven days, with no dating back. I think that the disadvantage of " dating back," viz., that it provides a temptation to malinger is very serious, but a reduction of three days would be a small though material help to workmen.

Question 6.—As I have pointed out under Question 3 to make a logical provision for dependants one must either have an arbitrary scheme like the present or make a complete change and introduce a scheme varying the compensation with the number of dependants and requiring proof of dependence, and I do not think the latter is practicable. Hence I would retain the list of relatives in the definition of " dependant " substantially as it is. However, I do not think any harm would be done by including widowed sisters and widowed daughters. The cases where they are the only surviving relatives included in the list, but not actually dependent would be so rare as to be negligible. Also I think there is some case for the addition of stepmother, half brothers, half sisters and stepchildren. I recently had a case in which half brothers and sisters had to be refused.

Question 7.—See answer to Question 3. If it is thought desirable to require proof of dependence I would suggest that at least in the case of widows and children if not in all cases dependence should be presumed, but the presumption should be rebuttable. This would enable the employer or other claimants to deny it if they wish, but proof would not have to be given in every case. If proof of dependence had to be given in every distribution case it would be great hardship to women and children. They would have to spend money to establish their claim and might think it necessary to engage lawyers for the purpose and much of the commissioner's time would be taken up in recording unnecessary evidence. The onus of proof should be on the person who denies that a widow or child is a dependant.

Question 8.—To make compensation vary with the number of dependants and the extent of their dependence on the deceased workman would from the employer's point of view result in making the employer's liability an uncertain quantity, and he would be unable to deposit until the commissioner had ascertained the amount payable. I do not however, consider this a serious matter. The advantage to the dependants that would ensue if such a scheme could be successfully administered is too obvious to point out, and fully outweighs any inconvenience to the employer. However, the difficulty of administration appears to me to be insuperable. I have already alluded to this in my answer to Question 3. To satisfy himself the commissioner would have to go to the deceased's village, report by a local officer not being receivable in evidence. If the claimants were not divided among themselves there would be no material for cross-examining their witnesses and no check on their claims. Further, the joint family system would make it very difficult to assess the degree of dependence.

Question 9—*Liability of contractors.*—The recent decision of the Calcutta High Court has exposed the anomalous position resulting from the present section. The workman can at his will, place the ultimate liability upon the contractor or upon the sub-contractor, and the former may be merely a middleman with no say in the engagement of the workman or the conditions of his work.

The Government of India recognize that the obvious amendment would be one permitting the liability to be passed on in every case to the person directly employing the workman, but doubt whether this would be suitable to Indian conditions, as in many cases contractors who are responsible for the employment of labour have little control over working conditions, and the main responsibility for the safety of workmen rests with the principal.

In my opinion however this difficulty will largely disappear if commissioners clearly grasp the distinction between " independent contractor " and " workmen." The question in such cases is with whom the workman is under contract of employment, and the best test of this is the degree of control exercised by the alleged employer. A true contractor, while undertaking to produce a given result, is allowed more or less of a free hand in the details of the work and the methods employed. An independent contractor is defined by Sir Frederick Pollock (Law of Torts, 11th Edition, page 80) as one who undertakes to produce a given result, but so that in the actual execution of the work he is not under the order or control of the person for whom he does it, and may use his own discretion in things not specified beforehand. " A master " he defines as " one who not only prescribes to the workman the end of

his work, but directs, or at any moment may direct, the means also, or, as it has been put retains the power of controlling the work." (See also Ruegg's Workmen's Compensation, 9th Edition, page 8 et seq.)

Judged by this test, the so-called contractors in mines and other concerns in this country will in most cases be found, I think, to be merely the agents of the persons giving the contract (whom I shall call for brevity the proprietors) for recruiting and paying workmen, and the workmen engaged by them to be under contract of service not with them but with the proprietors. Very often it is true that the "contractors" supervise the work, but they do so really as foremen, owing to the close control over every detail of the work exercised by the proprietors, and are therefore themselves workmen. Usually the contractor is remunerated on the basis of outturn, i.e., his contract is on the face of it a contract for work and not merely for supplying labour, but even this will not suffice to displace the strong presumption arising from the control exercised by the proprietor over the methods and conditions of the work and over discipline. I carefully examined the English cases (which are to be found collected on page 112 et seq. of Willis, 25th Edition) in connection with a disputed case in which this question arose. The practice of getting work done on a piece-work basis by men who engage and pay their own labour does not appear to have come before the British courts in exactly the form in which it is so common in India, but there are cases close enough to show that the degree of control is the all-important test, that a workman may engage and pay other workmen, and that even a written contract, ostensibly for work, is not decisive. In the case in question I found that no workmen thus engaged by contractors, who had a written contract for getting jute pressed in a machine operated by the proprietors and under supervision of the proprietor's direct employees, were under contract of employment with the proprietors. There was no appeal against the decision.

Any one who had read only the Indian Act might easily overlook this distinction altogether, since it depends upon the meaning of "contract of employment" and this is only alluded to in the definitions of "employer" and "workmen", though it is of the essence of them, and in fact the basis of all rights and liabilities under the Act. In view of this, and of the commonness of this peculiar form of contract in India, I would suggest to the Government of India the advisability of inserting an "explanation" after the definition of "workman", stating in clear terms the position resulting from such contracts. Perhaps something of this nature would be suitable. "If A contracts with B for the performance by B of certain work, B to engage and pay workmen, but A retaining full control of the methods and conditions of work, the workmen engaged by B shall be deemed to be under contract of employment with A." This I believe to be declaratory of the existing law, but as the Act has to be administered by many officers who have no time for a detailed study of all its implications, I suggest that it is advisable to state it in explicit terms. That workmen thus indirectly engaged are for practical purposes directly employed by the proprietors is already recognized by insurance companies who compel the proprietors to insure them as such. Existing interests would not therefore be affected if it were declared that this is the actual legal relationship between the parties.

To return to the question under consideration; if this be the true effect, of this very common form of contract, I submit that there is no need to reverse the whole scheme of Section 12 as the Government of India suggest. There is no reason why the ultimate liability should not rest upon the direct employer if he be a true independent contractor, and he is the person upon whom it logically should rest. This can be effected by substituting for "the contractor" in clause 2 of Section 12 the words of the British Act, "any person who would have been liable to pay compensation to the workman independently of this section."

If, however, this view is not accepted and it is thought desirable in India that ultimate liability should rest upon the principal, then I do not see any necessity for giving the workman any election at all. Why not declare, definitely, that the principal in such cases is liable and not the direct employer?

Question 10.—I do not think a special penal clause for omission to submit annual returns is necessary.

Question 11.—To require employers to include in their returns, figures of all accidents whether arising out of and in the course of the employment or not would be of no assistance, and to call for returns of accidents "arising out of etc." would be open to the obvious objection stated in the Government of India's letter. The only practicable amendment I can think of would be to require employers to state the number of claims rejected on the ground of misconduct. This figure added to the number of claims paid would give the number admitted by the employer to arise out of and in the course of employment. Whether any useful purpose would be served is a question for the Government of India.

Question 12.—It is no doubt true that an employer cannot come to an effective agreement with a dependant which will take the place of an award by the commissioner.

Nevertheless, I think that it is possible to give effect to the words " which cannot be settled by agreement " in Section 22 (1). I have always read the section as meaning, in the case of fatal accidents, that the employer should be given an opportunity of depositing by consent without issue of summons, and have always endeavoured to secure this, either by referring dependants to the employer or by intervening informally before issuing summons. I think this is, to say the least of it, more courteous to the employer.

There is a difficulty but it will disappear if employers are required to notify the commissioner of fatal accidents, with an admission or denial of liability, as suggested in paragraph 14 of the Government of India's letter. If the employer has notified his readiness to deposit, a letter intimating receipt of a claim is all that is necessary, while if he has denied liability, a summons can issue immediately. I would therefore answer Question 12 in the affirmative provided that this procedure is introduced.

Question 13 (*paragraph* 14).—For the reasons given by the Government of India I would not give the commissioner power to initiate proceedings, either in respect of fatal or non-fatal accidents.

I am however strongly in favour of the proposal (which I made myself) to require employers to notify the commissioner of all fatal accidents, with a statement whether or no they admit liability. This would effectively prevent employers from evading their obligations without prejudicing the impartiality of the commissioner. The better class of employers I am sure would welcome the proposal since it would prevent the unscrupulous from escaping liabilities which they themselves recognize. The alternative proposal, viz., that inspectors of mines and factories might be authorized to prefer complaints is unobjectionable in itself, but does not cover the whole field (e.g., it would not touch builders' employees, dock labourers, lascars and railway servants). In my opinion the first alternative is much superior.

As regards details, the first point is the period to be prescribed. It must be remembered that an employer is not usually in a position to admit or deny liability at once. If he is insured he must refer the question to the insurance company. Some shipping agents still refer such questions to their owners at home, though it is to be hoped that they will soon obtain powers to dispose of them themselves. Railways again conduct formal enquiries and are slow and cumbrous in their procedure. I think therefore that the accident should be reported first, and the statement regarding liability should follow later, say within a month at most from the date of the accident. The commissioner would have power to extend the time for cause shown, but unless the statement or a petition for time is filed within the time allowed, the employer should be liable to fine.

The first statement would be just a notice that a fatal accident had occurred, giving deceased's name, and the place, date and time, also the home address of the deceased.

The second statement would be an admission or denial of liability ; in the latter case, the reasons therefor with a brief statement of the circumstances of the accident.

Question 14.—*Register of relatives.*—In my opinion it would not be practicable for employers to register the names and addresses of their workmen's next-of-kin. Such a register would be of little use unless kept up to date, and workmen, as the Government of India suggests, might object. I think however that it would be practicable and very nearly as useful, to make employers note merely the home address (i.e., in most cases the native village) of their workmen. If the workman was killed, an enquiry through the local Tahsildar or circle officer would soon elicit whether any dependants existed. If the employer were required to notify fatal accidents as suggested in paragraph 14, the commissioner would need this information in order to intimate to the dependants that they could take action.

Question 15.—The cases which the Government of India have in mind are presumably those where the deposit is obviously inadequate on account of some apparent error or omission. The commonest example is where the amount has been calculated on actual instead of on assumed wages. In such cases I have always taken action without waiting for an application from a dependant. Very commonly dependants do not live in Calcutta and it is very much in their interest to get the full amount deposited before they are asked to come in. No objection on the merits can be raised in such cases, as it is only a question of complying with the method of calculation laid down in the Act, and no employer has ever raised a technical objection that the commissioner should have waited for an application from a dependant. I have gone further and enquired informally whether allowance has been made for free board and lodging or use of uniform where I know from experience that deceased probably enjoyed such privileges.

Cases in which the commissioner has to ask for a further deposit are fairly frequent, but to judge from my own experience, no amendment of the Act is necessary. I have always conducted the preliminary stages of proceedings as informally as possible, in the spirit of the Government of India's letter No. L. 859, dated the 4th July, 1923.

with the best results. I may add that it not infrequently happens that employers by a similar miscalculation deposit in excess in which case I inform them and allow them a refund.

If the actual rate of wages were in question it would clearly be out of place for the commissioner to take any action without an application from a dependant.

Question 16.—It is necessary not only to provide for suspension of distribution pending the disposal of an appeal, but also for withholding payment of any money paid into court under an award by the commissioner (i.e., in claims by injured workmen also) pending appeal. This is an omission in the Act, which should be made good.

In the absence of any such provision it has been my practice to withhold payment on application by the employer until he can obtain an order from the appellate court, or the period of limitation for an appeal has expired.

There has been no case hitherto of a dependant desiring to appeal against an order for distribution. In such cases the application would have to be made at once, as the money is already in deposit, and payment usually follows the award immediately. Where the employer has contested liability there is not the same difficulty, as he is always given some days in which to deposit the amount due under the award, and has this time to consider whether he will make an application for stay of payment.

In addition, I would suggest the following amendments :—

(1) I would introduce a proviso that the employer be not allowed to plead the defences in Section 3 (1) (*b*), (i) to (iii) (three forms of misconduct) in any case where the accident resulted in death, permanent total disablement, or permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent. or more of permanent total. This amendment would be in line with the trend of workmen's compensation legislation in most countries. It is in conformity with the general principle of occupational risk, that in the conditions of modern industry the consequence to the workman or his dependants of acts of negligence or misconduct are often so terrible that it is unjust that they should be compelled to bear the whole burden. Moreover the practical difficulty of arriving at a true finding when these defences, particularly the defence of breach of rule, are pleaded, makes such an amendment in my opinion very desirable. A large proportion of claims are resisted on the ground that the accident was due to disobedience of a rule that machinery is not to be cleaned while in motion. This rule is made to cover not only periodical cleaning but clearing jams as well. I very gravely doubt whether the workman was really in fault in many of these cases. I have been assured by persons conversant with the facts that so far from this rule always being enforced, workers are often not allowed to stop a machine before clearing a jam. If in consequence he is killed or mutilated he or his dependants are not in a position to rebut the evidence offered by the employer that the rule was regularly enforced. Out of 107 cases in Bengal in which liability was contested and evidence recorded, the question of disobedience of a safety rule was the principal issue in 30. In all except 2 or 3 of these the rule in question was a rule that machinery is not to be cleaned while in motion. In 10 the rule was found not to be proved, in three not to have been effectively enforced and in one the disobedience was found not to have been wilful. In the remaining 18 wilful disobedience was found and the claim dismissed. I feel sure that in some at least, of these cases there was a failure of justice, but there was no reason in any one case for refusing to accept the employer's evidence. This very real danger of failure of justice could be avoided in more serious cases by the amendment I propose.

It must not be supposed that such an amendment would leave the employer liable to pay in all cases where the accident was due to breach of rule. He could still rely in many cases, as he can in England on the defence that the accident did not arise out of the employment. To quote Lord Dunedin's well known distinction : " There are prohibitions which limit the sphere of the employment and prohibitions which only deal with conduct within the sphere of employment." (Plumb *v.* C. Cobden Flour Mills, 7 B. W. C. C. 1). In case of breach of prohibitions of the former class, the employer could successfully resist a claim on the ground that the accident did not arise out of the employment. If the prohibition were of the latter class he would have to pay.

(2) I would recommend provision for referring to medical referees questions concerning the nature and degree of disablement, and how far it was due to the accident. At present it is very difficult to settle a claim in which there is any difference of medical opinion without recourse to formal proceedings. If a formal claim is made, doctors have to be brought to court for examination and in some cases another doctor is called in to sit as medical assessor. To empower the commissioner to refer the parties to a medical referee and act on his report would result in a great saving of doctor's time and of the parties' money, and also of the Commissioner's time.

(3) *Disease.*—" It does not appear to me," said Lord Halsbury (Brintons *v.* Turvey (1905) 7 W. C. C. 1), "that by calling the consequence of an accidental injury a disease one alters the nature or the consequential results of the injury that has been inflicted." But in India if the employer can call the consequence a disease he can get the benefit of the very severe restrictions laid down in Section 3 (4). Where the consequence is not a disease, compensation is payable for it if not " results " from the accident (Section 4) and this word " results " has been liberally interpreted in the English courts. It includes indirect consequences (2 B. W. C. C. 357) and consequences due partly to something else (10 B. W. C. C. 624). But Section 3 (4) lays down that where the consequence is a disease it must be " solely and directly " attributable to the injury by accident. Further the injury must be specific, by which I understand a definite bodily lesion as opposed to a general condition such as " shock " or " lowered vitality." Again the disease must be attributable to such injury and therefore something distinct from it. The effect of the English decisions is that personal injury by accident means accidental injury and may include disease accidentally incurred (Brintons *v.* Turvey supra). Thus the three things " accident," " injury " and " disease," may be treated as one, by what Lord Shaw called the " synthetic treatment " (9 B. W. C. C. at page 379). Under the Indian Act, though " injury by accident " may perhaps be taken to mean " accidental injury " there being no accident distinguishable from the injury (there are grounds for disputing even this), the disease must be distinct from it. Taking therefore, the various possible cases and applying Section 3 (4) we have the following results :—

(i) *Pre-existing disease.*—(*a*) Where the disease itself has been lighted up or rendered worse by the accident, compensation is payable in England (2 B. W. C. C. 157, 40 S. L. R. 89, 5 B. W. C. C. 36). " Results from " includes " accelerated by " per Cozens Hardy M. R. (8 B. W. C. C. at page 430). But if the disease pre-existed, it cannot obviously be said to be solely due to the accident.

(*b*) Where on account of pre-existing disease some bodily tissue (bone, blood vessel, muscle, etc.) is weakened, and gives way under accidental strain, it may I think be contended that the payment is for the injury not for the disease and would be admissible even under the Indian Act, but liability might be resisted on the ground that but for the disease there would have been no injury. Clover Clayton & Co. *v.* Hughes, 3 B. W. C. C. 275, is the classical English case.

(ii) *Disease subsequent to and casually related to accident.*—(*a*) *Infections.*—The words " solely and directly " seem to require that both conditions of infection, viz., presence of germ and breach in bodily defences should be directly due to the accident. In England compensation is payable where either is due to accident (10 B. W. C. C. 624, 12 B. W. C. C. 78). Again, if infection is purely local (suppuration, arthritis gangrene) is this a disease ? If amputation is rendered necessary by such infection, is compensation for this amputation payable " in respect of a disease ? "

(*b*) *Disease resulting indirectly from accident,* e.g., 2 B. W. C. C. 357, 6 B. W. C. C. 745. No compensation in such cases is payable in India.

(*c*) *Exposure diseases.*—In such cases it is often very difficult to distinguish " accident." " injury," and " disease." (See 6 B. W. C. C. 398, 7 B. W. C. C. 259 and 9 B. W. C. C. 371). There is no " specific injury " in the sense in which I understand the words, but a general chill resulting in pneumonia, rheumatism, etc. By the " synthetic treatment " compensation is found payable in England, but this section appears to be a bar.

(*d*) *Disease due to neglect of treatment.*—Where an injury is aggravated in this way, but no morbid condition is set up (e.g., a neglected fracture) the only restriction on compensation is that contained in Section 11 (6). If however, the consequence of neglect can be called disease, this clause also comes into operation.

This analysis shows that the restrictions imposed by Section 3 (4) are very severe and go far beyond the English Act. I think that they might be relaxed without fear of administrative difficulties.

The case of pre-existing disease being lighted up by an accident is perhaps so uncommon as to be negligible, and where diseased tissue gives way under sudden accidental strain compensation is I think payable under the Act as it stands.

I think, however, that compensation should be payable for exposure diseases, (to the extent it is payable in England) and that compensation for infections should not be restricted to those " solely and directly " attributable to the accident. If a man suffers from extensive laceration it seems unjust to deny him compensation for infection, simply because the germ did not enter the wound at the time of the accident. I submit that to ask " Is it just that the employer should bear the consequence of this ? " is not the proper question. The question should be " Is it just that the workman should bear the whole consequence ? " If the answer is in the negative, provision should be made for compensation, for the employer is or should be, insured, and the burden is transferred to the industry as a whole.

IX.—Hours.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,
dated the 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of memoranda of the Government of Bengal on the following items in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Royal Commission:—(1) IX—Hours: A—Factories (55) to (57), (60) to (62); and D—Other Establishments (78) to (80); (2) IX—Hours: A—Factories (58) to (60); and X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: A—Factories (83) to (85) and (88); (3) X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: A—Factories (81), (82), (86), (87) and (89).

2. A report on "IX—Hours: B—Mines (63) to (72), (90) and (91)," is contained in the report of Mr. J. A. Beale, Sub-divisional Officer, Asansol, which was forwarded to the Commission with this department letter No. 1330 T., Com., dated the 21st October/12th November, 1929, and the remarks of Government are contained therein.

3. The local government do not propose to offer any material on "IX—Hours: C—Railways" as they understand that this subject is being dealt with by the Central Government.

4. With regard to sub-item (60) (iv) (*Number of holidays given*), I am to say that no information has hitherto been collected by the Government of Bengal on this subject.

5. With regard to sub-item (89) (ii) (*Advisability of extended application*), I am to say that since the information on this item was originally compiled, the Government of Bengal have extended the Factories Act by means of a notification under sub-section 2 (3) (*b*) to all small tea factories.

6. As regards "X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: C—Other Establishments (92) (*Need for regulations*)" I am to say that the local government are not aware of any abuses relating to women, young adults and children in such establishments, which call for regulation.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. *Hours worked per Week and per Day*—(i) *Normal, i.e., as determined by custom or agreement.*—The normal working hours are the hours specified under the relevant sections of the Act. The following statement shows the normal hours of work in the various industries in Bengal:—

Class of factories.	Average number of persons employed.	Normal hours worked per day.	Normal hours worked per week.
Textile—			
Jute mills	331,899	Single shift, 11 Multiple shift, 9½–11	60 38–44* 47½–55*
Cotton mills	13,757	10	60
Engineering—			
Dockyards	3,204	7½	46
General engineering ..	2,957† 22,453	7½ 8½	46 50
Total	25,410		
Railway workshops ..	21,943† 12,124	8 8	48 48
Total	34,067		
Iron smelting	10,277	8	48

* Alternate weeks. † Government.

Normal hours of work in the various industries in Bengal—contd. :—

Class of factories.	Average number of persons employed.	Normal hours worked per day.	Normal hours worked per week.
Seasonal industries—			
Tea factories	16,149	11	60
Jute presses	35,592	11	60
Rice mills	10,778	10	60
Paper and printing—			
Paper mills	4,101	8	48
Printing presses	3,512†	8	48
	6,361	9	54
Total	9,873		
Miscellaneous—			
Electrical generating stations ..	1,861	8	48
Kerosine, tinning and packing ..	5,205	8½	52
Flour mills	1,283	11	60
Oil mills	2,796	11	60
Gas works	927	8	48
Paint works	1,223	9	54
Chemical works	2,200	10	60
Match factories	5,020	8	48
Ice factories	1,039	8½	52
Glass works	734	8	48

(ii) *Actual, i.e., including overtime.*—The Factories Act does not permit of overtime or work outside specified hours, except in the case of exempted factories. There should, therefore, be no difference between normal and actual working hours, except in the case of the exemptions. A statement is attached showing all the exemptions issued under the Act, and also the conditions of exemption. From these conditions it will be seen that the maximum limit of working hours permitted under the exemptions is that the weekly average in any one month should in no case exceed 66 hours.

. . . . . .

(iii) *Spreadover, i.e., relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.*—Workers cannot be legally considered to be "on call" outside the specified working hours. Hence, the point of this heading is not clearly understood. Probably it refers to the actual time during which a worker is on duty, as compared with the specified hours. It is the custom in Bengal for reserve workers to be borne on the staff in order to relieve the regular workers for short periods during their spells of work. These reliefs or short periods of rest are arranged amongst the workers themselves, and are not the periods of rest specified under the Act. Fuller information on this subject will be obtained from the various industries concerned, but in the jute mills the percentage of extra labour carried for reliefs is ordinarily round about ten.

56. *Days worked per week.*—The majority of workers in Bengal have the Sunday holiday, and in only a few cases is a week, full 6 days worked. With the exception of continuous process industries, the number of days worked per week in all industries throughout the Province may be taken to be 5½, i.e., from Monday to Friday, and half a day on Saturday.

In the jute mills, the system of work at present in operation is that single shift mills work for 5½ days per week, and multiple shift mills for 4 days and 5 days in alternate weeks. Prior to the 1st July, 1929, the multiple shift mills worked 13½ hours a day for 4 days per week on the shift system, and the single shift mills worked for 5 days per week—4 days of 11 hours and 1 day of 10 hours. All mills under the Indian Jute Mills Association, whether single-shift or double shift, worked 54 hours a week. Since the 1st July last, they have worked 60 hours a week. The multiple shift mills now work 4 days of 13½ hours a day and 5 days of 13½ hours a day in alternate weeks. The single-shift mills work 5 days of 11 hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday.

Shipyards and the larger engineering works, as a rule, work 5½ days a week.

57. *Effect of 60 hours restriction*—(i) *On workers.*—The 60 hours restriction imposed by the 1922 Act, has had little effect, so far as the larger industries are concerned, as it merely legalized conditions previously in existence. In some of the

† Government.

smaller industries, however, such as printing presses and oil mills, the Act has reduced the total weekly hours. In the case of maintenance staff and other non-process workers the conditions of the various exemption notifications restricting the weekly hours to an average of 60 or 66 per week in any one month has undoubtedly effected a reduction in the number of hours worked, with probably a consequent reduction in wages.

The extent of the effect of the 60 hours restriction may to some extent be measured by the applications for relief from the 60 hours restriction which have been received by the Government. In the case of gas works, flour mills, jute presses, and pottery works, exemption was granted owing to the nature of the work in these industries, but the condition imposed in these cases was that average weekly hours over any one month should be observed. In the case of gas works, the average was fixed at 56, for the rest at 66.

Applications for various exemptions, including relief from the 60 hours restriction, were also received from the industries noted below, but in these cases exemptions from the provisions of Section 27 were not granted :—(1) Paper mills ; (2) tanneries ; (3) Shellac factories ; (4) tea factories ; (5) electrical generating stations ; (6) rice mills ; (7) glass factories ; (8) blast furnaces, coke ovens, and by-product plants ; (9) mustard oil mills ; (10) printing presses ; (11) railway running sheds.

. . . . . .

In addition to the official requests that were received, numerous inquiries were made from time to time from inspectors regarding the possibility of obtaining relief from the 60 hours restriction, but formal application did not follow when the information was conveyed that exemption was not possible.

(ii) *On industry.*—The 60 hours' restriction has had no apparent adverse effect on industry.

58. *Effect of daily limit*—The daily limits for women and children of 11 and 6 hours respectively have given a fair measure of protection and have had some beneficial effect. In some of the non-textile industries, however, such as the engineering and shipbuilding industries, which normally work considerably shorter hours than the textile mills, the Act has led to a want of elasticity in working hours to meet market demands. In their case, i.e., the cases of all industries which are subject to fluctuating demands, probably employees would be sufficiently protected against excessive hours, and the Act made workable, were a weekly and not daily restriction of hours imposed. This, however, will be dealt with separately.

59. *Possibility of Reduction in Maxima.*—This will be dealt with separately.

60. *Intervals*—(i) *Existing practice* (*a*) *In relation to fatigue.*—Chapter IV of the Ace, which governs the rest periods in factories, generally speaking, has worked well. The Government of Bengal have no evidence that the periods of continuous work, as permitted by the Act are excessive, or that the prescribed hour or half hour of rest, as the case may be, is too little. In factories where shorter hours are worked, there is a marked tendency on the part of employees to prefer shorter intervals. This arises from the habits of the Indian workman. If an interval during the day is not sufficiently long to enable him to cook his food, he prefers to have quite a short interval with a view to enabling him to come later in the morning and go earlier in the afternoon. Workers take their two principal meals of the day before coming to work and in the evening.

This tendency has been particularly noticeable in factories in the Calcutta industrial area, where the homes of many workers are situated at some distance from the works.

(*b*) *In relation to workers' meal times.*—It has already been indicated above that unless there is an interval during the day sufficiently long to enable workers to cook and eat their food, they prefer to have shorter intervals in order to be able to come later in the morning and go away earlier in the afternoon. Where this is impossible, however, the prescribed rest period usually coincides with the workers' meal times. This is the case, for example, in the single shift jute mills, which start at 5.30 in the morning and go on working till 11 a.m., and then close down for 2½ hours.

In the multiple-shift mills, however, the meal times of the workers have to be arranged according to their shifts. These are described elsewhere.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.* (iii) *Suitability of hours during which factory is working.*—(These will be dealt with separately).

61. *Day of Rest*—(i) *existing practice* (ii) *Suitability of the law.*—The general practice in Bengal is to give the Sunday holiday, and this, or a substitute day, is rigorously enforced by the Factories Department. No change in the law is deemed necessary.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—The attached statement shows the number and class of labour exempted, the sections from which they are exempted, and the conditions of exemption. Exemptions are granted by the local government on the recommendation of the chief inspector of factories.

Exemptions applicable to all Factories.

Class of operatives exempted.	Sections exempted from.	Conditions of exemption.
Persons employed on :—		
(*a*) urgent repairs to the plant in all factories which have to be carried out on a Sunday or at times outside of the normal working hours, in order that the main manufacturing process may be continued without interruption during the ordinary working day ; or	Sections 21, 22, 27 and 28 ..	(*a*) a notice, stating the names of persons employed and the precise nature of work, shall be sent in time to reach the Inspector of Factories within 36 hours of such employment, and if the repairs are to be carried out on a Sunday the said notice shall be posted or sent prior to the Sunday on which the work is carried out ;
(*b*) breakdown repairs carried out in general engineering works or foundries to the motive power or transmission plant of other factories and which are necessary to enable such concerns to maintain their main manufacturing processes during normal working hours ; or		(*b*) no such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day or in the alternative a rest period of at least 36 consecutive hours ; and
(*c*) repairs to steamers which are essential to enable the vessels to leave or continue their normal operations in a seaworthy condition.		(*c*) the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty hours.
Adult male boiler attendants	Sections 21, 22, 26, 27 and 28..	(*a*) that no such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ; and
Adult male engine drivers.		
Adult male persons employed on despatching and receiving of goods.		(*b*) that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours.
Adult male oilers	Sections 21, 27 and 28 ..	(*a*) that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours.
Adult male persons employed solely on maintenance work.		

Exemptions applicable to individual industries.

Class of factory.	Total number of factories.	Total number of persons employed.	Approximate number of persons exempted.	Class of operatives exempted.	Sections exempted from.	Condition of exemption.
1. Rice Mills ..	286	10,778	7,621	Persons employed on boiling, spreading, drying and storing paddy.	Section 22—(Sunday employment).	No person shall work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day.
2. (*a*) Pottery Works	1	590	125	Firemen and their adult male attendants on kilns.	Sections 22, 27 (weekly limit of 60 hours work) and 28 (daily limit of 11 hours work).	(1) No person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day; and (2) Average weekly hours worked by such exempted persons in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six.
(*b*) Bengal Potteries, Ltd.	1	549	12	Firemen and their adult male attendants on gas-fired kilns.	Sections 21 (rest interval), 22 and 28.	(1) That persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts; and (2) That no such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least 24 hours at one time.
3. Paper Mills ..	4	4,643	1,396	Adult male persons employed on certain processes.	Sections 21 (rest interval) and 22.	No person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day.

Exemptions applicable to individual industries.

Class of factory.	Total number of factories.	Total number of persons employed.	Approximate number of persons exempted.	Class of operatives exempted.	Sections exempted from.	Condition of exemption.
4. Tanneries ..	5	489	163	Persons employed in— (*a*) soaking, (*b*) drying. (*c*) beating and (*d*) curing or tanning hides, kips or skins.	Section 22 ..	(1) No person shall be required to work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ; and (2) The hours of work of any such person on a Sunday do not exceed six.
5. Shellac Factories.	3	702	510	Persons employed on work necessitating continuous production in Shellac Factories using solvent process.	Sections 21 and 22.	(1) No person employed on such work shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ; and (2) Average weekly hours worked by any such person shall not exceed fifty-six.
6. Gas Works ..	3	822	245	Male operatives employed in retort houses in coal gas works.	Sections 22, 27 and 28.	(1) Persons employed on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts ; and (2) The average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed fifty-six.
7. Flour Mills ..	8	1,283	930	Men employed as cleaners and machine hands.	Sections 22 and 27.	(1) The terms of work of day and night-shifts shall not exceed four and six hours on Sundays ; (2) Average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six ; and (3) No such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day.

Class of factory.	Total number of factories.	Total number of persons employed.	Approximate number of persons exempted.	Class of operatives exempted.	Sections exempted from.	Condition of exemption.
8. Tea Factories	265	16,149	16,149	All employees	Sections 21, 22 and 26 (employment under specified working hours).	(1) No person shall be required to work continuously without a whole day's leave for more than fourteen consecutive days at a time ; and (2) The number of persons employed on a particular job shall always be at least twenty-five per cent. greater than the number actually required to do the work at any given time.
9. Jute Presses ..	112	35,592	35,592	Ditto	Sections 22, 26 and 27.	(1) No such person shall be required to work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ; (2) The average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours ; and (3) The hours of work shall be within the limits of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a mid day rest of at least one hour.
10. Iron and Steel Factories.	2	10,277	3,656	Persons employed on operation of blast furnaces.	Sections 21, 22 and 28.	(1) Persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts ; and (2) No such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least twenty-four hours at one time.

Exemptions applicable to individual industries.

Class of factory.	Total number of factories.	Total number of persons employed.	Approximate number of persons exempted.	Class of operatives exempted.	Sections exempted from.	Condition of exemption.
11. Waterworks or Water-supply Pumping Station.	7	1,011	554	Certain specified classes ..	Sections 21, 22 and 28.	(1) Persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts; and (2) No such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least twenty-four hours at one time.
12. Gas Works ..	3	822	238	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
13. Ice Factories	4	654	308	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
14. Chemical Factories	5	1,918	501	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
15. Distilleries ..	2	331	95	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
16. Oil Mills using the solvent process extraction.	1	Factory remaining closed.	Factory remaining closed.	All employees	Ditto ..	Ditto.
17. Electrical Generating Stations.	13	2,940	2,940	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
18. Tanning Extract Factories.	1	135	14	Certain specified classes ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.
19. Glass Factories	5	545	452	Ditto	Ditto ..	Ditto.
20. Oil Mills ..	61	2,796	2,796	All adult persons	Sections 21 and 35.	The hours of work shall be within the limits of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

B.—Mines.

63 to 72. *Vide* pages 9 and 10 of the report of Mr. J. A. Beale, Sub-divisional Officer, Asansol, Bengal, forwarded with Bengal Government letter No. 1330 T.—Com., dated the 21st October, 1929, and remarks contained therein.

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D.—Other Establishments.

(a) *Plantations ;* (b) *Docks ;* (c) *Other industrial establishments.*

78. *Hours worked per week and per day.*

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79. *Days worked per week.*

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Tea Gardens.—Generally speaking, in tea gardens, there is no custom or agreement regarding normal working hours. Most of the work is paid on a piece basis, and the employees are free to do it in their own time.

In the Darjeeling area in the plucking season—April to November—about 8 hours a day are actually worked, i.e., from 7-30 a.m. to 4-30 p.m., with an hour's rest at mid-day. In the non-plucking season when field work consists chiefly of pruning and cultivation, the day's work can usually be completed in about 6 hours, inclusive of the mid-day rest. The workers have generally finished and gone off to their homes by about 3 p.m. Although no definite time-limit is set to the day's work, sometimes special inducements are offered for workers to continue longer than usual. This happens when labour is insufficient for the working of a garden. These special rates may be looked upon as a kind of overtime wages. One day a week, usually Sunday, is a complete holiday in the tea gardens, and it is only very rarely, during periods of very rapid growth of leaf, that any work is done on this holiday. The workers themselves often voluntarily take more than one day per week.

In the Duars, the number of hours worked is from 4 to 5 hours a day in the cold weather, i.e., the non-plucking season, and from 7 to 8 hours in the plucking season, i.e., the rains.

The average coolie does not work more than 3½ to 4 days per week in the Duars, i.e., abour 20 hours per week in the cold weather, and 32 hours per week in the busy season.

The average muster roll in the Duars is reported to be about 60 per cent. of the total labour roll.

In the Chittagong gardens, the normal number of days worked per week is 6 days, although some coolies work 5 days and less. The normal hours worked by men on cultivation is 5 hours a day, or 30 hours a week. The coolies, however, have a daily task, on the completion of which they may go back to their houses.

Cinchona Plantations.—In the Government cinchona plantations at Mungpo and Munsong the normal hours worked are :—

Summer	.. ..	6 a.m. to 12 noon 1 p.m. to 4-30 p.m. } 9½ hours.
Winter	.. ..	7 a.m. to 12 noon 1 p.m. to 4-30 p.m. } 8½ hours.

The normal hours are worked by those employed on day work, but it is usual to prescribe a definite task for coolies, and the day's work ceases when the task is completed. It is usual for the task to be completed at times varying from 12 noon to 4 p.m., according to the efficiency of the worker. Overtime is paid in only very special cases, and that rarely.

The worker is on call at all hours in case of plantations fires only. The number of days worked per week is 6, but few workers work every day. On the Mungsong plantation, the average number of days worked by coolies per week is less than 4. On Mungpoo, the most regular workers work 22 to 24 days a month.

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Inland Steam Navigation (The Inland Steamer Companies).—On inland steamers and flats, work is irregular and spasmodic, the working hours depending on the conditions of service, tides, fogs, and channels. The average running time of the majority of inland steamers is 10 hours daily, and with two sets of men employed, this gives each man about 5 hours daily, provided the work is evenly allotted. The engine-room crew and navigating staff work about 2 hours daily, making a 7-hour day or 49 hours a week.

It is difficult to calculate the hours of lascars not engaged in the navigation of ships. Their working hours are dependent on the character of the traffic, i.e., whether it is cargo or passenger traffic, and in many cases they do practically no work for days-on-end. It is doubtful if the actual working hours of lascars on inland steam vessels approach an average of 60 hours weekly.

80.—*Desirability of Regulation.*—The Government of Bengal consider that, from the figures which they have received regarding working hours in " Other Establishments," there is no need for regulation.

IX.—Hours. (58) (59) (60).

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children. (83) (84) (85) (88).

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The above headings may be examined together as they are all inter-connected. An analysis* of the hours worked per day and per week in factories in Bengal gives the following results :—

A.—*Hours per Week.*—The industries in Bengal which work their labour 60 hours per week are :—

	Persons.
Single-shift jute mills employing about	165,000
Cotton mills employing about	13,800
Tea factories employing about	16,100
Jute presses employing about	35,600
Rice mills employing about	10,800
Flour mills employing about	1,300
Oil mills employing about	2,800
Chemical works employing about	2,200
Total	247,600

Of the above classes of factories, three—tea factories, jute presses, and rice mills—employing about 62,500 persons are seasonal, and, with respect to hours of work, must continue to be treated as exceptional. Flour mills, some oil mills, and chemical works are susceptible of special treatment on technical grounds, particularly continuous production. Thus, apart from a number of oil mills and chemical factories, the only factories in Bengal which at present work their labourers more than 55 hours a week are single-shift jute mills and cotton mills. The oil mills and chemical works employ a small number of workpeople, and the cotton manufacturing industry is of relatively small importance in Bengal ; hence the possibility of reducing the maximum hours becomes a question mainly affecting the jute-manufacturing industry.

B.—*Hours per day.*—The industries which work the maximum daily hours permitted by law at present are the following : single-shift, and, in part multiple-shift, jute mills, tea factories, jute presses, flour mills, and oil mills. Tea factories and jute presses are seasonal industries. Flour mills and some oil mills are susceptible of special treatment on the ground of continuous production. Oil mills employ relatively few workpeople ; hence, again, the problem of reducing the daily limit of hours mainly concerns the jute-manufacturing industry.

Apart from the industries mentioned in the previous paragraphs, all other industries in Bengal work their labour less than 55 hours a week and less than 10 hours a day.

So far as the weekly limit is concerned, the above analysis suggests that, as far as Bengal is concerned, there would be no difficulty in adopting a 55-hour week. The maximum in about half of the jute mills is already 55-hours ; hence it would appear that were the other half of the jute mills, i.e., those working on the single-shift, to adopt the multiple-shift system, and cotton mills to do the same, the 55-hour maximum week could be adopted without appreciable disturbance to production. The situation, however, is complicated by the fact that the existing multiple-shift system in the jute mills has been consistently condemned by the Factory Inspection Department as inimical to the enforcement of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Factories Act. To enforce the maximum of 55 hours a week in the jute-manufacturing

* *Note.*—Vide statement under item No. (55) : *Hours worked per week and per day.*

industry, as also in the cotton-manufacturing industry, without further safeguards would almost inevitably lead to the multiple or relay system of shifts being resumed in the jute mills which are at present worked on the single-shift system. It would also probably result in the introduction of a similar system in the few cotton mills in Bengal.

So long as they employ women and children, jute mills, under the existing law, may work their machinery to a maximum of 13½ hours a day or 81 hours a week, on a six-day week. The actual number of hours worked in mills which are members of the Indian Jute Mills Association is determined from time to time by the Association according to the state of trade. Prior to the 1st July, 1929, the mills had been working for several years for 54 hours a week, but these hours were changed on the 1st July to 60 hours a week. The 60-hour week is the maximum which can be worked on the single-shift system, because the same workers are employed in the morning and the afternoon shifts for the maximum period per day and per week permitted by the law. In the multiple-shift mills the 60-hour week still leaves a margin of 21 hours which could be utilized did the state of the market so require. In the 81-hour week, the workers are employed on the relay or shift system in such a way that in theory, no worker may exceed the maximum hours of labour imposed by the Factories Department. At the present time, about half the jute mills in Bengal are operated on the single-shift and half on the multiple-shift system. If, however, the conditions of the market demanded an extension of hours, then the single-shift mills would inevitably be forced back to the multiple-shift system for the reason that they have now no margin of expansion to meet the market, whereas the multiple-shift mills may expand to any number of hours between 60 and 81.

The fact that about half of the jute mills in Bengal have changed from the multiple-shift to the single-shift system of working within the last few years is in itself proof that several managing agents prefer the single-shift system because it makes for more efficient management. The rigour with which the principles of Chapter IV of the Factories Act have been applied has also not been without effect, but the Royal Commission will probably be able to ascertain from the managing agents concerned that the single-shift system is considered more efficient in every respect than the multiple-shift. Insomuch as the multiple-shift has for many years been condemned by the Factories Department on the ground that it has seriously impeded the enforcement of the hours provisions of the Factories Act, the Government of Bengal have welcomed the movement towards simplification of management in the jute manufacturing industry itself. So long, however, as one-half of the industry adheres to the relay system, the single-shift system is in a precarious position, for at any moment the single-shift mills may be forced on to the old system by the multiple-shift mills, or an appreciable number of them may withdraw from the present hours agreement. It is, therefore, necessary to consider means to ensure the observance of the labour provisions of the Factories Act, without at the same time interfering vexatiously with the industry concerned, and this question is intimately concerned with the possibility of reducing the present hours maxima.

Prior to the passing of the amended Factories Act in 1922, power to control shifts was conferred on Factory Inspectors. The power was included in factory legislation in India originally by the amendment Act of 1891, and the purpose was to regulate the employment of women during the night. The Act passed in 1911 conferred on the inspector power to control shifts with respect to periodical stoppages of work, the limits between which persons could be employed in textile factories, and limits on the use of machinery in textile factories [sub-sections 21 (2), 29 (2), and 31 (2)]. In particular, the Act of 1911 [sub-section 31 (1) [limited the use of machinery in textile factories to 12 hours per day, with the exception that this provision should not apply to any mechanical or electrical power being used solely in aid of work performed by any person employed in accordance with a system of shifts approved by an inspector. When the Draft Conventions and Recommendations adopted at the Washington Conference were under consideration in 1920, the Government of Bengal expressed the opinion that the power to regulate shifts should remain in the Act, while at the same time they emphasized the necessity for prescribing that the hours of labour for each worker should not affect the time during which plant and machinery might be kept going. In spite of the views of the local Government, for some reason, which has never been made clear to them, the power to control shifts was omitted in the amended Act of 1922. At the same time, of course, the regulation of the hours of labour was made more strict.

Prior to the passing of the amended Act in 1922, the attention of the Government of Bengal had on more than one occasion been invited by the Chief Inspector of Factories to difficulties arising from the application of the hours section of the Act in multiple-shift mills.

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It may be remarked here that Mr. Adams, the present Chief Inspector of Factories, occupied the same post in 1919, and that even before 1919 he had reported on the difficulty of administering the Act in multiple-shift mills. His predecessor, Mr. Walsh had also commented on the difficulties of regulating labour in the relay system prevalent in the jute mills even under the simple prescriptions of the original Factories Act. It may, therefore, be said that the continuous and unanimous opinion of inspectors of factories in Bengal is to the effect that the multiple-shift system militates against the effective application of the hours provisions of the Factories Act. After the 1922 Act came into effect, the Chief Inspector in March, 1924, submitted proposals to Government for the prescription of employment registers to take the place of the form previously in existence, and after long discussions, both formal and informal with the interests concerned, alternative forms of registers for jute mills were prescribed by Government in July, 1925. In the meantime, in June, 1923, the Government of India made certain proposals regarding the amendment of the Factories Act, as amended in 1922, and the Government of Bengal recommended the re-inclusion in the Act of the powers contained in Section 31 of the Act passed in 1911, with the exception that the power to control shifts should vest in the local Government instead of an inspector of factories.

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The Government of India did not accept the recommendation of the local government. Informal discussions followed at which it was agreed that a report should be submitted regarding the multiple-shift system after one year's experience has been had of the new employment registers. This report was submitted by the Chief Inspector of Factories in the letter reproduced below, dated the 17th May, 1927 :-

I have the honour to report that the conditions in jute mills consequent on the amendment of the Act restricting the hours of labour of employees, have been carefully watched and the efficacy of employment registers in multiple-shift mills in determining and ensuring compliance with Sections 21, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28 of the Act, ascertained, and I submit herewith, for the information of Government, a statement showing the contravention of these sections as observed in these mills by inspection since August, 1925. In these respects the employment of women and children is of great and immediate importance since of the approximate total of 242,500 women and 68,700 children employed in the whole of India, 55,500 or 23 per cent. women and 26,400 or 38 per cent. children are employed in the Bengal jute mills. One of the fundamentals of factory labour legislation and the whole of Chapter IV of the Indian Factories Act depend therefore very largely upon the maintenance in the correct state of the prescribed employment register. It has been my experience that in so far as multiple shift mills are concerned, registers are not and cannot be maintained in such a manner as to enable the inspector to determine compliance otherwise with the foregoing sections, and further that the records given in such registers do not represent the true conditions of such mill labour.

The labour is entirely in the hands of time clerks and sirdars. Upon the former devolves the recording of attendance of employees in the register, and upon the latter the recruitment of labour. The time clerk is occupied with the attendance of hundreds of persons and their registration cannot be done in the time and with the promptitude necessary to enable the inspector to ascertain compliance with the Act. The sirdar produces the children and, in many cases, allows them to be employed whether they are fit, certified or not, and he being illiterate cannot satisfy himself as to the correctness of the entries in the register. He must, however, keep the spindles going, if not directly to maintain continuity of production, to maintain his receipts on a child capitation basis.

The inspector, in order to ascertain compliance with the Act in connection with any employee, must pay two or three visits per day, each being futile without the others, and, that position being appreciated by infractions, the first inspection of the day acts as a warning for the succeeding ones and the irregularities of the latter are easily accommodated in consequence.

Prosecution proceedings have been instituted against mill managers, time clerks, and sirdars, and heavy fines imposed, but infractions still flagrantly occur in the mills convicted. Managers admit the infractions as well as others connected with labour supervision, but they all express inability to put a stop to them under the present multiple-shift system.

From the inspector's position the registers are also almost useless, and he considers the continued exercise of his powers of prosecuting mill managers an abuse of such powers when conviction can never act as a deterrent, and when the remedy does not lie in the hands of the managers but with those responsible for the continued existence of a system which encourages and cannot avoid breaches of the Act.

The difficulties of the situation were expressed as far back as 1913 in my letter No. 2034 of the 3rd November to Government, when the consequential demands on the inspector's time were fully explained.

These views, based on further facts and experience, were again submitted and endorsed in letter No. 1656 of the 22nd August, 1919, to Government, as well as in continuation of letter No. 1777 of the 12th September, 1919, and in which a statement was made to the effect that the introduction of a single shift system would benefit both employers and employed.

This same matter was again enlarged upon in my letter to Government, No. 324 of the 24th January, 1924, and the futility of registers explained, and also the suggestion expressed that if mills did not voluntarily eliminate the evil by the general adoption of the single-shift system, the powers given under Section 31 of the Act of 1911 should be reconferred on inspectors so that the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act could be more effectively administered.

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At present approximately 41 mills are now on the single-shift system, involving 105,811, 21,713 and 5,456 men, women and children, respectively, or a total of 132,980; and on the multiple-shift system 44 mills, involving 147,849, 31,114 and 15,329 men, women and children, respectively, or a total of 194,292 employees. The transition in the former mills has been effected with little trouble and few strike difficulties, and as pointed out in paragraph 6 of my annual report for the year 1926, the amount of labour released as a result of the transition was far below that feared by the supporters of the multiple-shift system and that which one would theoretically anticipate; on the contrary, one mill was short of labour within one month of effecting a transition.

Labour troubles on account of resulting unemployment were nowhere in evidence, and the strikes that did occur were on account of consequent adjustment of wages which the workers imperfectly understood.

These facts alone clearly indicate wholesale infractions of the sections of Chapter IV of the Act by mills working under the multiple-shift system.

Further, single-shift mill managers have given expression to the many advantages which they now enjoy and which are generally speaking also appreciated by those managers having to work under the multiple-shift system, with which they have little sympathy. With respect to the latter it is worthy of mention that a mill manager recently convicted and fined, on being asked by the trying magistrate to give any reasons in extenuation of the conditions found, replied to the effect that he was unable to regulate his labour to the requirements of the Act.

In view of this, therefore, it is now for consideration why a system open to so many abuses and involving the welfare of so many employees should be allowed to continue in one industry in Bengal, and it seems apparent that Government having the majority of mill authorities in favour of legislation towards the reduction of working hours, should now so act as to bring such conservative mills within the law, and with this class of factory make possible and practicable Chapter IV of the Act; for the amount of protection given to the labouring class is determined not by the number of labour laws enacted, but by the number of such laws which are properly administered, and by the extent to which their provisions are enforced. There is no other industry in the whole of India which requires women and children to commence work at so early an hour as 5.30 a.m. and to finish so late as 7 p.m., and in view of this I would suggest the amendment of Sections 23 and 24 of the Act to prohibit the employment of these classes of workers before 6 a.m. and after 6.30 p.m., and the daily working hours of women beyond 10 hours. The Act should also be amended to include an equivalent to Section 31 of the Act of 1911, but such power to approve or otherwise a system of shifts should be conferred on the Local Government.

Irregularities in the employment of labour in Jute Mills using the multiple-shift system from 1st August, 1925, till the 30th April, 1927.

	Nature of infraction.	Number of irregularities.	Number of prosecutions.
21	Persons were being employed during their midday rest	1	
23	Employing children contrary to Act's provisions ..	1	
(a)	Employing children without medical certificates or tokens.	28	
	Children were employed below legal age	6	
	Children were employed below legal age and also without medical certificates.	1	
	Inspector obstructed in his duties. Children were prevented from appearing before him for examination.	5	
(b)	Children were being employed before legal hours ..	4	
	Children were being employed after legal hours ..	1	
(c)	Employing children for more than 6 hours a day ..	8	
		54	—

Irregularities in the employment of Labour in Jute Mills using the multiple-shift system from 1st August, 1925, till the 30th April, 1927.—Contd.

	Nature of infraction.	Number of irregularities.	Number of prosecutions.
24 (*a*)	Employing women before legal hours	5	
25	Children with tokens of the neighbouring mills were being employed.	1	
26	Employing persons beyond or outside specified hours	52	
	Persons were being employed without any specified hours of employment fixed.	5	
	Employing persons without and beyond specified hours	2	
	Similar offences in respect of the employment of women	1	
	Similar offences in respect of the employment of children.	3	
		63	
28	Employing persons for more than 11 hours a day ..	1	
35	Not maintaining the prescribed register	12	
	Not maintaining register for maintenance workers ..	1	
	Not maintaining children's register	1	
	Not maintaining register up to date	21	
	Not maintaining register correctly	11	
	Not maintaining register correctly and up to date ..	16	
	Employment register not being kept correctly and was not produced on demand.	1	
	Employment register not being kept in the prescribed form.	7	
	Employment register not being kept correctly and not in prescribed form.	1	
		71	
36	Working hours were not correctly posted	5	
	Total	201	13

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In May, 1928, the Government of India raised a further question connected with the shift-system in jute mills. The letter of the Government of India No. L-1068, dated the 30th May, 1928, is reproduced below :—

" I am directed to request that in considering the question of exercising control over the shift system in jute mills, the Government of Bengal will consider the advisability of taking steps to secure for the women employed in these mills a night period of at least 11 consecutive hours. The Convention concerning the employment of women during the night which was adopted by the first International Labour Conference and which has since been ratified by India requires that a night period of at least 11 consecutive hours should ordinarily be given to women. The Government of India understand that in jute mills a large number of women commence work at the earliest time and finish work at the latest time permitted by the Factories Act and that their night rest is in consequence reduced to a period of 10½ hours. So far as the Government of India are aware, this practice does not prevail in any factories except those working on multiple-shifts ; but they would be glad to have information on this point when the Government of Bengal's proposals have been formulated."

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The proposals were discussed with the Chamber of Commerce and a point raised by the Chamber of Commerce was referred for interpretation to the Government of India, who replied in their letter No. L-1068, dated 21st March, 1929 :—

" With reference to your letter No. 309Com., dated the 14th January, 1929, I am directed to state that the Government of India have given their careful consideration to the contention of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that Article 7 of the Convention concerning the employment of Women during the night justifies the continuance of the present arrangement by which women employed in jute mills do not receive a continuous period of rest of eleven hours during the night.

The Government of India did not overlook the special provisions of this article when they asked the Government of Bengal in Mr. Clow's letter No. L-1068, dated the 30th May, 1928, to consider the advisability of taking steps to secure for women employed in jute mills the full rest period of eleven consecutive hours in the night. There is also reason to believe that in introducing the special provisions of Article 7 the framers of the Convention had in mind climatic conditions such as prevail in India, but the Government of India have, for the reasons explained in the following paragraph, some doubt as to whether in all the circumstances of the case, they would be justified in invoking Article 7 as the reason for permitting women employed in the jute mills of Bengal to be deprived of the full period of rest during the night as provided for by the Convention.

Apart from the fact that in reports made to the International Labour Office under Article 408 of the Peace Treaty the Government of India have declared that Article 7 of the Convention is not utilized in this country, when the Convention was under discussion at the International Labour Conference, a proposal was actually made to provide for a reduction in the night rest of women to meet the requirements of factories working double-shifts. This proposal was rejected and it may, therefore, be taken that it was the deliberate intention of the Conference not to make special provision for factories working double or multiple-shifts. I am to enclose in this connection a copy of a letter,* dated the 4th November, 1927, from the Director of the International Labour Office to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Finnish Government from which it will be seen that the International Labour Office is of opinion that a reduction cannot be made in the period of rest during the night in order to facilitate the organization of work in shifts. In the case of the jute mills the hours of work for women were fixed to suit the system of shifts adopted by the industry, and the benefit of Article 7 of the Convention has not apparently been claimed primarily for climatic reasons but for the continuance of that system.

The Government of India are, however, prepared to agree that there is no objection to the application of Article 7 of the Convention to the jute mills in Bengal provided this is done strictly in the interests of the health of the workers and not merely to facilitate work under any system of shifts. Before arriving at any final decision as to the action to be taken, they would therefore be glad to know whether, in the opinion of the local Government, it can be held that the hours of rest at present adopted for women in the jute mills are in fact in the best interests of the health of the women concerned as contended by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce."

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To this letter the Government of Bengal replied in their letter No. 465T.—Com., dated the 21st May, 1929 :—

" With reference to the correspondence ending with Mr. Lall's letter No. L-1068, dated the 21st March, 1929, on the above subject, I am directed to say that the Government of Bengal are of opinion that the hours of rest at night at present adopted for women in the jute mills are not in the best interests of the health of the women concerned. I am to add that the mills are not closed down during the hottest part of the day."

In the meantime it had been announced that the Royal Commission on Indian Labour was to be appointed and no further action on the shift-system as a whole or on the night-rest period of women has been taken, pending the reference of the whole subject to the Commission, and now to the question of shifts and the cognate question of the night-rest period of women have been added the items in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission mentioned at the commencement of this memorandum. The local Government have carefully considered the various questions at issue and have come to the conclusion that unless power is conferred on the local Government to control shifts, any recommendation made for the reduction of the weekly and daily maximum hours of work would be nugatory. The multiple-shift system in the jute mills is practically as old as the industry itself, and, particularly, before the passing of the Factories Act of 1911, it undoubtedly saved workers in jute mills from the graver abuses of labour which had been reported from other parts of India. It was devised by jute-mill owners in order to get the maximum out of their machinery. Before the night-work of women was prohibited, it enabled them to work their machinery for practically 24 hours a day, provided they had the necessary light. It also to some extent enabled managers to arrange shifts to suit individual desires of work people, particularly with regard to the distances they had to travel to and from their work in the mornings and evenings. These benefits the multiple-shift system still confers on workers, for, as has been already pointed out, the weekly and daily maximum hours worked in multiple-shift mills are theoretically less than those in single-shift mills, and the shifts may still be so arranged that workers coming

*Not printed.

from a distance can, to some extent, be accommodated with regard to the shifts which they work. The multiple-shift system is well understood by the workers, and, indeed, in some cases it seems to be preferred by them, although such preference, as has been openly expressed from time to time, is alleged to arise as much from the abuse to which the multiple-shift system lends itself as from its other merits. It is well known that, owing to the complicated nature of the shifts, the multiple-shift system has been the occasion of many illicit gains on the part of time-clerks and sirdars. It is also recognized that the multiple-shift system provides for a larger number of workmen than the single-shift system. Government has no accurate information as to the higher percentage of workmen employed in multiple-shift mills as against single-shift mills, but they believe that the figure varies from about 20 to 25 per cent. It is significant, however, that in spite of the statements which have been made regarding unemployment accruing from a change-over from the multiple to the single-shift system no complaints have reached Government regarding such unemployment, in spite of the fact that during the last few years fifty per cent. of the mills have changed over.

The Government of Bengal appreciate the reasons which have led to the multiple-shift system, and also the force of the contention that it gives to the jute manufacturing industry an opportunity of making the most of fixed plant within the present limits of the law. For many years, however, they have had before them constant complaint from the factory inspection department that the system prevents effective enforcement of the fundamental labour provisions of the Factories Act. The views of the department are not those only of the chief inspector; they arise from the experience of every inspector and every full-time certifying surgeon who has had to administer the Act, and the local Government on analysing the grounds on which their opinions have been founded have come to the conclusion that the complaints of the department are justified.

In the first place, it stands to reason that the multiple-shift system must render the checking of hours exceedingly difficult. This is inherent in it, as is evident from the following typical system of shifts :—

Time-workers.

A.—5.30 to 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
B.—5.30 to 9.30 a.m. and 2 to 7 p.m.
C.—8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Piece-workers.

A.—5.30 to 7.30 a.m. ; 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
B.—5.30 to 8 a.m. ; 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 3 to 7 p.m.
C.—5.30 to 9 a.m. ; 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.
D.—5.30 to 10.30 a.m. ; 12 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

Half-timers (Children).

A.—5.30 to 10 a.m.
B.—10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
C.—2.30 to 7 p.m.

(For a diagram of shifts vide Appendix A).

In the second place, it also stands to reason that there must be more than ordinary difficulty in checking hours in multiple-shift jute mills when the problem of devising suitable registers to secure observance of the Act proves so difficult. The factories department may fairly be looked on as expert in the matter of drawing up such registers, but the fact remains that neither the department nor the jute manufacturing industry itself, which has been constantly consulted on the forms proposed to be prescribed, have been able to find a register suitable to the circumstances.

In the third place, the list of irregularities attached to the letter of the Chief Inspector, dated the 17th May, 1927, quoted above, proves convincingly the Chief Inspector's contention that the system lends itself easily to abuses. Since the Chief Inspector submitted his report in 1927, further analysis has been made of irregularities in jute mills, and the following list is a record of irregularities in the employment of labour in multiple-shift jute mills from May, 1927 to November, 1929.

Irregularities in the employment of Labour in jute mills using multiple system of shifts from May, 1927, to November, 1929.

	Nature of infraction.	Number of irregularities.	Number of prosecutions.
21	Employing persons during their specified rest interval	3	
	Employing women during their specified rest interval	2	
		5	—
22	Persons were being employed on Sundays without being given a holiday in lieu thereof.	3	
	Illegal employment of persons on Sunday	2	
	Persons were being employed on Sundays contrary to Section 22 and Urgent Repairs Notification.	1	
	Persons were being employed on Sundays contrary to Section 22 and Exemption Notification.	1	
		7	—
23 (*a*)	Employing children without medical certificates or tokens.	12	3
	Employing children without medical certificates and on cancelled certificates.	2	
	Employing children on cancelled certificates	2	
	Employing a child carrying a token giving reference to a certificate belonging to another.	1	
	Children were being employed a few days before being certified.	1	
	A child had been employed without being certified ..	1	
	Employing children below the legal age	4	
	Children driven out of mill on arrival of the Inspector	3	
		26	3
24	Employing women after legal hours	1	
	Employing women contrary to specified hours ..	1	
	Women were found working before 5.30 a.m. ..	1	
		3	—
25	Employing children in two factories on the same day..	2	—
26	Employing persons contrary to specified hours ..	20	1
	Employing persons outside or beyond specified hours	8	3
	Employing persons beyond and without specified hours	2	
	Persons found working on wrong shifts	4	
	Employing a woman contrary to specified hours ..	1	
	Employing children contrary to or beyond specified hours.	7	
		42	4
27	Persons were being employed for more than 60 hours a week.	1	—
28	Persons were being employed for more than 11 hours a day.	2	—

Irregularities in the employment of Labour in jute mills using multiple system of shifts from May, 1927, to November, 1929.—Contd.

	Nature of infraction.	Number of irregularities.	Number of prosecutions.
35	Registers not maintained	5	2
	Registers not maintained up to date	11	
	Registers not maintained correctly	6	
	Registers not maintained correctly and up to date ..	3	2
	Total weekly hours not shown in employment register	1	
	Actual hours worked including overtime not shown correctly	1	
	Specified hours of work and shift classification not shown	2	
	Children's register not being kept correctly	3	
	Double employment of children	1	
	Attendance of a child found working not recorded ..	1	
35 & 43 (*a*)	Only register for the week current at the time of the Inspector's visit kept. Previous ones destroyed.	1	
		35	4
Rule 71	Employing a woman without "employment number check."	1	
	Total	124	11

In the fourth place, the present full time Certifying Surgeons, Captain O'Connor and Military Assistant Surgeon Pownes, have reported as follows :—" The systems of shifts in multiple-shift jute mills afford every opportunity for employment beyond legal limits and in some mills children are actually working as many as 11 and 12 hours per day. In single-shift mills, where two or more are adjoining, children have every opportunity of working the morning shift in one mill and the afternoon shift in another. Generally speaking it may be stated that in our opinion approximately 25 per cent. of the children employed in jute mills work longer hours than the law permits, thereby affecting and jeopardizing their general health and physique."

The above remarks, it is true, apply to both multiple and single-shift mills, but the regulation of child labour in single-shift mills is easier from the point of view of both the Manager and the Factory Inspector, and the Chief Inspector is of the opinion that were shifts properly regulated, then, in due course, the evil of double employment of children could be reduced to negligible proportions.

In the fifth place, as already indicated, the actual number of detected irregularities is not an adequate measure of the extent of the abuses under the multiple-shift system. It has already been mentioned that the majority of detected irregularities are practically random instances. During inspection, an inspector has not the time to question every adult or every child in a jute mill, but the fact that irregularities are detected in random instances gives reasonable ground for belief that the actual number of detections are only a small proportion of the total. Moreover, the inspector is constantly faced with the antagonism of the *sirdars*, time-clerks, and workers themselves in the detection of irregularities. It is significant that up to the present not a single employee in the jute manufacturing industry of Bengal has voluntarily come forward to give evidence of infraction of the hours provisions of the Factories Act. Trade unions have not yet gained sufficient strength to enable them to take a leading part in the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act, and in many instances questionable means are employed by *sirdars* and time-clerks in order to hoodwink inspectors. Managers are not to blame for this position. They are eager to avoid conflict with the law and generally do all they can to secure an adequate enforcement of it. Like the inspectors, however, they are faced with the problem that the labour is not desirous of observing in every case the labour provisions of the Factories Act. This, indeed, may be said to be an argument in favour of the continuance of the present system as it may be contended that if the labour provisions of the Act are not desired by labour itself, then there can be little oppressive employment. On the other hand, the attempts to hoodwink the Act are made mainly by the time-clerks and *sirdars* against whom in the present system of working the actual workers themselves dare not protest.

In the sixth place, the judgment in the Howrah mills case, a copy of which is attached (Appendix B) shows that any register which may be devised is likely to be useless. In that case it has been ruled that the words " up to date " in section 41 (*h*) of the Factories Act may be interpreted so freely as to permit the filling in of a register after a shift has been completed. This ruling removes the only effective means at the disposal of the inspector for checking the hours of workers.

In the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Factories Act, the first essential is co-operation of managers and managing agents with the officers responsible for the administration of the Act. Generally speaking, both managing agents and mill-managers have done their best to enforce the law, but the results as reported seem to indicate that managing agents, mill-managers, and factory inspectors are faced with almost an insoluble problem so long as the present complicated system of shifts continues to exist. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce suggest in their letter No. 2933–1927, dated the 30th September, 1927, that the system of inspection be revised. They say :—" The Committee of the Chamber do not say that the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories does not indicate a satisfactory state of affairs, but, in their opinion, it is more reasonable that the Government should so organize the system of inspection as to make it efficient to deal with the existing and old-established conditions of an industry, than that these conditions should be pruned and shaped to meet its difficulties."

The Government of Bengal cannot accept this view. The record of infractions of the Act is sufficient proof of the difficulty of enforcing the provisions under the relay system. With the exception of those owners who are ready to take the risk of conviction for labour irregularities for the reason that the large gains which accrue from such irregularities are out of all proportion to the fines which are imposed, it is assumed that managing agents and managers do intend to co-operate with the Factory Inspection Department in the observance of the law. That they are unable to do so is not their fault, but the fault of the system on which they work. Neither managers, nor assistant managers, nor overseers, can come to know their labour personally on a multiple-shift system. The workers are moving in and out of the factory during the whole of the day, and when 13½ hours are worked, different shifts of supervising staff have also to be employed. If the managers themselves and their superior staff do not know their labour, it goes without saying that factory inspectors, who visit the mills only occasionally, cannot know the labour. Even were the staff of the Factory Inspection Department to be so increased as to provide one inspector per multiple-shift jute mill in Bengal, the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act could not be guaranteed. The Government of Bengal, moreover, which have already expanded the Factory Inspection Department in recent years to the limit of their financial resources, could not possibly subscribe to the view that where, in their opinion, the end to be achieved can be effected by simpler means, the revenues of the province should be spent in employing a large staff of inspectors to secure observance of the law in only one section of one industry.

The enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act, in the opinion of the local government, should be accomplished not through a much-multiplied staff of inspectors, but through control of shifts. Regulation of hours, unaccompanied by control of shifts, has proved a failure, except in single-shift mills, which, under the present law, are liable at any time to be forced back to the multiple-shift system, the continuance of which, under the present law, must inevitably lead Government to consider seriously whether it is worth while at all to enforce the labour provisions of the Act.

The local government also consider that the time has arrived when the possibility of reducing maximum hours, both weekly and daily, should be taken up. The present weekly limit was imposed to carry into effect the principle of Article 10 of the Washington Hours Convention, but the same Article says that further provisions limiting the hours of work in India shall be considered at a future meeting of the general conference. The local government have no information as to when the reconsideration of the existing hours provisions is likely to take place, but they think that the time is even now ripe for re-opening the question. The new hours provisions of the 1922 Act, have in no way injuriously affected industry, which, indeed, in the main, was working within the maxima for adult labour before the Act was passed. From the analysis of hours already given above, it is clear that the majority of industries in Bengal are already working less than the maxima, both weekly and daily ; indeed, had the system of work in jute mills been reckoned as before the 1st July, 1929, when the hours of machine working were changed from 54 to 60, then Bengal would have shown a very small percentage of workers employed for the full 60-hour week. Industry in general has come to recognize the virtue of shorter hours. The Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908 came to the conclusion that shorter hours in India would mean higher production, a lesson which by then had been thoroughly assimilated in the

West, and, though the Government of Bengal are not in possession of statistical evidence showing that the production per operative per hour in the chief industries in Bengal is higher than it was before 1911, they conclude that because the majority of industries have reduced hours, such reduction has been in the best interests of the industries concerned.

The important exceptions, of course, are in the textile industry which in Bengal is tantamount to the jute manufacturing industry, for this industry employs well over half the total number of factory employees in the province. The Bengal labour problem is mainly a jute mill problem. Hence, it is that any proposal which is made regarding industrial labour must always have particular reference to that industry. The hours position in the jute manufacturing industry, is, as stated above, that the weekly limit in single-shift mills is 60 hours, in multiple-shift mills, between 38 and 55 hours. The daily limit in single-shift mills is 11 hours, and in multiple-shift mills, between 9½ and 11 hours.

The Government of Bengal consider that neither the jute manufacturing industry nor any other industry in the Presidency would be seriously affected were the weekly limit of hours reduced to a maximum of 55, with a proviso that the hours might be extended on the principle of section 30 (2) of the present Act, to deal with an exceptional pressure of work. 55 hours, however, should be regarded as the normal hours for every industry per week.

The maximum daily hours, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, should be 10.

The reductions suggested above are material ones, though the maxima still remain considerably higher than Western standards. Reduction in India must be gradual, for each step must be tested with reference to the regularity and efficiency of workers on the new systems of work. The Government of Bengal believe that the gradual reduction in hours which has taken place in the last 20 years has been accompanied by greater regularity and more efficiency, and they believe that further reduction will lead to the same result. They think, however, that the 48-hour week and the 8-hour day are both outside the realm of practical policy at present; indeed, only in recent years—or rather months—has any demand been made by local labour leaders for an 8-hour day or 48-hour week. Some industries, e.g., railway workshops, have already adopted the 8-hour day and the 48-hour week, but to prescribe it by law as applicable to all industries is at present impossible. Reduction in hours must go hand in hand with intensification in efficiency and regularity, which develops only slowly, over a series of years.

The Government of Bengal do not anticipate that industry in general will oppose the 10-hour day and the 55-hour week. The Government of India, indeed, prior to the Washington Conference, ascertained 10 years ago, after consultation with local Governments, that the general concensus of opinion was in favour of a 10-hour day. This limit may now be adopted, and with it a corresponding reduction of 5 hours in the maximum working week.

The Government of Bengal have carefully considered the question whether the hours of adult women should be reduced below those of adult men. On general grounds of humanity and progress, they would prefer to recommend a lower working-limit for adult women, but were such a limit imposed, it would react detrimentally on the interests of women workers. Disparity between the working hours of adult men and women would almost certainly end in the replacement of women by young adult men and were such replacement not to be made, a shift system would have to be introduced. This the Government of Bengal desire to obviate.

It is assumed that, in spite of the contentions of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the jute manufacturing industry falls within the general exceptions mentioned in Article 7 of the Draft Convention concerning the employment of women during night, the Government of India will amend the Factories Act to prevent women and children working between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. On this assumption, the limit of hours within which factories which employ women and children will be able to work will be 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., or 13 hours a day. The local government see no reason why if the recommendations they have made above are accepted, textile mills in Bengal should not work 2 shifts of 5 hours each per day with a long interval in the middle of the day, during which workers could go to their homes and have a meal and rest. In this connection, attention is invited to the findings of Mr. Parsons's report on the ventilation and the humidification of cotton mills in Bengal, which has been sent separately to the Commission. The general trend of Mr. Parsons's findings is that the hottest period of the day should be set aside for rest. His conclusions are tentative, and much more detailed enquiry is necessary before a categorical finding can be reached. But there would appear to be little doubt that it would be in the best interests of the workers

themselves that, particularly, in the hot months of the year they should not have to work during the hottest periods of the day. The Government of Bengal, however, have reached no findings on the particular system of working that should be enforced. What they do desire is the re-inclusion in the Factories Act of the power to control shifts. That power, they consider, should rest in the hands not of the Inspector of Factories, as it was in the 1911 Act, but with the local government, for the reason that the recommendations of the Factory Inspection Department would be subject to the decision of the Government, which usually consult the interests concerned in such matters.

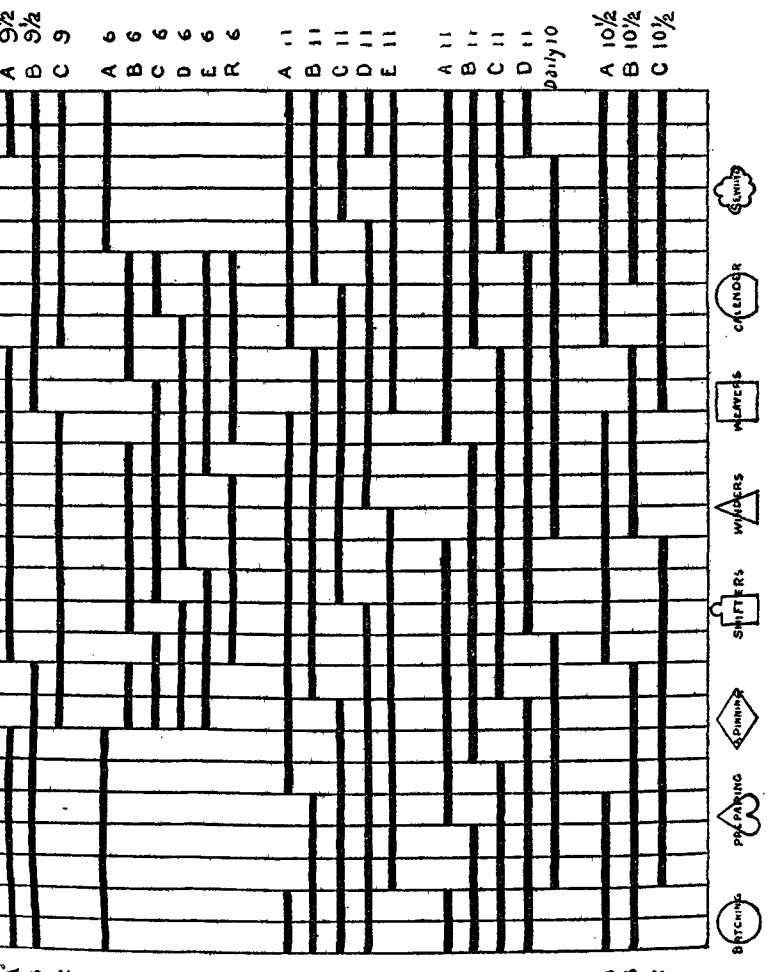
Much of the opposition to the re-inclusion of the power to control shifts arises from a fear that individual jute mills may be prejudiced. The root difficulty of the jute manufacturing industry is that the mills work and have always worked in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion. Their working agreements are unstable and always liable to dissolution by the disaffection of a minority. It is believed that the industry itself would ultimately welcome regulation by law on the ground that such regulation would be more stable and certain than internal regulation. All mills, both outside and inside the association, would be placed on a similar working basis and subject to a control which is not affected by competitive interests. The working conditions of employees could also be given more effective consideration. The Government of Bengal do not consider that the present single-shift system is a guarantee against the abuse of the labour provisions of the Factories Act. They have been compelled to support it as against the existing multiple-shift system, for the reason that no workable relay system has been put before them. Were the power to control shifts conferred on the local Government, it would be possible for them to permit systems of shifts, provided they were convinced that such shifts did not militate against the effective enforcement of the Act. On the other hand, it is probable that the industry itself would prefer that all the jute mills should work on a uniform basis, provided they were guaranteed that that basis could not be altered without the consent of Government.

The recommendations of the Government of Bengal with regard to the hours of children automatically follow from what has been said above. They consider that the maximum period of work permissible for children should be half the period permitted to adults, viz., five hours. This period would lead to greater effectiveness in the enforcement of the provisions relating to children and could be well adapted to a simple system of elementary education. If this recommendation is accepted it follows that the provisions of Sections 21 (*b*) and 21 (2) of the Factories Act are unnecessary.

The local Government do not consider that any change is required in the present age limits of children.

It has been suggested in the memorandum on " IX—Hours—A—Factories : (58) *Effect of daily limit* " that in the case of industries which are subject to fluctuating demands, probably, employees would be sufficiently protected against excessive hours, and the Act made workable were a weekly and not a daily restriction of hours imposed. This applies only to the non-textile industries, such as the engineering and shipbuilding industries, in which it has been alleged that the existing Act has led to a want of elasticity in working hours. All these industries work relatively short hours per day, viz., eight, and although the local Government have not examined this question in all its implications, there would appear to be a reasonable case for withdrawing the daily limit, provided means could be devised to ensure that the weekly limit was not exceeded. This raised a cognate question of considerable importance, viz., whether regulations could not be framed under the Factories Act on the parallel of the Codes of Regulations framed under the Factories Act in Great Britain. Such regulations might be framed on an all-India basis in consultation with the industries concerned, and it is probable that they might lead to simplification of administration on the side of both Government and the employers. The Government of Bengal, for example, have recommended separately that the English precedent should be followed in the case of docks. And it is probable that engineering workshops, ship-building workshops, and similar concerns could be dealt with in similar self-contained regulations. The framing of such regulations would obviate the complications of Chapter V of the Act and eliminate the difficulties which have been encountered in connection with the fixing of hours under section 26 of the Act. The local Government are inclined to view the above suggestions with favour, but are not prepared to give a final opinion on them without further analysis, in consultation with the industries concerned. They are of the opinion, however, that if such regulations are to be framed, the authority for prescribing them should be the Government of India and not local Governments.

APPENDIX A.
(Total number of employees, 6,964.)
System of Shifts.


GENERAL SHIFT
SHIFTERS
WINDERS BEAMERS & SEWERS
WEAVERS
SIRDARS
5-30 6 6-30 7 7-30 8 8-30 9 9-30 10 10-30 11 11-30 12 12-30 1 1-30 2 2-30 3 3-30 4 4-30 5 5-30 6 6-30 7
A 9½ B 9½ C 9
A 6 B 6 C 6 D 6 E 6 R 6
A 11 B 11 C 11 D 11 E 11
A 11 B 11 C 11 D 11 Daily 10
A 10½ B 10½ C 10½
BATCHING
PREPARING
PINNING
SHIFTERS
WINDERS
WEAVERS
CALENDER
CLEANING

APPENDIX B.

IN THE COURT OF BABU B. N. MUKHERJI, MAGISTRATE, FIRST CLASS, HOWRAH.

Complaint Case No. 1150 of 1927.

. . . . . .

Judgment.

The charge is that when the Inspector of Factories inspected the Howrah jute mills on the 28th July, he found that the attendance register had not been written in respect of five children workers. The manager, Mr. Murray, has been prosecuted under Section 41 (*h*) of the Factories Act. On the application of the manager, three other assistants have been summoned.

The Inspector of Factories has been examined for the prosecution. The manager has examined himself and two other witnesses.

There is no denying the fact the " B " shift commenced work at 10 a.m. and that at 11.15 to 11.25 a.m., it was found that the attendance of the five children had not been taken in the prescribed register. The witness admits that there are about 1,300 persons working in the particular mill and about 15,000 in the whole of the mill, and that it takes about a minute per head to mark attendance of the workers. The manager says that the taking of attendance is finished in about 1½ hours. The law says that the register is to be kept " up to date ". It does not mean that all the 1,300 persons are to be marked in the attendance register exactly at 10.30 a.m., which is physically impossible. A reasonable amount of time must be allowed to establish the identity of the persons working and then writing up the register. If it was found about the end of the day that the register had not been written up then of course it would be said that an offence under Section 41 (*h*) had been committed. But in the present case I cannot hold that the prosecution has established its case.

Further, even if it is supposed that an offence has been committed, yet it appears from the evidence of the Inspector of Factories that it is not possible for the manager to look into the working of all the departments and that his duty is that of supervision and management.

It appears from the defence evidence, including three volumes of circular orders issued by Mr. Murray (Ex. A to C) that the manager issued from time to time very strongly worded orders to his subordinates warning them against violation of the rules and threatening with punishments and that as a matter of fact some assistants were in fact fined and some dismissed. It must therefore be said that the manager has exercised " due diligence to enforce the execution of the Act " as contemplated in Section 42 (1) (*a*).

I therefore find the accused not guilty and acquit him under Section 245, C.P.C.

Enter Section 41 (*h*) mistake of fact.

(Signed) B. N. MUKHERJI,
Magistrate, 1st class, Howrah.

Howrah,
14th October, 1927.

X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults, and Children.

A.—Factories.

81. *Effect of* 1922 *Act on Employment.*—The higher age limit imposed by the 1922 Act on the employment of children has resulted in a very marked diminution in the numbers employed. The following table shows from 1920 to 1928 the number of adults and children employed in both textile and non-textile factories in Bengal :—

Year.	Number of children in textile factories.	Number of children in non-textile factories.	Number of adults in textile factories.	Number of adults in non-textile factories.
1920	30,599	4,361	262,238	167,515
1921	31,387	4,899	263,299	165,827
1922	29,929	6,203	299,576	181,372
1923	29,965	5,394	305,267	183,009
1924	29,361	5,679	317,576	190,507
1925	27,906	5,945	323,768	193,723
1926	21,912	5,891	319,096	204,024
1927	20,575	5,862	318,202	215,120
1928	18,906	5,516	326,750	219,907

Of the total number of children employed in Bengal, the great majority are employed in textile factories, and the above total shows that while the number of adults in textile factories has grown from approximately 262,200 to 326,700, the number of children has fallen from 30,600 to 18,900. In other words, while the number of adults in textile factories has increased by 24·5 per cent., the number of children has decreased by 38 per cent. This decrease is practically entirely due to the raising of the age limit by the 1922 Act. A few jute mills in recent years have entirely stopped employing children. The difficulties in regularizing the employment of children and the risk of prosecution, if children are found illegally employed, are undoubtedly the reasons why these jute mills have dispensed entirely with half-time labour.

In non-textile factories in which the employment of children is insignificant, as compared with textile factories, the number of adults increased from 167,515 in 1920 to 219,907 in 1928 or by 31·2 per cent., while the number of children increased from 4,361 in 1922 to 5,516 in 1928, or by 26·7 per cent. The following table shows the relative increases in the number of non-textile factories, and the number of employees, including children, during the period 1912 to 1920 and 1920 to 1928 :—

—	1912.	1920.	Increase.	1920.	1928.	Increase.
Number of non-textile factories.	247	596	349	596	1,247	651
Number of children employed in non-textile factories.	2,282	4,361	2,079	4,361	5,516	1,155
Number of adults employed in non-textile factories.	106,755	167,515	60,760	167,515	219,907	52,392

The increases in the number of employees, shown by the above figures, may be taken as being entirely due to the increases in the number of factories brought on to the register. The comparatively small increase in the number of child operatives during the 1920–28 period is due to the raising of the age limit from 9 to 12 years by the 1922 Act. A considerable increase took place between 1920 and 1922, but this was followed by a decrease after 1922, when the new provisions came into effect. The number of factories on the register in 1922 was 884 as against 1,247 in 1928, whereas the number of children employed was 6,203 and 5,516 respectively, i.e., an increase of 363 factories and a decrease of 687 children.

82. *Admission of infants to Factories.*—The Factories Act contains ample provision for the exclusion of infants from factories, if such exclusion is deemed advisable.

It is practically the universal habit of mothers employed in factories in Bengal to bring their infants into the factories with them. Very few cases of accidents to such children have been reported, but to avoid the chance of accidents several attempts have been made by employers to establish creches. Unfortunately not one of these has had the success that was anticipated. Women prefer to have their infants under their own eyes in that part of the factory in which they are working if at all possible. They are suspicious of other supervision for reasons which are best known to themselves. Probably they arise from caste prejudices or personal jealousies. It is difficult to understand why women should not prefer the obvious advantages which creches offer, but the fact remains that the good intentions of some managements in this respect have been frustrated. On the other hand, useful experience has been gained which will doubtless be used to future advantage.

It would be impossible at the present stage to prohibit the admission of infants and young children to factories. This would be tantamount to prohibiting the employment of female employees who are mothers of small children. Any attempt to force the exclusion of children or even to force the use of creches inside the factory would almost certainly result in labour trouble. The question is not a serious one, because the children are better off, at least in the larger, well-ventilated factories than they are in the lines or bazaar bustees. Moreover, in the home of the ordinary factory-worker there is no means of supervision of infants, apart from the mother herself. Were the admission of infants to factories to constitute a danger, the existing powers of the Act could be used at any time.

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86.—*Work and Training of Young Adults*—(*i*) *Facilities for apprenticeship.*—In textile factories, with few exceptions, there are no systematic arrangements for the training of young adults.

In the Ludlow Jute Mills at Chengail a system has been enforced since 1922 which aims at the filling of subordinate posts by boys educated in the mill's own school.

After three years at the mill school the six most advanced pupils are put into a " B " apprenticeship class for a period of 18 months, during which time their daily training consists of being in the mill departments from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and at school from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. According to a calculated schedule time each boy goes through the machine shop, carpenter shop, electrical department, power-plant department, weaving and preparing departments, and, at the end of 18 months, is promoted to an " A " apprenticeship class, where he goes through another course on similar lines, but on a higher plane. After 18 months as an " A " apprentice, the boy is given his choice with respect to the department in which he wishes to work. During these three years' apprenticeship, he is paid at the beginning at the rate of 2 annas per day, rising by small sums every six months. He then starts at 12 annas per day in the department of his choice, where he begins his regular work. Dependants of all classes of employees are eligible for such training irrespective of caste or creed. Ninety per cent. of the seats are allotted to sons of labourers, and 10 per cent. to sons of the clerical staff. The management hopes that in due time boys educated in this way will be able to fill posts in the mill as high as that of departmental manager.

Systematic training in craftsmanship is confined almost entirely to Government factories, railway workshops, and the larger engineering concerns. These factories employ apprentices who go through a five years' course of workshop and technical training.

87. *Extent of " Blind Alley " Employment* (i.e., *Extent to which Children are Dismissed on reaching Full Age*).—There are no statistics available on this subject, but there is no evidence to show that children are generally dismissed on reaching full age. Boys are absorbed in the industries in which they work as half-timers, but it is not uncommon for boys on reaching the legal adult age for factory employment to leave their employment for some time. Girls, as a rule, leave their employment when they are married, and may or may not return some time later.

89. *Work of Women and Children in Factories not subject to Act.*—There is a large number of concerns in Bengal which fall short of the requirements of section 2 (3) (*a*) of the Factories Act for registration purposes. The main classes of such concerns are soorki mills, rice mills, iron foundries, printing presses, match factories, brass and bell metal casting and polishing workshops, oil mills, hardware workshops, steel-trunk factories, wire netting and weaving factories, umbrella factories, soap factories, tanneries, and hosiery factories. The number of women and children employed in these factories is not known, but probably it is not very large. In one instance only in Bengal has use been made of section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Act. The factory in question which was already registered, was notified as the result of an attempt by the proprietor to avoid coming under the Act by dispensing with the use of power-driven machinery.

The majority of the smaller factories are ill-adapted for factory purposes, and the extension of the Act to them has been prevented in Bengal hitherto by lack of staff due to financial reasons. Probably, however, there would be no real reason for the extended application of section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Act on account of women and children only. The local Government consider that they should be regulated in the interests of all employees, and such regulation is only a matter of time and money.

It may be added, that at present, Government have in contemplation the extension of the Act by means of notification under section 2 (3) (*b*) to all small tea factories. A fairly large number of tea factories do not satisfy the provision of section 2 (3) (*a*) of the Act, and it is considered desirable that small as well as large tea factories should be brought under regulation.

XII. Wages.

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, dated 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of memoranda of the Government of Bengal on XII.—Wages, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Commission.

2. With regard to Chapter XI, item (93), I am to say that a report has been included under item (79) (*days worked per week in other establishments*), the memorandum on which was forwarded with this department letter referred to above. Items (94) and (95) are dealt with by the Government of India, and the local Government have no remarks to offer on them.

3. Memoranda on items (96) to (104) (Chapter XII) and items (108) to (111) (Chapter XII), in one collection are forwarded herewith, as also a separate memorandum on items (105), (106) and (107).

4. I am to say that the Government of Bengal propose to offer no evidence on the items in Chapter XIII.—" Industrial Efficiency of Workers." These are essentially subjects for which the necessary facts must be obtained from employers of labour. I am, however, to enclose a note on sub-item (115) (ix) (*effect on production of alcohol and drugs*).

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96. *Prevailing Rates of Wages (time and piece) and Average Earnings.*—(i) *In industry.*—No census of wages has been held in Bengal. Such figures as are available have been collected by the Chief Inspector of Factories, and the most comprehensive report compiled so far is in appendix VI to the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1927.

No further wage figures were published in the report of the Chief Inspector for the year 1928, as the wage-level remained the same.

(ii) *In surrounding agricultural areas.*—Quinquennial censuses of agricultural wages are held in Bengal. The last census was held in 1925. No material changes have taken place in agricultural wages since the publication of that report.

(iii) *Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.*—No official analysis has been made of this subject in Bengal. In organized industry payment in kind is not usual. In a large number of concerns, however, workers receive benefits analogous to payment in kind, such as housing, which is provided either free or on less than an economic rent. In some cases, the money value of wages is increased by strict supervision of bazaar prices and by the provision of special facilities for bazaar purposes. These result in cheaper and better food being made available to employees than is usually provided in the local bazaars.

In agriculture, payment in kind is much more common, and this applies also to tea-gardens, where houses are provided, as a rule, entirely free of rent. Firewood is also often provided free, and workers are given plots of land on very favourable terms.

97. *Movements in recent years.*—(i) *Increases and decreases.*—(ii) *Reasons for variation.*—All wages in Bengal have increased during the last 10 years. The main reason for the increase was the rise in the cost of living during and after the war. Since the post-war increases were given, the wage standard has been stable. After the war, from 1919-20 to 1921-22, there was a great deal of industrial unrest owing partly to the fact that the increase in the cost of living had not been followed sufficiently promptly by a corresponding increase in wages. By 1922-23 the unrest subsided, as wages had been brought into line with the cost of living.

No authoritative general figures have been collected to show the differences in the standards of wages in the last 10 years, but in the Bengal jute mills, which may be accepted as a type for other industries, the rise in wages has been between 50 and 60 per cent. No definite calculation could be given without a detailed wage census, which cannot be undertaken in Bengal until the Government of Bengal can afford to set up the necessary organization.

Statements are attached showing current rates of wages and movements in recent years in the following industries and services.

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(5) Inland steamer employees (the Inland Steamer Companies)—E. (6) Canal employees—F. (7) Cinchona plantation employees—G. (8) Tea garden employees —H.

(iii) *Relation to prices and cost of living (pre-war and post-war).*—As indicated elsewhere, no cost of living statistics have been prepared in Bengal. There is, therefore, no authoritative information with regard to the relation between prices and cost of living pre-war and post-war.

(iv) *Relation to profits.*—No official information is available on this head.

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E.

Inland Steamer Employees (The Inland Steamer Companies).

Prevailing Rates of Wages and Earnings.—Serangs Rs. 46 to Rs. 150 per month; drivers Rs. 46 to Rs. 120 per month.

Lowest Ratings.—Generally speaking, the minimum pay is Rs. 20 per month.

Movements in Recent Years.—Increased by approximately 20 per cent. since 1920.

Note.—The above rates do not apply to the crews of barges employed on harbour work.

F.

Irrigation Department—Canal Employees.

Prevailing Rates of Wages and Earnings.—Rates in metropolitan areas and in Eastern Bengal :—

	Rs. a.	Rs. a.
	Per day.	
Coolies	0 8 to	0 12
Masons	1 4 to	1 12
Carpenters	1 4 to	1 12
Blacksmiths	1 4 to	1 8 or even Rs. 2.
Sweepers	..	0 12
Khalasis	..	0 12

Members of ships' crews are employed on monthly wages varying from Rs. 18 to Rs. 75 per mensem.

Prevailing rates of wages in 1929 in South Western and Northern Bengal :—

(1) Coolies for earthwork are paid 8 annas to 10 annas per diem. But in cultivation season the rate is increased to 12 annas per day. The female coolie gets one anna less than the male coolie.

	Rs. a.	Rs. a.
	Per day.	
(2) Carpenter	1 4 to	1 8
(3) Mason	1 4 to	1 8
(4) Thatcher	0 12 to	0 14
(5) Blacksmith	1 8 to	2 0
(6) Reja for carrying mortar	0 5 to	0 6

On the piecework system their earning depends on their output. Generally the men earn about 12 annas per day for earthwork. The Sonthali coolie and his wife earn a rupee a day working together.

In recent years there has been increase in wages and the present rates are 40 to 50 per cent. above the pre-war level.

G.

Cinchona Plantation Employees.

Rates—Skilled Men.—Rs. 12 to Rs. 36 per month according to degree of skill and local supply and demand. Unskilled men 5 annas 3 pies to 6 annas per day.

Women—4 annas to 4 annas 3 pies per day.

Children—3 annas per day.

Movements in recent years.—Movements about 50—80 per cent. above the rates prevailing in 1912.

H.

Tea Garden Factories.

(i) *Darjeeling.*—The minimum average wages earned per day by ordinary workers will be approximately, for men 7-6 annas, for women 6 annas and children 2-9 annas. As much of their work is paid on the piece-work system throughout the year, it is usual for good industrious workers to earn more than double the figures mentioned.

It is estimated that the average earnings of the workers are about double those of 15 years ago.

(ii) *Jalpaiguri.*—The average monthly wages earned by a man is about Rs. 12–4, by a woman Rs. 5 and by a child Rs. 2–10. This is secured, however, by working only about one-third of the time which could normally be expected from workmen without imposing a strain on them.

The rates of earnings have increased considerably in recent years and it is considered that since the war, the earnings have in exceptional instances increased by 250 per cent.

(iii) *Chittagong.*—The average wages earned per day by a man is 8 annas, and by a woman 7 annas, the wages vary according to the amount of work the worker desires to do.

Earnings have generally increased by about 25 per cent. in recent years.

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101. *Method of Fixing Wages.*—(i) *By negotiated agreements.*—The fixation of wages by negotiated agreements is extremely rare in Bengal. In the Calcutta Tramways Company, as the result of serious labour trouble in 1921, an agreement was reached regarding the fixation of wages as the result of the report of the committee of inquiry appointed by Government.

In 1929, in the jute mills, industry agreement was negotiated by the Labour Intelligence Officer embodying the general principles on which wages should be paid on the change-over from 54 to 60 hours working week.

In many disputes informal agreements have been made between managements and their workmen regarding the rates to be paid but these do not fall within the definition of negotiated agreements.

(ii) *Other means.*—The ordinary method of fixing wages is supply and demand, which are tempered by the prevailing rates in the various areas. Practically no agreements of a general character between employers are in operation in Bengal. Wages are fixed by individual concerns, not by industries or localities.

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" 105. *Minimum wages—Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.*—The advisability and possibility of the statutory establishment of minimum wages in India was considered in 1927–28 by the Government of Bengal in connection with the International Labour Conferences held in 1927 and 1928. The Government of Bengal recommended that the Government delegates at Geneva should ask for the exclusion of India from any Convention or Recommendation on the subject that might be adopted, on the basis of Article 405 of the Treaty of Peace. The following extracts, adapted from a demi-official letter on the subject to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Industries Department, indicate the grounds on which they reached their conclusions :—

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"(1) The subject is not entirely new to the Government of Bengal, as a reference to the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council of the 7th July, 1921, will show. Mr. K. C. Roy Chaudhuri's Resolution, moved just after the Bengal Committee on Industrial unrest had finished its enquiries, could hardly then be taken seriously by the council, but it at least elicited from Sir John Kerr a clear statement of what the Government of Bengal then thought of the applicability of the minimum wage system to India, a subject which, as he pointed out to the council, very few have studied, and concerning which, it may be added, his arguments are as valid in 1928 as they were in 1921.

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"(2) In view of the importance of the issue under consideration, it is necessary to go into the problem of minimum wage machinery in some detail. It is not proposed to deal with the general economic issues involved in minimum wage legislation ; the questionnaire adopted at last year's conference clearly shows that only methods are going to be taken into consideration at this year's conference.

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"(3) The example chosen for comparative study is the Trade Board system in the United Kingdom. This is chosen for several reasons ; but mainly because in India labour legislation has, as a rule, followed the example of similar legislation in Great Britain ; the Trade Board method of fixing minimum wages has been widely adopted in Europe outside Britain, e.g., in France, Germany, Norway, Austria and

Czecho-Slovakia; it has also been adopted in the Argentine Republic, and, in a distinctive form, in some parts of Australasia. The General Board system, common in North America, differs from the English system only in respect of method; in trade boards, rates are fixed by industry or by part of an industry or trade, in general Boards, they are fixed for a number of industries or for a whole area. The other types of method for fixing minimum wages—compulsory arbitration and direct legislation—need hardly be mentioned, as it is taken for granted that the Government of India have not had either of them even in remote contemplation when framing their tentative proposals.

"(4) It is not proposed here to go into a detailed history or description of the Trade Board system in Great Britain. Sir John Kerr dealt with this side of the question in his council speech, to which reference is invited. A short resume of British Trade Board legislation is necessary, however, in order to bring into prominence some salient points which give illumination from the comparative point of view.

"(5) Trade boards in Great Britain originated in 1910 as the result of the passing of the Trades Boards Act, of 1909. This Act was the culmination of a long continued agitation against "sweating" in particular trades and in industry in general. The particular trades scheduled in the first Trade Boards Act, were chain-making, machine-made lace and net finishing, paper-box making, ready-made and wholesale bespoke tailoring. Trade boards were established in these trades soon after the passing of the Act, and in 1913 four more trades were included, viz., sugar confectionery and food preserving, shirt-making, hollow ware and tin-box making, and linen and cotton embroidery. Up to the war, in all, 13 boards were established. During the war, the trade boards were in practice, superseded by orders issued by the Ministry of Munitions, but in 1917, as the result of recommendations made by the Reconstruction Committee on the regulation of women's wages, the question of prescribing a minimum wage for women workers was taken up, and trade board machinery was suggested as a means to secure that end. The Whitley reports also recommend the continuance and further establishment of trade boards as a measure for the preservation of industrial peace in trades which were not well organized. As a result of the recommendations of the reconstruction committee and of the Whitley reports, the Trade Boards Act was amended in 1918. The fundamental principles of the first Act were unchanged. These features were (1) that minimum wages should be fixed trade by trade; (2) that the power of fixing the rates should be entrusted to a joint board composed of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers in the trade concerned, with the addition of "appointed members"; and (3) that rates fixed by trade boards became, when confirmed by the Ministry of Labour, enforcible either by civil or by criminal proceedings through a Government department. The original trades to which the Act applied were unorganized on both sides, i.e., there was little or no organization amongst the employers and there was practically none amongst the workers. In some of the trades, too, there was a large amount of "home work," that is work done in the worker's own home, usually at contract rates, which were very low.

"(6) In the original Act, the description of the class of trade to which the Act could be applied was that the rate of wages prevailing in such trade should be "exceptionally low" as compared with that in other employments. Difficulties arose in connection with the interpretation of the words "exceptionally low." It proved difficult in practice to establish that in any particular trade wages were exceptionally low in comparison with other trades especially as the comparison might be with other "sweated" trades. It was also considered necessary, in the conditions of industry excepted to prevail at the end of the war, to give power to the Minister of Labour not only to deal with trades which were manifestly "sweated" trades but also with trades which might become "sweated" as the result of the flow of labour into such trades with the cessation of war conditions. The result was that in the new Act the Minister of Labour was empowered to establish trade boards in any trade, "having regard to the rates of wages prevailing in the trade or in part of the trade." It was also added that he had to be satisfied that no adequate machinery was in existence for the effective regulation of wages throughout the trade. The 1918 Act also amended the original Act in respect of procedure, but this need not be further pursued. It may be added, however, that since the end of the war the list of trade boards established under the Acts has been enormously increased. It now extends to between 44 and 50 boards covering about one and a quarter million persons engaged in about 40 trades. These trades include, in addition to those already mentioned, aerated waters; boot and shoe repairing; brush and broom making; button making; flax and hemp; fur; hat, cap, and millinery; jute; laundry; paper-bag making; rope, twine, and net making; stamp and pressed-metal wires; the tobacco trade; and wholesale mantle and costume making. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but these trades are mentioned for a reason which will be obvious from what is said below.

"(7) Two points emerge from the preceding two paragraphs which are of interest in connection with the present reference. One is that trade boards were established in Britain as the result of an agitation spread over a long series of years. The agitation if a date may be definitely ascribed as the starting point, began in 1885; it was accelerated by the Report of the Dunraven Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1890, and reinforced by several private Bills, many independent inquiries, and the Official Enquiry into Earnings and Hours in 1906. The condition of the "sweated" trades and the evils attached to "home work" were well known before the first Trade Boards Act was passed. It was universally admitted that these evils should if possible, be eradicated, as it is also universally admitted that trade boards have been very effective in their eradication. Even so, it took almost a quarter of a century for the British Government to undertake legislation on the subject, and such legislation, when undertaken was defective in some important respects. It is not contended by the Government of Bengal that legislation to abolish crying evils should be spread over a quarter of a century, but it *is* held that, before the Government of India, either actively or passively, accept the principle of minimum-wage legislation, a reasoned case should be established for their creation. The Government of Bengal are not aware of any evils in industry in this Presidency, which call for the creation of minimum-wage machinery. There has been no public demand for it; nor even has there been occasion to appoint local commissions of inquiry into abuses of individual industries. One such committee, it is true, was appointed in 1921, which had partial reference to Bengal, viz., the Assam Tea Garden Labour Enquiry Committee but even the report of that committee does not support the view that minimum-wage machinery is necessary. The conditions then analysed were temporary, and since then these conditions have passed away and there has been little or no trouble in the tea industry, so far as the Government of Bengal are aware, in either Assam or Bengal. This industry, moreover, is mainly agricultural, and it is assumed that the forthcoming International Labour Conference will not include within the scope of its discussion the application of minimum-wage machinery to agricultural labour. The Government of Bengal are not aware that conditions in other areas of India have called for minimum-wage inquiries or legislation, and they are of opinion that till there are proved abuses, which require new machinery and which cannot be remedied by industry itself under existing legislation, no countenance should be given to a suggestion that minimum-wage legislation or machinery should be adopted in this country.

"(8) The second point which emerges from the short summary of minimum-wage legislation in Great Britain is the difficulty of interpreting the phrase "exceptionally low." This soon became apparent in Great Britain in the administration of the 1909 Act, and, as noted above, the phrase was abolished in the 1918 Act, and was replaced by "having regard to the rates of wages prevailing in the trade or in part of the trade." This is a very important point, especially as exactly the same phrase as proved unworkable in Britain, is used in paragraph 4 of your letter. A reference to paragraph 13 of the report of the delegates at the 10th Conference shows that the principle of "exceptionally low" wages was "readily accepted" by the drafting sub-committee. In this ready acceptance there appears to have been either ignorance or forgetfulness of the history of English legislation on the subject. It may be noted that the phrase appears in item 1 of the questionnaire, and, if the opposition of the Government of Bengal to countenancing minimum wage legislation in India may be regarded as captious, it may at least be conceded that there is ample enough proof in Great Britain itself that one of the fundamental ideas adopted by the 10th Conference has proved unworkable in practice in the very country from which the suggestion of internationalising minimum-wage principles emanated.

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"(17) It has been mentioned above that difficulties have been experienced in England regarding the interpretation of the phrase "exceptionally low." This was surmounted by the adoption of a workable criterion based on wages paid in similar industries or trades. In Australia, under the compulsory-arbitration system, the idea of a basic wage, or a "living wage" sufficient to enable a certain type of workmen to live on a certain standard, is prevalent; indeed there the "living wage" is a gospel enforcible by law. No employer may pay less than this minimum basic wage. There is now in Australia a very considerable literature on this very controversial subject, mainly compiled from the judgments of the various arbitration courts, and a study of this literature must convince everyone that the definition of "living wage" is one of the most difficult things in the world. The "living wage," however, is only one side of wage-fixing. Another is the capacity of an industry to pay, and this phrase has proved almost as controversial as the "living wage"; for example, the phrase "capacity to pay" is frequently interpreted to mean the determination of basic wage of a group of workers on the basis of the capacity of industry in general to pay. Or it may be based on the capacity of each separate industry to pay, regard being given only to conditions in an individual industry. Then, again, there is the English

principle of the 1918 Act, viz., wages in other industries. Now whatever principle is adopted (and often all together are taken into consideration in the decision of any one case), it is obvious that minimum-wage-fixing machinery presupposes complete and correct statistical information of various matters; of wages, both of industry as a whole and of the various grades of workers in individual industries; of the cost of living; of the financial position of industry in general and of each industry; of prices, wholesale and retail, general and local. It is almost unnecessary to dwell on the almost complete absence of information on several of these vital points in India. For one thing, there is no census of wages. In 1921–22 and attempt was made by the Government of Bengal (at the instance of the Government of India) to compile such a census for Bengal, but the effort was a complete failure. Such returns as were sent in were mostly inadequate; many returns were not sent in at all, and even if complete returns had been sent in the Government of Bengal would not have been able to afford the staff to deal with them. A real census of wages, moreover, in India would require compulsory powers, but it is doubtful if, at the present stage of development, a demand for such powers should be justified. In the absence of such powers, and in the absence of the census which such powers might enable Government to compile, it would be absolutely hopeless to attempt to introduce a minimum-wage system.

" (18) Nor, except in one or two provinces, is there a cost of living index number for the working classes; and even if there were, it would be no guide to what a " living wage " in India should be—a subject on which there would be endless argument and no agreement. The question of the construction of a cost of living index number was fully explored by the Government of India in 1921–22, when it was decided to leave the subject to local governments. The Government of Bengal at that time carefully studied the problem, and came to the conclusion that even if an index number could be constructed, and this was regarded as exceedingly problematical, it would have no real utility. Moreover a big staff for the work would have been required which would then have been, and still is, much beyond the purse of this Government. The subject was again considered in connection with the recommendations of the Indian Economic Inquiry Committee. The views of the Government of Bengal ware communicated to the Government of India in the Department of Agriculture and Industries' letter No. 851, dated the 9th February, 1927. Impossible as many of the proposals of that committee appeared to the Government of Bengal, yet many of them would actually have to be seriously considered as practical issues were the introduction of minimum-wage machinery contemplated.

" (19) In the second place, trade boards in other countries (although this is not universal) are created chiefly for unorganized industries. There has not been the same difficulty in Great Britain in arriving at a rough definition as to what " unorganized " means as there was in the case of " exceptionally low " wages. Lack of organization is a very elastic term, however, as a perusal of the list of industries mentioned in extract 5 above shows. So as far as " home-workers " are concerned, there is not, as a rule, much difficulty; " home-workers " are usually unorganized on both sides, as are many trades which are dispersed geographically and are carried on in small units, but trade boards in Great Britain are in existence for such industries as flax and jute manufacturing. Taking these instances, one finds in the latest available issue of the *Directory of Employers' Associations, Trade Unions, Joint Organizations, etc.*, 1925, published by the ministry of labour, that there are no less than 11 employers' associations for Scotland and the North of Ireland flax and jute manufacturing industries, and 23 trade unions (in each case national or general organizations are left out of account). Further examination of the same publication shows the existence of many organizations, on each side, for trades like tobacco manufacture, the fur industry, the clothing industries, brush-making, button-making and other trade boards trades.

" (20) The question thus may very pertinently be asked in India: " what is an ' organized ' or ' unorganized ' industry? " In this respect, attention is invited to the remarks in paragraph 6 of your letter, for in all probability industry in India would be judged in this respect by western standards. In Bengal we have one of the most compact industries in the jute mills; this industry has one employers' organization, and few workers' organizations. From the British or European point of view, the jute mill industry in Bengal would appear to be hopelessly unorganized, especially when contrasted with the Dundee industry which, in spite of an organization (which, at least on the labour side, is incomparably higher than that of Bengal) is actually a trade board industry.

" (21) This point of organization perhaps, better than anything else, indicates the complete inapplicability of western (or other) systems of minimum wage machinery to India. In India our " organized " industries are usually regarded as those falling within the scope of the Indian Factories Act, but not one of these industries,

especially on the labour side, stands even a moment's comparison with the most unorganized industries in highly industrialized countries like Great Britain. The jute industry is the most illustrative case in point, as it is not only a powerful competitor with respect to Dundee, but its wages are also governed by a trade board . . . . . A great deal has been said and written in recent years on relative rates of wages in India and the west, and there is now general recognition of the fact that no real comparison can be made unless every circumstance bearing on eastern labour is fully taken into account. The most recent attempt was made by the delegation of International Federation of Textile Workers, which, headed by an ex-member of the British Cabinet, Mr. Tom Shaw, visited India in 1926–27. It is significant that in Mr. Shaw's report doubt was expressed whether labour is cheaper in India than in the west (see summary of his report at page 308 of the December issue of the *Bombay Labour Gazette*). No criterion of comparative efficiency has yet been found as between the Indian and western workman, nor is one likely to be easily found owing to the great divergence between the conditions of work and life, between traditions, outlook, family life, and many other factors; and there is very little point in bringing this incalculable element into the discussion at all. Moreover, it might be argued from this point of view that the Geneva organization, by means of a western majority was attempting to raise wages to reduce India's competitive ability, and this would naturally lead to issues to be threshed out on a much more public platform.

" (22) Trade Boards are *joint* bodies, and clearly the questionnaire adopted by the last International Labour Conference contemplates that whatever machinery is to be adopted as the result of a Convention, that machinery shall be constituted on a joint basis. In England, Trade Boards are part of the normal joint machinery of industry. They are the lowest rung in the Whitley ladder. Now, joint machinery requires at least two sides: in actual practice, in the case of trade boards, three sides. But in India at least one side is notably absent. There is not a sufficient supply of labour representatives to work even the simplest joint machinery. We have not emerged yet from the paternal stage, and shall not be able to do so until the working classes are literate and are able to produce representatives from themselves to sit at conferences along with employers. To impose joint machinery on industry where essential parts of the machinery are lacking is foredoomed to failure. This has been found to be the case in Bengal in regard to the very simple Works Councils, suggested in the Report of the Bengal Committee on Industrial Unrest. The imposition of more specialized machinery on industry would be opposed with all the might of industry, and in the view of the Government of Bengal, justifiably so. The fixation of minimum wages is very technical work, requiring, even in England, expert assistance in administration, and the Government of Bengal are extremely doubtful whether in India there is even a sufficient supply of what in England are known as " appointed " members were the Trade Board system introduced in this country. Apart from this, however, the main consideration arising on the issue discussed in this paragraph is that that minimum-wage machinery is primarily necessary in highly industrialised countries. Trade Boards did not develop in the West before trade unions and other joint machinery; they came *after* them—to rescue those whom organized industries had left unnoticed or helpless. In India, as pointed out above, " organized " industries are industries subject to the provisions of the Factories Act. Our " unorganized " industries are those outside the scope of the Act. They are conducted partly on a family basis and partly on a wage basis, but complete information regarding them is defective. Anyhow, in the view of the Government of Bengal, in India it is first of all essential to see that the provisions of the Factories Act are enforced, and, where they are enforced fully, to extend the provisions of that Act to smaller establishments than those to which the Act is at present applicable. On this point, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, reference is invited to the Government of Bengal (Commerce Department) letter No. 4074 Com., dated the 27th July, 1927. Similar conditions, it is assumed, prevail in other provinces, and it would seem like running before we can walk to impose another, and an entirely new, class of legislation on industry.

" (23) So far, one element in minimum-wage legislation has not been mentioned in this letter, although reference was made to it in Sir John Kerr's speech in the Legislative Council. One of the main objects if minimum wage legislation is to prevent unfair competition. This is very fully dealt with in most of the literature on the subject; and it is familiar to anyone who has actually attended meetings of Trade Boards, or, for that matter, of Joint Industrial Councils. Trade Boards in England have in many instances been accepted—indeed, supported—by employers, as the employers, through the Boards, can impose rates of wages which ensure the absence of unfair competition, or at least guarantee that competition is carried on within ascertainable limits. There is the example of the sugar confectionery board in England. Within the purview of this board are businesses like Cadbury's and Fry's. It is farcical to contend that these concerns require Trade Board machinery

to ensure good conditions for their workers; but the boards, on which the big businesses have a very powerful representation, impose rates which compel small jam-making or sweet-making shops to pay rates which guarantee immunity to the large concerns from competition from a multiplicity of small factories. This, of course, guarantees good conditions to the employees of small firms, but there has been a good deal of complaint on this issue, which, to many impartial minds, has been perfectly justified. Applied to India, this aspect of elimination of competition opens up avenues of serious political complications, for, were minimum-wage machinery introduced, there seems no reason to doubt that this factor of competition would play a very prominent part.

" (24) In view of what has been said in the previous paragraphs, it is almost needless to mention the financial implications of minimum-wage machinery in India. As Sir John Kerr pointed out, legislation on the subject would have to be central, but it is probable that administration, as in the case of the Factories Act, would be provincial. It has been pointed out above that various censuses are a pre-requisite of minimum-wage machinery. This would be a first charge on provincial revenues. There would then have to be created an entirely new staff of Trade Board Inspectors which would, if western standards of " organization " were to apply, be much bigger than the existing Factories Departments. This would be the next new charge. There would be necessarily big additions to the Secretariats of all the Provincial Governments and big sums to be paid as fees for " appointed " members, travelling expenses, and so on. No attempt need be made to compile an estimate; it may merely be said, as has been said so often already on similar references, that, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, they could not undertake a single item of such expenditure."

106. *Deductions.*—(i) *Extent of fining;* (ii) *other deductions;* (iii) *utilization of fines and* (iv) *desirability of legislation.*—An enquiry into the above subjects was held in 1926-27, at the request of the Government of India (letter No. L.1418, dated the 25th June, 1926) on the subject of deductions from wages or payments in respect of fines. Subsequent enquiries have revealed no material difference from the facts then ascertained, and the Government of Bengal adhere to their views expressed in the reply in their letter No. 1673 Com., dated the 7th March, 1927.*

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107. *Periods of Wage-payment (day, week or month)*—(i) *Periods for which wages paid;* (ii) *periods elapsing before payment.*—A detailed enquiry was made into these subjects in 1924–25. The results were partly published in Bulletin No. 34 of the Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, published by the Government of India. The complete results are given in tabular form below :—

Establishments.	Period of payment (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).	Number of days normally elapsing between conclusion of period of work and actual payment.	Notes regarding facilities, if any, for obtaining rations from employers.	Remarks.
1. Cotton spinning and weaving mills :—				
(*a*) Permanent labour	Monthly	15	—	In one out of the four mills that reported the number of days elapsing for permanent labour was 25.
(*b*) Casual labour ..	Weekly	7	—	
2. Cotton ginning and pressing mills :—				
(*a*) Permanent labour	Monthly	15	" Khoraki " given.	
(*b*) Casual labour ..	Weekly	Nil.		
3. Jute spinning and weaving mills :—				
(*a*) Textiles workers	Weekly	7	—	The labour gets one week's credit in the bazaars.
(*b*) Clerks, artisans and menials.	Monthly	15	—	
4. Engineering works :—				
(*a*) Firms' employees	Monthly	15	—	
(*b*) Contractors' employees.	—	—	—	The contractor is paid monthly. He is given intermediate advances at need.

* Printed in Appendix XII to the memorandum of the Government of India.

Table—contd.

Establishments.	Period of payment (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).	Number of days normally elapsing between conclusion of period of work and actual payment.	Notes regarding facilities, if any, for obtaining rations from employers.	Remarks.
5. Iron and Steel Works	Monthly	10	Individual "advances" in special cases.	
	Fortnightly ..	7		
	Weekly	2		
	Daily	Nil.		
6. Brick factories ..	Varies with localities. Never exceeds one month.	Up to 15.	"Khoraki" weekly or at shorter intervals.	The concerns are small and numerous, and the work is seasonal.
7. Cement works ..	Weekly	4½	"Khoraki" given.	Figures for one concern only were obtained.
8. Flour mills	Monthly	15	—	
9. Printing Presses :—				
(*a*) Permanent hands	Monthly	15	Advances in some concerns.	In 4 concerns out of 37, the number of days elapsing in the case of permanent hands was 20.
(*b*) Casual hands ..	Monthly	7		
10. Rice mills :—				
Different classes of labour.	Monthly	10	Individual "advances" in special cases.	
	Fortnightly ..	7		
	Weekly	2		
	Daily	Nil.		
11. Sugar mills	Monthly	15	Individual "advances" in special cases.	
12. Tanneries	Monthly	15	Intermediate "advances" for food.	
13. Coal mines :—				
Raniganj field ..	Daily	Nil.		
14. Mica mines	None in Bengal.			
15. Tea gardens :—				
Darjeeling	Monthly	Nil.	Weekly "advances" are given.	
	Weekly			
Duars	Monthly	15	"Advances" are given on the 1st of each month.	
	Weekly	Nil.		
	Daily	Nil.		
16. Docks :—				
(*a*) Permanent labour	Monthly	15	—	The labour gets one months' credit in the Port Commissioners' food-stuffs market.
(*b*) Contract labour	Weekly/Monthly	7/15	—	
(*c*) Casual labour ..	Daily	Nil.		
17. Tramways	Monthly	21	—	The Company (Calcutta) pays between 16th and 21st and explains that this interval is necessary as a security, since the whole of the revenues pass through the employees' hands.
18. Municipalities ..	Monthly	7/15	—	Sixteen bodies reported. The Calcutta Corporation is among those who pay in the 2nd week.
19. Local Government Factories.	These fall under "printing presses."			

Explanation.—With the exception noted under item 9, the figures in column 3 accommodate the highest figures reported. Where 2 figures are given, the meaning is that about half the concerns from whom information was obtained fall within one maximum and about half within the other maximum.

So far as the information of the Government of Bengal goes, there has been no change in the situation since the above enquiry was made.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation.*—This was considered by the Government of Bengal in 1926-27, as the result of a reference from the Government of India in their letter No. L. 1391, dated the 28th July, 1926, on the subject of the prompt payment of wages. The reply of the Government of Bengal is contained in their letter No. 986-Com., dated the 9th February, 1927.*

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* Not printed here. The letter is reproduced in Appendix XIII to the Memorandum of the Government of India.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed Wages.*—The information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal shows that in the majority of concerns a small percentage of wages always remains unclaimed, and that these wages, after the lapse of periods ranging from six months to two years, are in most cases absorbed in the assets of the companies. In some cases unclaimed wages are placed at the credit of a fund set aside for general welfare purposes.

Wages are as a rule claimable, no matter what length of time has elapsed between the earning of the wages and the claim. The amount of wages which remains unclaimed is very small, and varies from ·25 to ·5 per cent. of the wages total. No information is available regarding unclaimed wages due to contract labour. The records of the Bengal Government Press and His Majesty's Mint indicate that in Government factories about one-quarter per cent. of the total wages is returned to the treasury as unpaid wages and fines.

Wages remain unclaimed for a variety of reasons, e.g., sickness, leaving the district, absconding to avoid creditors, or death without record of next-of-kin. In some cases, employees deliberately leave their wages behind in order to ensure re-employment after absence, on the theory that if they do not take their wages, their employment is continuous even in spite of a period of absence.

109. *Bonus and Profit-sharing Schemes.*—There are various types of bonus schemes in operation in Bengal, but, so far as Government are aware, there is no profit-sharing. A general discussion of the types of bonus in operation in Bengal is contained in Wages and Profit-sharing by R. N. Gilchrist (University of Calcutta, 1924, pages 294–334).

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111. *Desirability of Fair Wages Clause in Public Contracts.*—The question of desirability of a Fair Wages Clause in public contracts has never been raised in Bengal. In the present unorganized state of Indian labour, the insertion of such a clause in public contracts would serve no useful purpose. In actual practice, employees working under contractors have to be paid at least the rates prevailing in the area in which they are employed.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

115. *Effect on Production of*—(ix) *Alcohol and drugs.*—It has been always recognized that there is a tendency towards excessive indulgence in drink and intoxicating drugs amongst the workers in the industrial area in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. To check consumption, the steps mentioned below have been taken by Government.

(*a*) The price of country spirit has been considerably increased in Calcutta and in the industrial areas in the other districts referred to above. The retail price of country spirit of 25 U. P. strength, the highest strength in which the liquor is issued in the Calcutta district which includes the suburbs and the towns of Howrah and Bally and in the industrial areas in 24-Parganas and Howrah, is Rs 21-4-3 per imperial gallon. In the industrial area in Hooghly the price is Rs. 20–15 annas per imperial gallon, while in the rural areas in 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly it is Rs. 13–1–6 pies per imperial gallon. These increased rates of prices were first introduced in October, 1921. Figures have been obtained from the 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly districts to show comparative consumption of country spirits and foreign liquors in the industrial areas from 1921–22 to 1928–29 in the case of Hooghly and Howrah and from 1926–27 to 1928–29 in the case of 24-Parganas. As regards the last mentioned district, previous figures are not available. These figures show clearly that the policy of the Government to check consumption by increasing the price has been remarkably successful. In Howrah, consumption of country spirit in 1928–29 is abour half of what it was in 1921–22. From 12,996 L.P. gallons the quantity has come down to 6,604 L.P. gallons. In Hooghly, consumption has come down from 12,968 L.P. gallons in 1921–22 to 10,020 L.P. gallons in 1928–29. In 24–Parganas, it has come down from 20,819 L.P. gallons in 1926-27 to 18,342 L.P. gallons in 1928–29. In the Calcutta district, consumption has come down from 243,035 L.P. gallons in 1921–22 to 148,875 L.P. gallons in 1928–29. As foreign liquor is not generally drunk by the workers, no comment on the figures about foreign liquor is called for.

(*b*) As regards drugs, the consumption of raw opium in Calcutta and in the industrial areas of Serampur and Barrackpur is markedly in excess of the standard indicated by the League of Nations. In 1927, Government appointed a Committee to ascertain the reasons for this excessive consumption and to suggest possible remedial measures. The Committee found that the principal reason for this unusually heavy consumption of opium is the large increase of the industrial population in these areas, many of whom are recruited from provinces and territories where people are habituated to the use of opium. It was found that the habit of doping children was comparatively rare and was confined mostly amongst certain classes of labourers in mills and factories who come from Orissa and the Central Provinces.

The retail price of opium was increased in these districts, viz., Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Hooghly and Howrah with effect from the 1st September, 1925, from Rs. 130 to Rs. 150 per seer. This increase in price has checked consumption to a certain extent. In Calcutta, it has come down in 1928–29 to 10,926 seers from 11,545 seers in 1925–26. Similarly in 24-Parganas it has come down from 5,065 seers to 4,839 seers; in Howrah from 1,576 seers to 1,546 seers, and in Hooghly from 2,864 seers to 2,662 seers.

The age limit for the sale of opium was raised from 16 years to 20 years in Government Notification No. 4488 Ex., dated the 11th August, 1927.

The recommendations of the Opium Enquiry Committee are still under the consideration of the Government.

(*c*) As regards other intoxicating drugs, ganja, charas and bhang, no special steps as regards the industrial areas have been taken, but the duty on ganja and charas and the retail prices of these drugs were increased throughout the Presidency with effect from 1st April, 1928, to check consumption. The retail price of ganja was increased from Rs. 97–8 annas to Rs. 105 per seer and of charas from Rs. 140 to Rs. 160. There has been an appreciable decrease in the consumption of all these drugs in 1928–29.

(*d*) Licensing Boards for the municipalities of Calcutta, Howrah and Bally and for the district of 24-Parganas have been constituted to regulate the number and location of excise shops. There is a strong non-official element in all these Boards. In the Licensing Board for the Barrackpur sub-division, two members are nominated by the Jute Mills Association. In Hooghly, in the mill municipalities, there are Excise Advisory Committees, members of which are consulted before the issue of licences. Under Rule 74(d), pages 131-2 of the Bengal Excise Manual, 1918, Volume 1, Collectors are required to consult large employers of labour in mills, factories, tea-gardens and coal mines on proposals for the grant of licences for shops for supplying spirit to their labourers.

(*e*) Limited powers have been delegated to the Licensing Board of the 24-Parganas district and other Licensing Boards in mufassil districts, viz., Dacca, Chittagong and Rangpur, to control the hours of sale. Proposals to delegate such powers to the Licensing Boards for the Calcutta, Howrah and Bally municipalities are under consideration.

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Extract from a Letter from the Government of Bengal, dated 16th December, 1929.

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(3) Information on item (119) (i) and (ii), (*Nature of trade union activities*), is contained in the second annual report of the Registrar of Trade Unions, and also in the note of the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

(4) Since the memoranda were compiled, more trade unions have been registered, and the following corrections should be made under item (121). To the list of unions which have been registered, the following should be added, in continuation of the list given in that item :—(11) Clerks' Union, Clive Street, Calcutta; (12) Indian Seamen's Union, Ekbalpore Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (13) Bengal Labour Association, Bow Bazaar Street, Calcutta; and (14) Press Employees' Association, Bow Bazaar Street, Calcutta.

The list of application for registration should be modified as below :—(1) All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union in Calcutta; (2) Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta (a different body from the one noted in the list of registered unions); (3) Calcutta and Suburban Transport Service Workers' Association, Calcutta; (4) Calcutta Corporation Employees' Association, Calcutta; (5) Bengal Oil and Petrol Workers' Union, Budge-Budge, 24-Parganas; and (6) Bengal Jute Workers' Union, Calcutta.

Under the same heading should be included the second annual report of the Registrar of Trade Unions, copies of which, as already noted, accompany this letter.

(5) As regards item (122), (*Miscellaneous questions regarding trade unions*), I am to say that the commonest method of negotiation between employers and employed is through sirdars. As indicated under other headings, trade unions are not commonly utilized as intermediaries. The local government have no information regarding any attempts at co-operation between employers and employees to increase efficiency of production.

The present position regarding employees in State industrial concerns in Bengal in relation to the trade union movement is that they are free to join or abstain from joining trade unions as they care.

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(7) Under item (124), sub-headings (ii) and (iv), certain corrections are necessary. It will be seen from the note on the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929, that a Government official was specificially directed to take part in the settlement of an industrial dispute during

1929. During 1929, also, joint standing machinery has been set up between the Inland Steamer Companies and the Bengal Mariners' Union for the settlement of disputes. This machinery was successful in avoiding a threatened dispute in July and August of this year.

As regards item (vi), I am to say that the applicability of trade boards to conditions in Bengal has been dealt with under item (105), Minimum Wages, and that the Government of Bengal are of opinion that at the present stage of development the creation of an Industrial Court would be premature. Workers are not sufficiently educated or organized to permit of the creation and utilization of any general scale of joint industrial councils.

(8) Under item (125), (*Trades Disputes Act*), correction is necessary in the light of the views expressed in pages 154 *et seq.* (starting from " Recent experience has clearly demonstrated " down to the end of the note) of the note on Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

(9) The attitude of Government towards trade combinations and in connection with industrial disputes is indicated in the note on the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

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XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. *Extent of the Organization of*—(i) *Employers.*—The employers' organizations in Bengal represent industries which extend beyond Bengal, as well as industries which are mainly or almost entirely located in Bengal; for example, the Indian Tea Association represents interests in both Assam and Bengal, and the Indian Mining Association interests in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and other provinces. Normally, in matters of commercial interest, the Government of Bengal consult about 10 employers' associations, viz., the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, the Marwari Association, the Bengal Mahajan Sabha, the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Merchants' Association, Chittagong, the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce, and the Calcutta Trades Association. On mining subjects, the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation are consulted, sometimes separately and sometimes through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. As a rule, other associations representing particular interests, such as the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Jute Mills Association, and the Indian Engineering Association, are consulted through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber recognizes no less than 23 associations, which are as follows:— Calcutta Wheat and Seed Trade Association, Indian Jute Mills Association, Indian Tea Association, Calcutta Tea Traders' Association, Calcutta Fire Insurance Association, Calcutta Import Trade Association, Calcutta Marine Insurance Association, The Wine, Spirit and Beer Association of India, Indian Mining Association, Calcutta Baled Jute Association, Indian Paper Makers' Association, Indian Engineering Association, Calcutta Jute Fabric Shippers' Association, Calcutta Hydraulic Press Association, Jute Fabric Brokers' Association, Calcutta Baled Jute Shippers' Association, Calcutta Liners' Conference, Calcutta Jute Dealers' Association, Calcutta Hides and Skins Shippers' Association, Indian Lac Association for Research, Calcutta Accident Insurance Association, Calcutta Sugar Importers' Association, Salt Importers' Association of Bengal.

The Marwari Chamber of Commerce and the Marwari Association, as their names indicate, represent the interests of up-country merchants, but the most fully organized representative chamber of Indian interests is the Indian Chamber of Commerce, which was registered in 1926 to promote the interests of commerce and industries in India, and, in particular, the industries in which Indians are engaged or concerned. Similar objects are professed by the much older associations—the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and by the Bengal Mahajan Sabha. The Calcutta Trades Association, which was founded in 1830, exists for the protection of European shopkeepers and tradesmen in Calcutta.

The local chambers of commerce at Chittagong and Narayanganj are of minor importance, as compared with the Calcutta Chambers. Most of the concerns represented on these chambers have their head offices in Calcutta; hence their activities are mainly of local interest only.

There are a number of local associations in the tea industry, representing both European owned and managed and Indian owned and managed gardens, for example, the Duars Planters' Association, Jalpaiguri; the Indian Tea Planters' Association, Jalpaiguri (the most important association of Indian tea garden owners); the Darjeeling Planters' Association, Darjeeling; the Terai Planters' Association, Darjeeling; and the Terai Indian Planters' Association, Sukna. The Indian Mining Federation represents Indian owned coal mines.

Several other associations have been founded from time to time to represent particular interests. For instance, in the last two years, two motor-bus syndicates have been started in Calcutta to represent the interests of motor-omnibus owners.

(ii) *Employed.*—Records of organizations of employees have been kept in Bengal since 1920, and between 1920 and 1929, 140 employees' organizations have been reported to have come into existence. These organizations have been of various types. The best of them have had a continued existence for some years and have ultimately registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926. A very large number of them—the number has been estimated to be 54—passed out of existence very soon after they were started. Of this class, a not uncommon type is the strike committee. The strike committee comes into being usually *after* a strike breaks out. A number of officials are elected, meetings are held and subscriptions collected, but after the strike the body entirely disappears. Another type of this class is the association which comes into existence owing to the influence of one or two individuals for a specific purpose, such as raising the status of a class of workers. Sometimes no definite strike is connected with such organizations, but almost invariably they have become moribund after the first two or three meetings. Another type, the existence of which has been as fitful and uncertain as that of a strike committee, is the body which is set up in the interest of some particular individual. Such bodies, with a full list of office bearers, have been established from two causes; one is nomination for the local and imperial legislatures, and the other nomination for the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. In the former case—the legislatures—labour members are nominated and not elected, and some individuals have been under the impression that nomination from a large number of labour bodies would lead to selection by Government. In the case of the Geneva conferences, the expectation is founded on Article 389 of the Treaty of Peace, under which Governments are compelled to nominate the labour representatives of the delegations after consultation with representative organizations of employees.

Between the two extremes, i.e., registered trade unions and strike committees, there is a big class of labour organizations which have preserved an identity for all the period for which reports are available. It is difficult to classify these bodies, as sometimes a body which has been moribund for two or three years suddenly comes to life for some reason or other. It is estimated that of the total number of 140 trade unions, which have been reported to be in existence between 1920 and 1929, 86 still show activity of some kind; of these only 10 are registered trade unions.

Of the 86 bodies reckoned to be in existence at present, only a few represent manual workers. The great majority of the so-called trade unions in Bengal represent non-manual workers, especially clerks. The ratio is approximately three clerks' unions to two manual workers' unions. Some of the unions are mixed organizations professing to represent both clerks and manual workers.

The above numbers include branch organizations of all-India organizations (but not branches and sub-branches of other organizations to a total number of 36).

Besides the number shown in the above list, there are three bodies with headquarters in Calcutta which are of a federal type. One is the Bengal Provincial Committee of the All-India Trade Union Congress, an unregistered body which professes to receive affiliation fees from other individual unions in Bengal; another is the All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union, which has also a provincial branch in Bengal with its headquarters in Calcutta. The branch is included in the above number; and the third is the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, which represent railway unions. It also has its headquarters in Calcutta.

No estimate can be given of the number of persons covered by these unions, except for registered trade unions, which are mentioned later. The great majority of the labour bodies have no regular membership. Indeed, it is doubted if the existence of the bodies is known to the great majority of workers whom they claim to represent.

118. *Effect of the Organizations.*

119. *Nature of Activities.*—So far as employers' organizations are concerned, the only effect that is noted from the point of view of the Government is the better regulation of industry. Information regarding the internal organization and working of employers' organizations may more appropriately be obtained from the organizations themselves.

The labour organizations in Bengal have made their existence felt mainly through strikes, and the efficacy of their endeavours to better workers' conditions may be judged from the tables of results of industrial disputes given below. A large number of the so-called local trade unions have been merely strike committees, such committees, as already pointed out, usually come into existence *after* a strike breaks out. They disappear when the strike is settled. Some unions with a more permanent organization have attempted to create definite machinery for negotiation, and, in one or two cases, threatened strikes have been avoided by negotiation. In the great majority of strikes which have been recorded in Bengal, however, proper

negotiating machinery has been conspicuously absent, and, in cases where the influences behind strikes were more political than economic, the will to negotiate on any reasonable terms was absent.

In a few cases trade unions have interested themselves in activities outside wage issues. Benefit funds of various kinds have been started in some unions. Such unions might perhaps more properly be designated mutual improvement associations. Their members are of the clerical class.

The Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation in more than one report has commented on the fact that labour organizations have helped to secure for workers the benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Act. Unions have also reported alleged abuses of the Factories Act to the Factory Department; their complaints when investigated, however, nearly all fail because they cannot produce the necessary evidence for use in court.

120. *Individual Trade Unions.*—(i) It is not possible to give the history of individual trade unions in Bengal, except so far as that history has been written in documents published by the unions themselves, e.g., the Indian Seamen's Union. The annual reports of bodies which are not registered are not submitted to the Government, and in the case of registered trade unions only two have had an official existence for more than one year.

(ii) The attitude of workers on the whole towards trade unions is apathetic although they may be quite enthusiastic temporarily over the creation of a strike committee. So far as the information of the Government goes, trade unions have not wide control over the persons they claim to represent. In individual instances of protracted strikes, trade union leaders aided by outsiders have undoubtedly been able to exercise much control over workers, but sustained control is rare. Such control presupposes a stable organization resting on regular subscriptions, and the Indian worker has not yet realized the value of solidarity to the extent of being willing to pay a regular monthly contribution during periods when no agitation is going on.

(iii) This is a subject on which evidence may more appropriately be received from employers. So far as the information at the disposal of the Government goes it may be said that employers are exceedingly hostile to the type of union known as the strike committee, which usually contains a number of outside *bhadralog* leaders who have no connection with the concern in which the trouble has broken out. On the other hand, employers have shown the greatest readiness to listen to grievances put forward by their own employees. In some cases, employers have definitely agreed to recognize unions which have been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, and to confer with their officials as representing the men. Bodies which have no definite status, however, i.e., trade unions which have not been registered under any Act, are not well received by employers.

121. *Trade Unions Act*, 1926.—The extent to which the Trade Unions Act, 1926, has been utilized is shown in the following list of unions which have been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act:—(1) Bengal Nagpur Railway Employees' Union, Bengal Nagpur Railway compound, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (2) The Calcutta Tramway Workers' Union, Old Post Office Street, Calcutta; (3) Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union, Kanchrapara, Eastern Bengal Railway; (4) Eastern Bengal Railway, Indian Employees' Association, Huzurimull Lane, Calcutta; (5) Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur; (6) Assam-Bengal Railway Indian Employees' Association, Mymensingh; (7) Bengal-Nagpur Railway Workers' Union, Kharagpur; (8) Kankinarah Labour Union, Kankinarah, 24-Parganas; (9) Bengal Mariners' Union, Ekbalpur Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (10) The Calcutta Port Trust Employees' Association, Ekbalpur Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta.

One of the above unions has ceased to exist, and applications for registration are at present under consideration from the following unions:—(1) All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union, Calcutta; (2) Clerks' Union, Calcutta; (3) Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta; (4) Labour Association of Bengal, Calcutta; (5) Calcutta and Suburban Transport Service Workers' Association, Calcutta.

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The Trade Unions Act so far has had no definite effect on industry beyond the fact that the above number of unions has been registered. As pointed out above, employers are more ready to negotiate with unions which have been registered than with bodies which have not been registered, and in one case, in particular, viz., that of the Bengal Mariners' Union, the employers definitely refused to negotiate with the union till it was registered. After registration, the employers did negotiate with the union.

Of the number of unions which have been registered, 8 are in the transport industry, and of these, 3 (1 now defunct) are on one railway and 2 on another. Only 1 union representing workmen in one mill area in Bengal has been registered in the Bengal jute manufacturing industry.

It is too early yet to suggest amendments of the Act. No abuse of any individual section has yet come to the notice of the Government. There seems to be the possibility of abuse in section 22, which requires that not less than one-half of the total number of the officers of every registered trade union shall be persons actually engaged or employed in an industry with which the trade union is connected. A noticeable feature of the trade unions which have been registered in Bengal is the very large numbers of officers. The average number for 10 unions is 32·8, the maximum being 51, and the minimum 18. Not one of the unions has contravened the section, or, indeed, included even an appreciable percentage of outsiders among the officers. If however a union desires to include a large number of outsiders in its membership, all the union need do is to extend the list of officers accordingly.

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XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. *Extent of strikes and lockouts.*—The extent of strikes and lock-outs in Bengal is shown by the analytical tables below, which cover the period 1921–29. These tables show the total number of strikes for the period and also the strikes for each calendar year of the period. They also show the distribution of disputes by groups of industries and trades.

Industrial Disputes—extent of strikes and lock-outs during the period 1921–29.

Year.	Number of disputes.	Number of men involved.	Number of man-days lost.
1921	150	254,982	2,990,253
1922	93	198,702	1,803,750
1923	67	137,529	1,247,569
1924	55	90,881	925,562
1925	44	60,344	517,549
1926	57	150,670	822,255
1927	33	60,674	802,289
1928	58	123,275	3,916,057
1929	35	324,528	3,485,385
Total for period 1921–29 ..	592	1,401,585	16,510,669

Distribution of industrial disputes according to groups of industries and trades affected in the period 1921–29.

Groups of industries and trades.	Number of disputes.									Total 1921–29.
	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	
Jute mills and presses	44	41	33	22	16	34	15	19	12	236
Cotton mills ..	8	1	1	10	1	3	2	5	6	37
Transport	27	9	1	1	6	1	3	8	0	56
Other factories ..	46	14	12	8	8	7	6	12	14	127
Conservancy ..	5	1	4	10	3	7	2	12	0	44
Cargo handling coolies	8	14	9	2	4	2	0	0	1	40
Miscellaneous ..	12	13	7	2	6	3	5	2	2	52
Total ..	150	93	67	55	44	57	33	58	35	592

From these tables it will be seen that the total number of disputes in the period 1921–29 was 592. The number of men involved was 1,401,585 and the number of man-days lost 16,510,669 giving an average per year of the whole period of 66 strikes, 155,732 men involved, and 1,834,519 days lost.

(i) *Causes*—(iii) *Nature of settlement.*—The analytical tables below show the causes and the nature of settlement of strikes for the period 1921–29, as well as for each year of the period.

Year.	Demands.				
	Pay.	Bonus.	Personnel.	Leave and hour.	Other.
1921	74	3	32	1	40
1922	43	1	15	2	32
1923	22	Nil.	17	9	19
1924	27	1	10	5	12
1925	20	3	9	Nil	12
1926	26	3	7	11	10
1927	18	Nil.	5	3	7
1928	35	1	12	1	9
1929	19	Nil.	8	1	7
Total for the period 1921–29	284	12	115	33	148

Year.	Results.			
	Success.	Partial success.	Failure.	Indefinite.
1921	11	37	79	23
1922	14	14	53	12
1923	8	3	50	6
1924	8	8	30	9
1925	5	1	31	7
1926	6	1	39	11
1927	4	1	23	5
1928	6	9	33	10
1929	9	8	14	4
Total for the period 1921–29	71	82	352	87

From these tables it will be seen that causes arising out of pay and bonus were responsible for 296 strikes, or exactly half the number. Causes arising from personnel were responsible for 115 disputes. Under this heading has been included all types of disputes arising from quarrels with sirdars or management. A number of specific instances are quoted below :—Demand for dismissal of two sirdars for alleged submission of false reports against strikers ; demand for dismissal of a sirdar who assaulted a spinner ; protest against assault on a weaver by a sirdar ; demand for the reinstatement of a sirdar dismissed for taking part in an attack on a European member of the administrative staff ; demand for the reinstatement of two sirdars dismissed for an attempt to assault a European assistant ; demand for the reinstatement of four sirdars dismissed for assaulting other sirdars under the same stevedore ; demand for dismissal of a sirdar who attended the mill disregarding the demand of the majority of the mill hands ; protest against the dismissal of a sirdar by the management ; demand for redress for assault made on a cooly by a sirdar for misconduct ; demand for dismissal of sirdars on account of alleged exactions ; protest against dismissal of weaving sirdars by the management ; demand for the reinstatement of a dismissed sirdar ; protest against alleged abuse by a sirdar ; protest against the dismissal of two sirdars ; demand for the reinstatement of a dismissed sirdar ; protest against the dismissal of a sirdar who was an enthusiast in the labour union movement.

One hundred and forty-eight disputes have been classified as having been occasioned by other demands. The variety of these demands is so great as not to be susceptible of classification. Many of them were non-economic or only remotely economic in character, and selected examples are set out below :—

(1) Proposed arrest of weavers concerned in assault upon European assistant.

(2) The arrest of a craneman for removing a piece of wood.

(3) Demand for recess for *namaz* (prayer) on Fridays.

(4) Demand for a burial ground by Muhammadan employees.

(5) Arrest in connection with a fatal riot in which a Gurkha durwan of the mill was killed.

(6) Stoppage of a village pathway running through acquired land.

(7) An altercation between the manager and the cook.

(8) Transfer of a popular European assistant and appointment in his place of a Bengali.

(9) Demand for release of non-co-operation volunteers occasioned by a European depriving a cooly of a khaddar cap.

(10) Refusal of the manager to take back a worker who was arrested as a congress volunteer.

(11) Demand for withdrawal of proceedings against an Indian worker accused of assault on a European assistant manager.

(12) The excellence of the local harvest.

(13) The presence of elephants in the locality, supposed to be the vanguard of a Gandhi army.

(14) Rumour that workmen of the mill concerned were assaulted in a recent shooting affray at a place about 30 miles distant.

(15) Demand for permission to attend the trial of workers prosecuted in connection with the volunteer (non-co-operation) movement.

(16) Demand for immedate release of men convicted in connection with a mill-rioting case.

(17) Demand for release of men arrested for disorderly conduct.

(18) Prosecution and conviction for driving an unlicensed gharry and using a horse with a diseased eye.

(19) Order prohibiting demonstrations in connection with the Turkish victory celebrations.

(20) Instigation by the zamindars' (landlords) agent who had a quarrel with the manager.

(21) Men's refusal to carry foreign goods in their carts.

(22) Frequent railway accidents by shunting engines caused a demand for specific hours for the work of loading and unloading.

(23) Complaint regarding police prosecutions.

(24) Demand for disposal of cases affecting the staff by the manager and not by the departmental head.

(25) Demand for the release of men arrested on a charge of theft.

(26) Police prosecution and conviction for using disabled animals for transport.

(27) Demand for withdrawal of a theft case against employees.

(28) Chastisement for bad work. Many strikes have been occasioned by this, and also by threats of dismissal for bad work. European, Parsi, Punjabi and Bengali supervisors, foremen or overseers have been concerned.

(29) Arrest of three sweepers for obstructing a public thoroughfare with carts.

(30) Demand by the authorities requiring particulars (home address, etc.) of workmen.

(31) Protest against the arrest of three mehtars on a charge of obstructing the public thoroughfare supplemented by complaints about alleged police oppression in the past.

(32) Protest against the arrest of two sweepers on a charge of theft.

(33) Demand for withdrawal of restrictions imposed upon the workers' entrance into and exit from the mill premises.

(34) Protest against charges of theft levelled against a few of the coolies.

(35) Trouble connected with alleged inadequate supply of drinking water in the menials' quarters.

(36) Protest against the arrest of a few employees on a charge of theft of company's property.

(37) Demand for withdrawal of an order for the daily cleaning of looms.

(38) Protest against police prosecution for gambling.

(39) Protest against the publication of certain municipal bye-laws.

(40) Protest against alleged abuse by a clerk and a sirdar of the firm.

(41) Protest against the alleged rough-handling of a cooly by the manager for idling.

(42) Protest against the quality of the food supplied at meals.

The result column shows that 352 or 59 per cent. resulted in failure, and that only 71 or 12 per cent. were entirely successful. 82 or 14 per cent. have been classified as partially successful, while 87 or 15 per cent. have been classed as indefinite. In these cases it is impossible to say whether the demands were or were not conceded. Examples of this class are :—promises of sympathetic consideration of grievances; indefinite settlements reached through outside intervention ; promises of enquiry; promises of personal investigation ; compromises ; promise of increase of wages provided neighbouring firms granted rise to their employees.

(ii) *Duration and character*—(iv) *Loss to industry and workers.*—The analytical tables below indicate the aggregate duration of the disputes in man-days and their magnitude in respect of numbers of men involved, for the whole period as well as for each year of the period.

The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to their duration :—

Industrial disputes—Duration and character,—The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to their duration in man-days.

Duration in man-days.	Number of disputes.									
	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	Period 1921–29.
From 10 to 99	9	8	5	3	6	6	4	7	1	49
,, 100 to 999	31	20	26	24	15	15	13	22	13	179
,, 1,000 to 9,999	55	32	20	19	13	16	7	9	12	183
,, 10,000 to 99,999	45	29	13	8	9	19	8	15	7	153
,, 100,000 and upwards	8	4	3	1	1	1	1	5	2	26
Total ..	148*	93	67	55	44	57	33	58	35	590*

* The number does not include two disputes of 1921, figures for which are not available.

The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to the number of men involved in them :—

Number of men involved.	Number of disputes.									
	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	Period, 1921–29.
From 10 to 99	18	14	10	6	12	7	11	16	8	102
,, 100 to 999	50	36	31	30	17	19	12	24	16	235
,, 1,000 to 9,999	75	38	25	17	15	31	9	15	10	235
,, 10,000 and upwards	5	5	1	2	0	0	1	3	1	18
Total ..	148*	93	67	55	44	57	33	58	35	590*

* The number does not include two disputes of 1921, the figures for which are not available.

The loss to industry is estimated by the number of man-days lost due to the disputes. No estimate has been made of the loss in wages caused to workers.

4. *Conciliation and arbitration machinery*— (i) *Results of previous investiga-* –Several special investigations were instituted by the Government of Bengal ; the period of intense industrial unrest in 1920–21.

As the result of a strike of taxi drivers and professional drivers of private cars icutta which was caused by objections to certain rules, particularly (1) a new equiring medical examination of applicants for professional driver's licences, (2) another rule forbidding the carrying of attendants in taxis, Government ated a committee of inquiry into the existing licensing regulations and the of taxicabs generally. The strike lasted from the 12th to the 20th January, and ceased as a result of the institution of the inquiry. The committee made a er of proposals for amendments in the existing regulations. These proposals ltimately accepted and brought into effect on the 12th October, 1921.

As the result of a strike of drivers and conductors of Calcutta and Howrah ways, which lasted from the 27th January to the 24th February, 1921, Govern- appointed a committee of inquiry after the resumption of work by the strikers 8th March, 1921. The men resumed work towards the end of February on tion (1) that the Calcutta Tramways Company would investigate their grievances nounce their decision within a week, and (2) that if the men were dissatisfied the Company's decision, Government would appoint a committee of inquiry. was general agreement between the Company and the men's representatives in to the majority of the committee's recommendations. Some, however, the rs of the company did not accept. Another strike of the tramway employees uch more protracted character broke out in 1922. It lasted from 20th December 27th January, 1923. No committee of inquiry was appointed, although the ntatives of the men raised several points which arose from the previous inquiry. was resumed unconditionally.

During a strike on the light railways of Messrs. Martin & Co. in the 24-Parganas owrah, which lasted from the 15th June to the 2nd July, 1921, a special con- n board was constituted by Government by a special resolution, at the joint st of the employers and the employees concerned. The result of the board's was a compromise on most of the points raised by the workers, and as a result board's recommendations it was agreed that joint works committees should up on the Howrah-Amta and Howrah-Sheakhala lines. Works committees established soon after the Board's report was published, but they failed to owing to the men's indifference.

A resolution was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council on the 4th March, to the effect that Government should appoint a committee to inquire into the causes of the prevailing unrest and to suggest remedial measures. The report committee was published on the 18th June, 1921. The main recommendations committee were :—(i) the establishment of joint works committees in industrial ts ; (ii) non-intervention of Government in private industrial disputes, which, nsidered, should be settled by voluntary conciliation ; (iii) the constitution rnment of a conciliation panel to deal with disputes in public utility services ; the appointment by Government of special conciliation bodies in the case of industrial disputes, if both parties desired outside intervention.

the result of the recommendations of this committee, a conciliation panel was ted . . . . . on the 29th August, 1921. The panel contained 30 names, and mposed on a representative basis, leading public bodies being asked to end persons to serve on it. The panel was reconstituted every year till 1929, was superseded by the Trade Disputes Act. Several applications for ment intervention were received during the period of the panels' existence, no case did Government consider that intervention was justified.

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assist in the formation of joint works committees in industrial concerns a let containing model constitutions was compiled by the Department of ies.

Part played by official or non-official conciliators in settling disputes.—In no a Government official been specifically ordered to take part in the settlement ndustrial dispute, but there are records of a number of disputes which have ttled by the intervention of officials. In such cases of intervention, officials ded either by giving advice or by acting unofficially as arbitrators. Most of putes were of a trifling character. In one case of an important dispute, the tion consisted merely in a Government officer acting as a post-office between loyer's organization and a trade union of which the employers refused to take cial cognizance.

eral disputes have been settled by the intervention of non-officials, and a few re on record in which settlements were effected by the joint efforts of repre- ves of employers and employees.

(iii) *Use (if any) made of Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act*, 1860.—This Act has not been used in Bengal.

(iv) *Joint standing machinery for regulation of relations between employers and workpeople.*—No such machinery is in existence in Bengal. The recommendation regarding the creation of works committees, to which reference has been made above, was infructuous. A few attempts were made to create such committees, but they were unsuccessful.

(v) *Opportunity afforded to workpeople of making representations.*—No case has ever come to the notice of the Government of Bengal in which workpeople were not given the freest opportunity of making direct representations to employers.

125. *Trade Disputes Act.*—The Act has just come into effect, and no remarks are called for.*

Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

1.—*Narrative of the Strikes.*

The jute mill strikes which broke out in July, 1929, have brought to light many features of interest to the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, and in this note the narrative of the strikes, and the issues connected therewith, are presented in such a way as to provide information for the Commission on the lines indicated in the list of subjects issued by them to witnesses.

The jute mill strikes were notable for many reasons. One was their magnitude. Never before in the history of the jute mills in Bengal had anything of the nature of a general strike been attempted. Strikes in individual mills have been common but, as a rule, they have been confined to the concerns in which they broke out. From July 1st to September 30th, a period which includes the general strike which was settled by the agreement, and the individual strikes which broke out after the agreement, the total number of employees affected was about 272,000, the total number of working days lost was about 2,896,000, and the total number of looms closed down was 42,700 out of a total of 51,000 in Bengal. The following statement shows the total number of employees implicated, and the total number of working days lost in the jute mill industry for the whole period, prior to 1st July, 1929, over which statistics have been recorded by the Government of Bengal:—

Year.	Number of strikes in jute mills.	Number of men involved.	Number of working days lost.
1921	39	186,479	706,229
1922	40	173,957	1,079,627
1923	29	90,664	644,804
1924	18	69,488	346,756
1925	14	44,940	242,906
1926	29	38,042	794,384
1927	9	34,900	218,000
1928	18	56,524	1,508,708
Up to 30th June, 1929	5	18,285	106,785
From 1921 to 30th June, 1929	201	713,279	5,648,199

Prior to the general strike, the most protracted strike in the industry was in the Fort Gloster Mills, Bowreah, in 1928. This strike lasted from 17th July to the 31st December, 1928, and the employees concerned lost 1,129,358 working days. The strikes of 1929, it has been estimated, cost the workers Rs. 27,57,000 in lost wages and the industry 117,327,000 yards of lost production, valued at about Rs. 171·71 lacs.

The apparent ease with which the jute mill workers were brought out on strike this year is very remarkable in view of the fact that not only have the great majority of strikes in the jute mills hitherto been localized in individual concerns and of short duration, but also because during the period of intense industrial unrest from 1919 to 1922 there was at no time any sign of a general jute mill strike. The attempted general strike of 1929 has brought into the limelight many defects in the organization of the jute mill employers and workers, but the long record of peace which the mills have enjoyed must be set down to the credit of both sides. Perhaps nowhere in the world are conditions more favourable to strong organizations on the part of both employers and employees than in the jute-manufacturing industry in Bengal, for all the mills, now nearly 100 in number and employing nearly four lakhs of workers, are situated on the banks of the Hooghly within a radius of 18 to 20 miles on the north and south sides of Calcutta and Howrah. In some areas such as Titaghur,

* But see para. 9 of the Government of Bengal covering letter.

Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah, and Telinipara-Baidyabati-Champdany, the mills are very numerous, and the mill employees form the great majority of the inhabitants in the surrounding municipalities. But whereas the Indian Jute Mills Association on the employers' side has been in existence for many years for the regulation of the commercial side of the industry, no regularly organized trade union has yet been formed for jute workers as a whole. During the strikes the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, led by Miss Probhabati Das Gupta, professed to represent all jute mill workers on the river, but this claim was later proved to be unfounded, as the union, even before it split into two, was unable to control the workers in some important areas.

Another reason why the general strike was important was that, for the first time in the history of the Bengal jute mills it led to common action by the Indian Jute Mills Association on the subject of wages and conditions of work. Prior to these strikes, the Indian Jute Mills Association had concerned itself with general commercial conditions only; it was part of the creed of the association that each mill or group of mills should be allowed to manage its internal affairs, including wages and shifts. The association attended to general trade conditions and policy, and it was from action dictated by the association on trade policy that the 1929 strikes arose.

Prior to the war, the economic position of the jute mills was not so strong as it is now. During the war they passed from lean years into undreamt-of prosperity, which has continued up to the present time. Before the war, joint action for trade purposes was not easy to achieve, very largely owing to the independent outlook of the various managing agents. The competition between mills was intense—some times almost disastrous—but prosperity taught them what adversity could not, viz., the uses of combination. To preserve the prosperity in the post-war period, the managing agents of the mills, as organized in the Indian Jute Mills Association, decided to restrict production, and to attain this end they came to an agreement regarding working hours. This agreement was that all mills should work only 54 hours a week. The agreement applied to all members of the association, and at present only about half a dozen mills are outside the association, and most of these are new and small mills.

The maximum of working hours permitted by the Indian Factories Act is 60, so that, under the 54-hour agreement, all mills would ordinarily appear to have had a reserve of six hours per week to meet growing demands. This, however, is only partially the case. From their earliest days, the jute mills have been accustomed to work on what is usually known as the double-shift, but what actually is a multiple-shift system. This system grew up gradually with the industry. It was devised to suit the peculiar character of the labour. Originally, the labour was mainly Bengali, recruited from the local districts. Later on, as the industry developed, it was imported mainly from the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. Before hours for adult labour were regulated by the Factories Act, there was no need for the jute mills to restrict working hours, except for light; and when electric light came in, theoretically the mills could work all hours. The labour, however, restricted their own working hours by the simple expedient of refusing to work longer than it suited them. The labour was also very casual, and the jute industry evolved the shift system as a means of harmonising their own desire to utilise their plant to the maximum by the continuous running of machinery with the peculiar type of their labour. Incidentally, the shift system prevented abuses which were common in other parts of India, especially unduly long hours, and gradually, as legal regulation came in, it accommodated itself to new prohibitions regarding the night work for women and children, and the limitation of the hours of work of children.

When the amended Factories Act of 1922 came into effect, the position was altered. A maximum daily and weekly limit was imposed for all workers, and the women's and children's regulations were also tightened up. Added to these was an increased effectiveness of the factory inspection department, and gradually managing agents of mills began to take into consideration the possibility of organizing their labour on a new system, viz., the single-shift system, under which the mills work for two clear-cut periods per day, the same workers, with the exception of children, manning the periods.

During the last half a dozen years about half of the jute mills have changed from the old double or multiple-shift to the single-shift system. Under the multiple-shift system, at present it is possible for jute mills to work 81 hours a week, i.e., 6 days of 13½ hours each. This is quite legal under the Indian Factories Act, although it does not satisfy the Washington Convention regarding the night-rest period of women. Prior to the 1st of July, 1929, when they were working 54 hours a week, single-shift mills could expand only to 60 hours a week, the maximum number of hours permitted under the Factories Act. The reason for the difference is that in multiple-shift mills the shifts can be so arranged as to satisfy all the provisions of the Factories Act regarding maximum hours, rest periods, half-timers' hours, and women's

hours. In single-shift mills, however, there is only one shift; this shift, with different sets of children, works 5½ hours in the morning and 5½ hours in the afternoon, i.e., the maximum of 11 hours.

When, after the war, the Indian Jute Mills Association decided to restrict working hours, they adhered to the 13½ hour day, but decided on working only 4 days a week, from Monday to Thursday. This left the multiple-shift mills with a theoretical margin of two 13½ hour working days per week, to meet any possible new developments in the market. From the workers' side it meant two completely idle days per week. To compensate the workers for these days, a scheme was devised whereby they were granted a subsistence wage for one of the two days. This payment, known as *khoraki*, has led to a great deal of trouble since it was instituted.

The mills which changed over from the multiple to the single-shift adopted, as indicated above, the clear-cut system of one shift working for the whole day, the mills closing down altogether during the middle of the day. In almost every instance when they changed over from the double to the single-shift there was a strike arising from disputes over wage adjustment. The disputes were always connected with *khoraki*, which, under the new system, was automatically abolished. The single-shift mills on the 54 hour week worked for 11 hours per day during the first four days of the week and 10 hours on Friday. The workers thus lost one of their idle days, and with it, of course, disappeared the *khoraki*. The *khoraki*, however, was incorporated in the new rates, and the single-shift mill workers soon came to realize that, on the single-shift, their total earnings were a little more than they had been on the double-shift.

Another feature which made the strikes of 1929 notable was that for the first time in the history of the Bengal jute mills, Government intervention was necessary on the industrial side; this intervention led to the first negotiated agreement in the industry. Hitherto, the jute mills had upheld a strenuous individualism with regard to their own affairs. In 1929, however, not only did circumstances render intervention of Government essential, but the jute mills were forced to recognize the power of organized labour, even although the organization was only temporary and based on rather flimsy foundations.

The immediate cause of the strikes in 1929 was a decision of the Indian jute mills association, reached towards the end of 1928, to raise the working hours of all mills from 54 to 60. This decision was actuated by market causes; the chief element leading to the change was increased competition from continental mills. Although the decision was reached in 1928 it was agreed for various reasons not to give effect to it till the 1st July, 1929. The main items in the new agreement were:—

(1) That all mills which were members of the association should work 60 hours a week;

(2) That in multiple-shift mills, the hours might be reckoned over two weeks, i.e., these mills could continue to work, as before, 54 hours in the first week, but in the second week they would have to work 66 hours, or 120 hours per fortnight; and

(3) That no mill should make up for lost time caused by strikes.

Under the previous agreement, mills which lost time by strikes were permitted to make up lost time by working during the "idle" days. The new agreement, like previous agreements, contained no stipulation concerning wages. During the first six months of 1929, the managing agents made preparations for the change-over on the 1st July, and the general result of these preparations, so far as hours are concerned, was that single-shift mills were to work one hour extra on Friday and five hours on Saturday, and multiple-shift mills four days of 13½ hours each one week and five days (13½ hours for four days and 12 hours on the fifth) the next week, as allowed in the agreement. On the 1st July, the change-over took place, but the effect on wages was not felt till the end of the second week, as all wages in jute mills are paid one week in arrears. Prior to the change-over, the one registered union in the whole of the jute mills—the Kankinnarah Labour Union—publicly drew attention to the necessity for joint conferences between representatives of the mills and of the workers to adjust terms for the new system of working. There was then, however, little expectation of trouble, even on the part of the union, as it was anticipated that the rates would be amicably adjusted.

The first signs of actual trouble became apparent at the end of the first week in July. The principle on which the managing agents generally proposed to pay wages for the extended hours was an exact proportionate increase on the old time wages, with fractions in favour of the worker. In single-shift mills (multiple-shift mills were not at first implicated), this meant an increase of one-ninth, as the hours were increased by one-ninth. In double-shift mills the same principle was observed, although the increase of hours in the case of individual workers was not necessarily the same. In the double-shift mills the position was complicated by *khoraki*. In the first week of working in the multiple-shift mills there was no question of not paying

khoraki, as the mills worked for four days as previously. In the second week, however, the question of *khoraki* did arise, as work had to be continued from the Thursday to the Friday, and *khoraki* had hitherto been paid for Friday. The storm-centre of the trouble was a group of single-shift mills in Bhatpara, viz., the Alliance-Craig-Waverly group, under the managing agency of Messrs. Begg, Dunlop & Company, and the neighbouring Megna Mill under the managing agency of Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Company.* In the Jagatdal group of mills there was at first no definite strike. The workers simply refused to work 60 hours a week. They worked for 54 hours, but immediately the 54 hours were completed they left the mill. They refused to work the extra hour on Friday, and did not turn up on Saturday. This went on for two weeks, during which time the workers refused to take wages which they had earned. This, it may be added parenthetically, is not an unusual feature of strikes in Bengal. The refusal to take wages which have been earned evidently arises from a hazy idea on the part of the workers that the continuity of their employment, which in some cases affects provident funds or pensions, is broken by taking wages before resumption of work. The leaders in the strike were the weavers, and in the whole of the Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area such trouble as did become apparent arose from this class of worker, which in all jute mills is the most highly paid. There was no apparent trouble amongst the time-paid workers.

The grievance of the weavers arose from the decision of the managing agents to alter the old stent. Weavers are paid by the piece, and the prevailing method of payment in jute mills is a basic rate per cut of 100 yards, with an ordinary bonus on cuts when a certain number of cuts have been taken off, and an extra bonus on cuts when a higher number have been taken off. The lower bonus was easily earned by all workers under the 54-hour working week, as it practically amounted to a bonus for regular attendance. The higher or extra bonus, rising from cut to cut, was earnable by the great majority of weavers, although only the best weavers were able to reach the highest bonuses. What the managing agents did in effect was this. They argued that by increasing the working time by six hours, weavers would be able to reach the higher bonuses with ease, with the result that they would get more than the proportionate increase in earnings which had been granted to the time-workers. They therefore shifted the cut at which the higher bonuses could be earned forward by one place. The argument was that if, say, a weaver on the old system could take off 9 cuts in 54 hours, he could take off 10 cuts in 60 hours, that is, at the rate of one cut per six hours. This shifting forward of the bonus by one cut at once aroused the opposition of the weavers in the group of mills where the original trouble took place. When the trouble spread later, with one or two exceptions, no grievances were put forward by the workers, either time or piece, but probably, especially in the congested area, where the original trouble started, all weavers were closely interested in the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna dispute.

The Kankinnarah Labour Union, under Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, took up the case, but, before a settlement could be reached, other influences had entered the field. In the second week of July, a Barrackpore pleader and the Bengal Jute Workers' Union began to take an interest in the case. The Barrackpore pleader was elected vice-president of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and an intensive campaign was started in the affected area. By the end of the third week of July, i.e., 20th July, no strike had actually broken out, but the workers had consistently refused to work more than 54 hours a week and to take their pay. On the 22nd July, on the advice of the pleader, the weavers adopted a new policy. They went into the mills but did not work to their full capacity. This ca'canny policy which is a variation of the *satyagraha* tactics so commonly adopted in recent years in both Indian politics and strikes, led to an immediate deadlock in the mills. All jute mills in Bengal are so organized that if any section of the workers goes on strike or adopts tactics such as those just mentioned, the rest of the mill is immediately affected. The weavers, who had decided to take off only one cut, informed the management that they had been told to do only half their usual work. This

* On the 5th July a strike had broken out in another set of mills—the Barnagore mills—at Barnagore, adjoining and north of Calcutta on the left bank of the Hooghly. this, however, at first was a localized strike ; it arose from a complaint of a number of spinners, who raised questions affecting the wages granted at the change-over from the double to the single-shift in these mills three years previously. The Barnagore spinners resumed work on the 8th July, but went out again on the 9th, and remained out till the 12th July, when work was resumed on the old conditions, till the mills closed altogether along with all the other mills (except the Lansdowne mill) on the left bank of the Hooghly, north of Calcutta. This dispute was not connected with the main issue which arose at Jagatdal, although the Barnagore mills ultimately resumed working as the result of the agreement.

immediately led to a glut of yarn in the mills, and they had to close down. On the same day (the 22nd of July), the managing agents of the affected mills met in Calcutta and decided to grant the demands of the weavers (to restore the 54-hours stent) in full. This decision was promptly communicated to the mills, and managers were ordered to tell the sirdars to spread the news amongst the workers. The decision was also posted up on the mill gates. The concession, however, proved too late, as on the next day, the 23rd of July, the weavers pursued the same tactics, and the mills closed down entirely.

The original dispute was a perfectly genuine one. It arose in a group of single-shift mills in which the workers were asked to work six hours more per week and thereby give up the free Saturday which they had hitherto enjoyed. The extra-ordinary feature of the case is that the dispute arose amongst the relatively high-paid weavers. The time-workers put forward no case at all. In the case of the weavers, the decision of the managing agents to alter the stent looked perilously like rate-cutting, and it ultimately received the fate which rate-cutting receives where labour is better organized. The time-workers would seem to have had a fairly good case for asking more than an exact proportionate increase in wages, for, although the hours they were asked to work were within the legal limits of the Factories Act, they had not been working 60 hours for many years. They could have put up at least a colourable case for increased rates on some overtime basis for the extra six hours worked. This, however, was at no time put forward during the strike, although the principle of additional wages for time-workers was included in the agreement which settled the strike.

The dispute remained more or less localized for the week starting on the 22nd July. With a large number of workers standing idle in the very congested Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area, contagion was almost inevitable, and at the beginning of the succeeding week, picketing became general in the district. During the week, the management of the mills made every attempt to induce the workers to return on the ground that all that they had demanded had been conceded. The workers, however, would not be persuaded. They said that they would not resume work without the order of their union, the union in this case being not the registered Kankinnarah Labour Union under Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, but the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, which thenceforward took command of the situation. The Kankinnarah Labour Union, it may be added, had done its best to induce the workers to resume work, but their efforts were fruitless. On the 29th July, the Alexandra mill, neighbouring the above group, was severely picketed by strikers. The Alexandra mill is under the same managing agency as the Alliance, Craig and Waverly mills, viz., Messrs. Begg, Dunlop & Company. Thus, at the very beginning of the strike, one of the peculiar, indeed almost incomprehensible, features of the general strike became apparent, viz., that while three mills under the same management went on strike, the fourth, immediately neighbouring the others, refused to go out till circumstances compelled the management to close it. The Alexandra mill was closed down by the management in order to prevent rioting and destruction of property. Actually, it continued working in spite of picketing, from the 29th July to the 1st August, on which date a mob of strikers attempted to enter the mill to force the workers to stop. The Kankinnarah Labour Union officials claimed that the mill continued working owing to the fact that the influence of the union in that mill was very strong. By the 1st August, picketing had become more effective, and there appears to be no doubt that picketing was accompanied by general intimidation in the form of personal threats. Women, especially, were threatened with assault and general molestation if they continued to work, and shopkeepers were also warned that if they supplied workers continuing to work with food, their shops would be looted. The neighbouring Anglo-India mills, four in number, had to close down for these reasons. The closure in their case was gradual —a fact which suggests that the workers had no marked grievance. By the 2nd August, however, the closure in these mills was complete. At the beginning of next week, i.e., the 5th August, the strike had practically become general. All the rest of the mills in the Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area had to close down—the Auckland, Reliance, Kankinnarah and Nadia mills on the 5th August, and the Gourepore and Naihatty mills on the 7th August. On the 7th August the strike also spread southwards to the Shamnagar South Mill. In none of the later stoppages was a statement of grievances put forward by the workers to the management. Indeed, the opposite was the case, as the management were informed by such workers as they were able to consult that they had no grievance, and that they had stopped work only because of intimidation.

On the 5th August, the strike also spread to the whole of the Titaghur mills. In that area it also affected one or two other concerns, a jute-shoe factory and an engineering works, which, though they had no ascertainable grievances, closed down because of either sympathy or intimidation. In none of the stoppages in the Titaghur

area were statements of grievances put forward by the workers. All the mills in this area work on the multiple-shift, and the ostensible reason for closure was the abstention of the women workers.

In the meantime, trouble had arisen in another area, viz., the Sealdah area in Calcutta. On the 29th of July, the operatives of the Union North, Beliaghata, and Narkeldanga mills went out after some agitation conducted by a local branch of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. On the following day, the workers of the Soorah mills followed suit. Work was resumed in the Union North mill on the 2nd of August, and partially in the Soorah mill on the same date. The Union North mill again closed on the 5th August, and the Soorah mill on the 8th. In the case of the Sealdah mills, the only statement of grievances put forward was an ultimatum issued by the Beliaghata Jute Workers' Union the existence of which has been known to no one before the issue of this document.

On the 5th of August, the trouble spread to the south of Calcutta, where two mills—the Clive and Union South—went on strike without any grievances being communicated by any agency to the management.

The result of these strikes was that during the week beginning the 5th August all jute mills between Calcutta and Naihatty had closed down, with the exception of the Lansdowne and Kamarhatty mills. The Khardah mill closed down during this week. At the end of this week, viz., on the 9th August, the debate referred to below took place in the Bengal Legislative Council. During the next week, i.e., the week starting the 12th August, the Hookumchand and Kamarhatty mills closed down. The Barnagore mills, after having worked partially for a short time, had also closed. The Agarpara mill, a new non-Association mill, closed down on the 14th August. The Naihatty mill, which had made an attempt to restart, closed down again on the same date. During all this period, the Lansdowne mill, close to Calcutta and adjoining the disaffected Sealdah group, remained working. It also remained working after the general strike—a rather unexpected development, as the Lansdowne mill has a fairly long history of unrest.

On the opposite side of the river on which there are about 25 groups of mills, up to this time only one mill was affected—the Hastings mill—where a purely localized dispute led to a strike on the 1st of August. This dispute arose from a question of wages affecting only a portion of the sacking weavers which did not affect the neighbouring mills—Wellington and Presidency. Indeed—another remarkable feature of the strike—the Wellington and Presidency mills were not affected during the general strike before the agreement, or for some weeks after the agreement, yet the Wellington mill is separated from the Hastings mill only by a compound wall. The Hastings dispute later became merged in the general issue, but the Wellington mill was not affected till September, and the Presidency mill was one of the few that at no time went out.

On the 13th August, trouble appeared in another area containing a number of jute mills, viz., the Telinipara, Bhadreswar, Baidyabati and Champdany area in the Hooghly district on the right bank of the river. The Victoria and the North Shamnagar mills, both under the management of Messrs. Thomas Duff & Company, then closed down. Local trouble had previously broken out in the Champdany mill, but the mill had continued to work.

The position at this stage may be summarized as follows. The whole of the mills from Calcutta to Halisahar were on strike, with the sole exception of the Lansdowne mill. South of Calcutta, the Union South and Clive mills were also out. The Barnagore dispute, originally of a localized character, had been merged in the general dispute. On the other side of the river, the Victoria mills had joined in the general issue, and the Hastings mill still remained out. Trouble had also appeared at the Birla mill, the extreme south mill on left bank of the river. The mill, however, continued working partially. The total number of looms affected was 30,400 or 60 per cent. of the total number of looms on the river. The number of workers involved was approximately 192,000. The only real statement of grievance in the general dispute had been put forward in the case of the Alliance-Craig-Waverley-Megna group, and that grievance had been settled by the concession of what the workers had demanded, although the workers did not resume. Apart from the localized disputes at the Hastings and Barnagore mills and the ultimatum delivered to the Sealdah group by a hitherto unheard-of labour body, no other statements of grievances had been put forward.

On the 8th of August, notice was given by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy of a motion for adjournment of the Bengal Legislative Council to discuss the strike situation. The motion was admitted, and a discussion took place on Friday the 9th August. No further reference to the debate is necessary here, as a printed copy of the proceedings is appended. The Hon Mr. McAlpin explained the attitude of Government in the matter, which, in short, was that negotiations, which had started between the

jute mill authorities and certain trade union leaders, should be given a chance to fructify, and that nothing in the debate should be said which would prejudice the prospects of peace.

In the week succeeding the debate, viz., the week starting the 12th August, as already indicated, the strikes spread still further. During this week, an agreement was reached between the parties. The part played by the Government, up to this date, in the strike and the negotiations leading to the agreement, as well as the conditions of the agreement itself, are referred to subsequently. The agreement was signed by the various parties on Friday, the 16th August, and the labour leaders in accepting the terms signed an undertaking that they would to their utmost to secure a resumption of work over the week end. The effect of the agreement was immediate. On Monday, the 19th August, all the mills which had been on strike, with one exception, resumed work. The one exception was the North Shamnagar mill, which was affected by a series of fresh strikes that broke out in the Telinipara-Bhadreswar-Baidyabati-Champdany area. This mill, however, resumed work on the following day. Thus, by the morning of Tuesday the 20th, every mill which had been on strike had resumed work.

Then followed a series of new strikes in mills which had hitherto defied all the efforts of the strike leaders. These strikes seemed to have been caused by fear on the part of the workers that, unless they went on strike, they would not share in the concessions to be granted under the agreement. During the week end following the agreement, the managing agents of the various groups of mills, with one or two exceptions, had let it be known in all their mills, irrespective of whether they had been on strike or not, that they would partake in the concessions. In spite of this guarantee, the mills went on strike, either simultaneously or one after another, very much as if they had been smitten by a rapidly spreading contagious disease. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union, faithful to the promise of Miss Das Gupta, exerted every effort to send the workers back, but while the union leaders had found it easy to get the workers on the left bank of the river, north of Calcutta, out, they did not find it so easy to get the workers on the other side either to remain at, or return to work. The strikes following the agreement provide one of the most amazing and peculiar incidents in industrial history, for, in spite of resisting the intense efforts of the union to get them out during the main strikes, the workers actually went on strike when they had been promised the concessions granted as the result of the general strike and against every argument that the union leaders could use to induce them to remain at work. The two chief centres of trouble were the mills on the right bank of the Hooghly, from Chandernagore to, and including, Serampore and the group of mills under the managing agency of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Company in the Budge Budge area. During the first week after the settlement of the main strike, all the mills in the former area, with the exception of the Victoria and the North Shamnagar Mills, which returned to work, went out and remained out for a week. No demands were put forward by the workers. They said that they did not understand the notice which had been issued by the union calling the strike off. The notice had been signed by Miss Das Gupta, whom, they said, they did not recognize. Miss Das Gupta did her best to get the men back to work, but she proved to have little power in that area; indeed, a number of workers abused and insulted her when she went there to speak to them. The mills which were on strike in this area included the Angus Mill, under American management, which had granted the concessions secured by the agreement on the day of the change-over, the 1st July.

On the south of Howrah, the Lawrence workers went out, evidently under the impression that they had to make some sort of demonstration of unrest in order to get the concessions. They realized their mistake when explanations were given by the management, and resumed working the next morning. On the 20th August, the whole of the Andrew Yule group of mills in the Budge Budge area went on strike, in spite of the fact that the workers in these mills had been promised the concessions secured by the agreement. The strikes in this group proved the most stubborn of the post-agreement strikes, and did not collapse till the 11th September. The unrest in the Yule mills had repercussions on the other side of the river, the Yule mills in that area—Belvedere and Delta—also going out, though in their case the strike was short-lived. One of the group, indeed—National—remained steadfast throughout the whole period, with a very slight intermission. The Ludlow and Fort Gloster Mills, opposite Budge Budge, were also affected. The Lawrence Mill again went out subsequently, on two occasions, while the Fort Gloster group resumed work, and again went partially on strike. The restiveness in these mills was all the more peculiar in view of their resoluteness during the earlier troubles. In the Fort Gloster case, demands arising from a protracted strike of 1928 were put forward. Miss Das Gupta went to the Budge Budge area several times to persuade the workers to go back, but her efforts were unavailing. The strike ultimately collapsed by the workers returning unconditionally. Agitators not connected with Miss Das Gupta's union had informed the workers south of Calcutta that Government had promised them

100 per cent. rise in wages. This 100 per cent. was whittled down to 75, 50, and, ultimately, 25 per cent., but in spite of the variations, the workers had to resume work under the terms of the agreement.

Apart from the strike in the Budge Budge group of mills, none of the strikes which broke out after the agreement was of long duration, and in none of them was any statement of grievances put forward, unless the demands for 100 per cent. rise in wages made in some of the southern mills could be said to be such a statement.

The position gradually calmed down, till, in the second week of September, the great majority of the mills were working. A local dispute broke out at the Kamarhatty Mill, in which the workers demanded the rates in the Kankinnarah Mill under the same managing agency, viz., that of Messrs. Jardine, Skinner and Company. In the second week of September, the Wellington Mill at Rishra went on strike, because the time-workers alleged that they had not received the concessions stipulated in the agreement. The New Central Mills in Howrah also went out for a few days, alleging that the agreement had not been put into effect. This strike was the only strike during the whole period in the Howrah area.

By the end of the second week of September, when the position became practically normal, the great majority of mills at one period or another had been affected by the unrest. Indeed, only about 10 mills had worked consistently throughout in both the pre-agreement and post-agreement periods, and in several of these there had been temporary disturbances which, however, did not lead to definite stoppages. A remarkable feature about the mills which did not go on strike is that the majority of them are situated in areas likely to encourage strikes. For example, with one exception, all the Howrah mills, from Howrah to Bally and Belur, remained steadfast. The Hooghly Mill, situated in Kidderpore, a mill which has had considerable labour trouble and which is situated in a very congested area, reported no unrest, although two of its neighbours were on strike, and the Lansdowne Mill, situated near Sealdah, the mills in which all went out, worked throughout in spite of a well-earned reputation for readiness to strike.

2.—*Negotiations Leading to the Settlement.*

It has already been remarked that, although there had been many strikes in the jute mills, there had at no previous time been any attempt at a general strike. The part of Government in all the previous strikes had been that of a neutral third party keeping the peace and watching developments, and in no case did either disorder or the merits of a strike appear to them of such a character as to require intervention on industrial grounds. Intervention, moreover, has always been strongly opposed by employers, specially in disputes in private concerns. In the present case, the first approach was made to Government by the employers. The Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and, later, representatives of the managing agents of the mills affected, approached the Honorable Member in charge of the Police Department with a view to securing adequate police protection for the workers, who, they declared, were prevented from going to work purely by intimidation. They contended that, as the demands of the workers had been granted, there was no industrial dispute. In spite of action taken by district and subdivisional authorities to prevent illegal intimidation, the workers in the mills concerned did not go back; indeed, the strike spread. Once it began to spread, it developed so rapidly that the issue of intimidation was submerged. The workers as a whole, in spite of any protestations made by individual workers to managers, showed no disposition to return. They remained remarkably peaceful, especially on the left bank of the river north of Calcutta. There was only one serious clash, and that was between workers of the Gourepore Mill and Kabuli money-lenders—a clash which was only indirectly connected with the strike. From the peace-and-order point of view, in spite of the inherent dangers of the position, the strike was very orderly, although, after the settlement, several cases of assault on members of the superior staffs of mills were reported.

From the point of view of a settlement, the position in the early stages was complicated by the facts that the demands of the discontented workers had been conceded in the case where demands had been made, in the other cases no demands had been made at all, and that, while in one area weavers had led the strike, in another the women workers had caused willing men workers to be locked out. The mill authorities were given no chance to negotiate, as their workers did not approach them. General statements of grievances, however, were broadcasted by means of leaflets; these were issued by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The managements endeavoured to spread the news among their workers that any reasonable statements of grievances would be looked into. The Jute Mills Association came into the field with a statement of terms on which work might be resumed. These were:—(1) That the mills would pay the correct proportionate increase in wages for the extra

hours worked ; (2) That they would pay *khoraki* as before ; (3) That there would be no victimization ; and (4) That the association would recommend that favourable consideration should be given by members of the association to the provision of maternity benefits.

These negotiations were conducted mainly through the medium of the press, in which many letters and statements appeared. They were very much " in the air," and little calculated to secure peace, for the main parties to the controversy would not meet.

Government were closely watching the position, but at that stage could do little to bring the issues to a conclusion. With respect to grievances, they were practically in the same position as the employers. No definite issues had been put forward; where they had been put forward, they had been met. No negotiations had taken place between the workers and the managements, except in the cases where the Kankinnarah Union had been implicated. Miss Das Gupta's union was not a registered one, and recognition of her as leader might further complicate matters. The employers were strongly opposed to intervention by means of the Trade Disputes Act, and it was apparent that till the issues were clearer, no useful purpose would be served by appointing either a court of inquiry or a board of conciliation, as it was not likely that a promise to appoint either of these bodies would bring the strike to an end. From the industrial point of view, therefore, no immediate action was deemed advisable.

The fact that so many workers were on strike, however, was a great menace to the peace of the community, especially as there was a possibility of communal friction. A table is appended which shows the communal composition of selected jute mills, and from that table it will be seen that while there is a preponderance of one community, there is a powerful minority of the other.

Name of Mill.	Hindus per 100 of full strength.	Muhammadans per 100 of full strength.
Bhatpara-Jagatdal-Kankinnarah Area.		
Hookumchand	65	33
Naihatty	74	24
Gourepore (2 mills)	81	19
Nadia (2 mills)	71	29
Reliance	64	36
Kankinnarah (2 mills)	73	27
Anglo-India (4 mills)	71	28
Alliance (2 mills)	64	36
Megna	66	32
Alexandra	74	26
Auckland	69	31
Craig	60	40
Waverly	75	25
Shamnagar (South) (2 mills)	78	22
Agarpara	64	36
Empire	81	19
Kelvin	70	30
Kinnison (2 mills)	74	26
Standard	74	26
Titaghur (2 mills)	80	20
Khardah (2 mills)	74	26
Kamarhatty (2 mills)	61	39
Barnagore (2 mills)	62	37
Sealdah-Garden Reach Area.		
Soorah	65	35
Beliaghata	67	33
Union (North)	54	42
Clive (2 mills)	52	48
Union (South)	65	35
Budge-Budge Area.		
Cheviot	78	22
Caledonian	70	30
Budge-Budge (2 mills)	70	30
Albion	65	35
Lothian	72	28
Orient	61	39
Birla	52	48

Jute Mills.—contd.

Name of Mill.	Hindus per 100 of full strength.	Muhammadans per 100 of full strength.
Serampore-Chandernagore Area.		
Victoria (2 mills)	72	28
Shamnagar (North)	79	21
Angus	73	27
Northbrook	79	21
Dalhousie	73	27
Champdany	71	29
India (3 mills)	71	29
Wellington	64	36
Howrah Area.		
Belvedere	83	17
Delta	73	27
Fort Gloster (3 mills)	73	27
Lawrence	76	24
Ludlow	70	30

From the point of view of peace and order, therefore, Government had to keep in close touch with the dispute, not only with a view to deciding whether intervention was necessary, but also to safeguard the public peace. The council debate also helped to clear the issues and it gave an indication of the mind of the legislature with regard to Government intervention.

There was no resumption of work in the beginning of the week commencing the 12th August; indeed, the strike leaders took heart from the council debate and urged the workers to stay out, as Government would be forced to intervene. Instead of settling down, the unrest spread, and on the 14th August, conferences were arranged at which the Honourable Members in charge of the Police and Commerce Departments, with Mr. Gilchrist, Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department, Labour Intelligence Officer, and Registrar of Trade Unions, met separately the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association; Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, of the Kankinnarah Labour Union; and Miss Das Gupta, the President of the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union and actual leader of the strikers. The only action prior to this that had been taken by a Government officer was by Mr. Bingemann, district magistrate of the 24-Parganas, who in his capacity as district magistrate, summoned a representative conference on the 5th August, at Bhatpara, at which were present representatives of the jute mills in that area, Miss Das Gupta, Mr. Roy Chowdhury, Maulvi Latafat Hossain and others. This conference, the main aim of which was to ascertain the facts of the situation, was not successful in bringing the parties together for purposes of negotiation.

At the conference held in Writers' Buildings, with the committee of the India Jute Mills Association on the 14th August, the committee confirmed the announcement regarding the conditions mentioned above on which workers might resume work. The conditions were further discussed and the association placed the following interpretation on the phrase " correct proportionate increase in wages " :—

" In the case of workers, time and piece, the correct proportionate increase will be the correct proportionate increase on total earnings for the extra hours worked, with fractions in favour of the workers..... In mills, where *khoraki* has hitherto been paid, *khoraki* will continue to be paid as before. (*Note.*—In mills in which *khoraki* has not been paid separately, it has been incorporated in the wages.) "

The above formula, the association agreed, should apply to all workers, but there was some discussion on the extra increase that might be paid as the result of working more hours in the case of both time and piece-workers. No definite decision was reached at the conference, but an indication was given that (*a*) in the case of time-workers any increase over the correct proportionate rate would be considered by individual mills, as no solution of a general nature was possible owing to various reasons, and (*b*) that in the case of piece-workers individual mills would consider reasonable requests which might be put forward by workers on their return to work.

The committee also indicated that there was no question, as had been alleged in some quarters, of turning workers out of their quarters, unless there were riots. The committee also agreed to take up the question of simplification of wages after the strike was over.

At the conference, at which Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain were present, both union leaders said that in their opinion the terms already announced by the Association were sufficient to secure the return of the workers.

At the conference with Miss Das Gupta, the various claims put forward in the pamphlets of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and by Miss Das Gupta herself were narrowed down to the following :—(1) Proportionate increase in total earnings for

extra time worked, the total earnings to include bonuses of all kinds and *khoraki*; (2) no victimization; (3) payment of wages for the period during which the workers had been on strike or had been locked out; (4) the creation of a board to consider other grievances, the board to consist of three millowners, three representatives of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and two outsiders (one to be chosen by the employers and one to be chosen by the union); (5) provision of maternity benefits; and (6) no corporal punishment.

These terms were communicated to the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, which replied that the committee could recognize only registered trade unions, and that they adhered to the assurances which they had given at the conference on the previous day. The committee absolutely declined to pay wages for the strike period and refused to agree to the creation of a board, as stipulated by Miss Das Gupta. So far as corporal punishment was concerned, they indicated that the striking of workers was strictly prohibited in all mills, and that any man caught breaking the rule was severely dealt with. They also stated that the mill authorities would, as they always had done, consider sympathetically any reasonable grievances or demands which might be put forward by the workers themselves.

Such was the position of the various parties on Thursday, the 15th August. On the afternoon of that day, the labour intelligence officer, by previous arrangement, had a conference with Miss Das Gupta, who was accompanied by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who had moved the adjournment motion in the Legislative Council. At this conference, issues were raised which had not been previously mentioned. These were mainly of a general nature, and the labour intelligence officer persuaded Miss Das Gupta that they could not be made subjects for negotiation then, as they were to be considered subsequently by the Royal Commission. The issues were gradually narrowed down until there was agreement on all save strike pay and the proposed board. Dr. Roy in particular pointed out that, as the mills were in the wrong on their own admission, they should pay for the period of stoppage. Miss Das Gupta pleaded the examples of other countries in support of strike pay, but it was proved to her that her statement was entirely wrong, and that the issue could be settled by herself if she would organize a sound union. Ultimately, the labour intelligence officer suggested a compromise, namely, that time-workers should get a concession similar to that granted for piece-workers, i.e., that if the 54-hour stent was continued as proposed, the time-workers should get the same ratio of increase as the piece-workers. This was accepted and the strike pay issue dropped. There was some difficulty about the proportionate increase in total earnings, as Miss Das Gupta had insisted on the inclusion of *khoraki*. *Khoraki*, however, does not apply to single-shift mills, and it was agreed that *khoraki* should be treated separately. Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Roy both insisted on keeping in the item regarding the appointment of a board to examine other grievances, and ultimately they agreed to accept a general formula, such as was ultimately included in the agreement, if the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association could not be persuaded to accept their point of view.

After the conference with Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Roy, the labour intelligence officer got into touch with the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association late in the evening. He explained to them the position taken up by Miss Das Gupta, particularly with regard to strike pay and to the creation of a board, and suggested to them that a settlement was now possible on the basis already agreed upon by the Association publicly *plus* concessions to the time-workers on a scale proportionate to those that would accrue to the piece-workers by the adherence to the 54-hour stent. The Mills Association had not at this stage publicly announced their adherence to the 54-hour stent, but it was known that they would accept this concession, which had already been granted in the case of the Begg Dunlop group and some other mills. After some discussion the committee agreed to recommend the proportionate increase in the case of time-workers. The labour intelligence officer explained to them Dr. Roy's and Miss Das Gupta's point of view with regard to the creation of a board. The committee, as anticipated, absolutely and finally refused to have anything to do with it, and it was necessary, therefore, to fall back on the general statement that each mill would consider reasonable statements of grievances put forward by its own workers.

The concessions granted by the committee made a settlement possible, and the labour intelligence officer at once drew up a draft of terms, which was signed next morning by the chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and later in the day by Miss Das Gupta and Mr. Roy Chowdhury. The terms of settlement are reproduced below :—

Terms of Settlement.

(1) *Wages.*—The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association will recommend to members of the association the terms already publicly announced :—(*a*) to pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours worked; (*b*) to pay *khoraki* on the same scale as heretofore.

They will also recommend to members :—(*c*) that the scales of bonuses remain the same as they were before July 1st when the mills were working 54 hours a week ; and (*d*) that favourable consideration be given to an adjustment of wages to time-workers on the basis of the concession suggested for piece-workers.

(*Note.*—This will not apply to mills where such adjustment has already been made).

The Committee will also recommend to members :—(2) that there be no victimization ; (3) that favourable consideration be given to the provision of maternity benefits ; (4) that there be no corporal punishment.

(*Note.*—The committee wish to point out that corporal punishment is already strictly prohibited.)

(5) That the authorities of each mill consider favourably reasonable statements of grievances put forward by their workers.

The labour leaders also signed an assurance to the effect that they would do their utmost to secure a resumption of work on Monday, the 19th August.

During the week-end the Labour Intelligence Officer had considerable difficulty in securing adherence to the terms of settlement on the part of Miss Das Gupta as her advisers had impressed on her the fact that the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association had made the agreement in bad faith and had no intention of adhering to it. Moreover, she made an attempt to insist on special terms for the Barnagore workers. Ultimately after long argument Miss Das Gupta decided to adhere to the settlement in spite of all advice to the contrary, and the results of her adherence have already been indicated in the account given above. It may be stated here that although during the weeks immediately following the resumption of work the position was at times somewhat tense owing to the fact that many allegations were made regarding victimization and non-compliance with other items of the terms of settlement Miss Das Gupta exerted herself to the utmost to keep the peace. In this she was successful, although it ultimately came to light that her influence in some of the new strikes was ineffective.

The following weeks, during which the post-agreement strikes referred to above broke out, led to many difficulties, mostly connected with the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The union, as will be seen later, split into two, but Miss Das Gupta retained her control over the workers, and was able to persuade them to remain at work. Agitation was started by dissentient members of the union with a view to creating further trouble. During this period, Government were not approached by any of the parties to take any action, but the Labour Intelligence Officer was constantly in touch with both the Jute Mills Association and the union with a view to preventing new strikes arising from misunderstandings. The position of the Labour Intelligence Officer in this respect was exceedingly delicate. As the negotiator of the agreement, he was looked upon by Miss Das Gupta's side as responsible for its enforcement in spite of the fact that it had been made perfectly plain in all the negotiations that Government had no power to enforce the agreement, and that the Committee of the Jute Mills Association itself had only power to recommend. Nevertheless, because an officer of the Secretariat negotiated the agreement, Government was constantly spoken of on the union side as being responsible for its enforcement, and, when the post-agreement strikes broke out, especially in the Budge-Budge area, Government was actually declared publicly to have enforced 100 per cent. rise in the case of the workers north of Calcutta.

Complaints poured in to the Labour Intelligence Officer from Miss Das Gupta regarding breaches of the terms of settlement, especially with regard to victimization. After the resumption of work, Miss Das Gupta was bombarded by complaints from men out of work, who alleged that they had been victimized. The complaints were also published in several of the daily papers, particularly the English *Basumati*, which contained a daily bulletin from Miss Das Gupta's union, or, after the split, from Miss Das Gupta herself. The Labour Intelligence Officer had to act as an intermediary between the jute mills and Miss Das Gupta—a position which was forced upon him by the fact that up to the 31st of August none of the jute mill authorities would correspond directly with Miss Das Gupta or her union. He at first conveyed the messages by telephone to Mr. Laird, Chairman of the Committee of the Jute Mills Association, who passed them on to the managing agents concerned—a function which, however, unpalatable, Mr. Laird readily undertook in the interests of peace. Complaints and consequent strike threats became more and more numerous, until the Labour Intelligence Officer at Miss Das Gupta's request, had to hold another conference with her and Dr. Roy. It was pointed out at that conference that the general charges of victimization which had been made had been denied, and that such charges could serve no useful purpose. If the allegations were persisted in, then the individual instances would have to be examined. The Labour Intelligence Officer informed Miss Das Gupta that, although he was somewhat taxing his position, he would use his influence for one occasion only to have her complaints analysed by the mill authorities. Miss Das Gupta thereupon sent a long list of alleged cases. This

list, through the courtesy of Mr. Laird, was examined by the various mill authorities concerned, and a report submitted on the understanding that no further cases would be forwarded by the Labour Intelligence Officer. The explanations were ultimately shown to Miss Das Gupta. Not a single case in the whole list could be called a *bona fide* case of victimization. Much of the difficulty connected with the so-called victimization arose from two causes, viz. :—(1) That during the strike, as in most strikes in India, many workers left for their up-country homes and did not return in time to take their places when the mills resumed ; and (2) that during the strike many workers, who had been on leave for the hot weather, returned, with the result that the men who had taken their place temporarily were displaced. These men had no claim whatsoever on the permanent jobs, but a number of them went to Miss Das Gupta on the off-chance that under the agreement the mills would be compelled to give them work ; their action can be interpreted only as a deliberate attempt to mislead her, but it was not so culpable as the later attempts made to create a new strike by deliberate falsification of wage figures.

The general unsettlement caused by charges of victimization and corporal punishment gradually died down, but a crucial test of the agreement came at the end of the second week of working when the wages for the first week of working under the new conditions fell to be paid. In the great majority of cases, the new conditions were accepted without murmur, but in the group of mills where the trouble originated, the workers refused to accept their wages, with the result that a strike appeared inevitable on Monday, the 2nd September. Had a strike broken out in this original group for the second time, it is probable that there would have been a recrudescence of the strike fever over the whole of the jute-mill area. The cause of the trouble was that in spite of the agreement, some labour leaders had promised the workers in the Jagatdal area that *khoraki* would be paid in addition to the other concessions. The agreement clearly stipulated that *khoraki* would be paid as before the strike. Before the strike it was paid only in multiple-shift mills, as in all the single-shift mills *khoraki* was incorporated in the rates when the system of working was changed. The Kankinnarah Labour Union clearly understood the position, and they used their influence to spread a correct understanding of the position. Some other leaders, however, adhered to the mistaken position, and on Saturday (31st August) morning deputations of workers arrived at Miss Das Gupta's house (the union by this time had split into two, and she held office in her own house), and stated that, unless they got *khoraki*, they would not work again on Monday. They complained that the agreement had meant nothing to them at all, as the workers were getting less now under the 60-hour week *plus* concessions than they were getting under the 54-hour week *minus* concessions. Miss Das Gupta left for Jagatdal in the early morning on Saturday, and from Jagatdal arranged a conference with the Labour Intelligence Officer with a view to preventing a fresh strike. At Jagatdal she compiled from material given to her by workers several sets of wage figures which showed that the men were getting less under the new system than under the old. It was pointed out to Miss Das Gupta by the Labour Intelligence Officer that the figures were manifestly wrong, and that they were against all reason and commonsense. She was advised to send the disaffected workers to the managers of the mills, who would at once explain the position, She was unwilling to advise the course, as, she said, the workers themselves were not agreeable to it.

An impasse seemed to have been reached, and a strike seemed imminent, unless authoritative contradiction of the figures, as ascertained by Miss Das Gupta, were at once available. The Labour Intelligence Officer explained the position to Mr. Laird, the Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and suggested that, in spite of all prejudices, a representative of the managing agents of the mills concerned should be sent to explain the position to Miss Das Gupta. Mr. Laird agreed, but asked that the suggestion should be conveyed to the managing agents by the Labour Intelligence Officer himself. This he did, and the managing agents, Messrs. Begg Dunlop and Company, immediately agreed to send a representative of their firm to explain the position. They recognized that a strike was almost certain on Monday, unless some immediate action was taken. The representative of the firm came to the office of the Labour Intelligence Officer, where he met Miss Das Gupta, and at once proved to her that practically every item she had taken down from the workers was wrong. The Labour Intelligence Officer pointed out that as there was obviously so much misunderstanding and as all parties were eager to keep the peace, the best thing would be for Miss Das Gupta to take deputations of the workers to the management and have the position explained. The representative of the managing agents agreed. A conference was held in the disaffected area, in the Alliance Mill on Sunday morning, and the crisis was averted. The meeting in the Labour Intelligence Officer's room on Saturday morning was the first occasion on which managing agents or their representatives had voluntarily met Miss Das Gupta. It was an important meeting from more than one point of view, but especially important for the Labour Intelligence Officer,

who had been much harassed as the intermediary between the parties, as it enabled him to inform both Miss Das Gupta and the managing agents that henceforward, if there were difficulties, they must correspond direct. It should be added that the many messages which the Labour Intelligence Officer had conveyed to the Jute Mills Association through its chairman, Mr. Laird, had led to a certain amount of restiveness amongst some members of the association. Mr. Laird exerted every effort to prevent misunderstandings and he, too, came to share in some of the unpopularity which was inevitable from his being the channel of communication to individual members of the association of a number of disagreeable messages.

3.—The Position of Government.

For many years, the Government of Bengal have had conciliation machinery which, under certain circumstances, could be applied to disputes in private concerns. The machinery, described in the memorandum on the subject already forwarded to the Commission, was never used in such disputes ; indeed, on no occasion was a serious effort made by any party to a dispute to have it brought into operation. With the passing of the Trade Disputes Act, however, the position was changed. The Act came into effect only in May of last year. No rules had been framed under it, and Government had not considered the organization that might be necessary to work the Act, or the principles which should underlie its application to individual cases. Government were aware that the Indian Jute Mills Association were to change over from the 54-hour to the 60-hour week at the beginning of July, but, as explained above, there was little sign of trouble until the agitation commenced in the Jagatdal mills. Even this agitation was of a mild character, for it consisted only in refusal to work the extra six hours a week on the old wages. There was no definite strike, except for the extra six hours. Negotiations were known to be in progress between the one registered union in the jute mill area, which happened to be in that district, and the employers, and, with the concession of the demands of the workers, there was reasonable ground for anticipating that the trouble would be ended, although it was almost certain that, in due course, other mills would have to adjust their rates on the 54-hour stent. It was the refusal of the workers to accept what they themselves demanded that led to the general or pre-agreement, strike, and events developed so quickly that Government had to cope with circumstances in the best way they could. Their primary interest was the preservation of peace and order. In the peculiar circumstances of labour in the Bengal industries this is the foremost issue in all strikes. The workers are excitable and easily led and their excitement in many cases quickly merges into violence. There is always, also, the possibility of communal, and even racial clashes. Moreover, when picketing is resorted to, it easily develops into intimidation, and this intimidation in congested areas like Titaghur, Jagatdal, and Bhadreswar, may lead to mob violence. The mill authorities, therefore, as well as the Government, have always before them the possibilities of riot, bloodshed and destruction of property when any considerable body of men are on strike. Almost invariably, therefore, their first approach to Government is made for the purpose of police protection for their workers and property. This protection is automatically accorded by the district authorities when there is danger to peace or property, but, in the case of the early stages of the general strike, the representatives of the mills implicated asked for direct interviews with the Honourable Member in charge of the Police Department for the purpose of getting special police protection, on the ground that as the demands of the workers had been conceded, clearly there was no industrial dispute, and, therefore, the continuance of the strike was due purely to intimidation. In spite of the guarantees of the employers, however, the additional police protection which was granted did not secure resumption of work, for instead of the strike abating, it rapidly spread not only in the area where it originally broke out, but to several other areas.

With the spread of the strike and about 175,000 people out of employment, the situation became increasingly serious from the point of view of peace and order. From the industrial point of view, the position was indefinite. Under the Trade Disputes Act, a court of enquiry or a board of conciliation can be appointed if any trade dispute exists, or is apprehended between an employer and any of his workmen. The employers contended that there was no trade dispute, although the men were on strike ; and Government obtained legal opinion to the effect that the stoppages *ipso facto* were sufficient evidence that a trade dispute was in existence. The difficulty remained, however, that the appointment of a court or board under the Act would not have bettered the position, because the position on the workers' side was so inchoate that the appointment of such a court or board would not have secured the resumption of work. Indeed, in the first conference with Miss Das Gupta at Writers' Buildings, after it was recognized that Miss Das Gupta was the *de facto* leader of the strike, she said that she was not aware that the Trade Disputes Act was in force in Bengal. This conference was held after the debate in the Bengal Legislative Council, when several speakers had urged the Government to intervene.

It was, therefore, clear that section 3 of the Act would have had no effect whatsoever. The only course open to the Government, therefore, was to summon the leaders on both sides to take stock of the situation and to adopt such a course as appeared to them best. After the leaders had been interviewed, the position had been clarified on both sides, but the speedy outcome of the negotiations, the agreement, was more or less of an accident, resulting in a private conference which the Labour Intelligence Officer had with Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and Miss Das Gupta, at the conclusion of which the Labour Intelligence Officer recognized that with only slight concessions on the part of the Jute Mills Association, an agreement could be reached between the Association, Miss Das Gupta, and the Kankinnarah Labour Union. The whole of the negotiations took place on the Labour Intelligence Officer's own initiative between 2.30 p.m. and 7 p.m., and the actual papers of the agreement were signed by mid-day the next day. The Labour Intelligence Officer drafted the agreement. and it was signed in his house by Mr. Laird, the President of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and Miss Probhabati Das Gupta on the morning of the 16th August. The parties, however, were not brought together. Actually, the manuscript agreement, which was signed by Mr. Laird, was also signed by Miss Das Gupta in the Labour Intelligence Officer's house, because he had no office facilities for making duplicate copies of the agreement. In theory, the terms of the agreement were signed by each party separately, the Labour Intelligence Officer attesting the signatures.

The Labour Intelligence Officer is a Secretariat officer, occupying the position of Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department, which administers labour laws, and also in the Marine Department. Thus the agreement was given the appearance of having been negotiated under Government sanction, and it was this that led to subsequent declaration of the union in the press and in speeches that the Government was the sanctioning authority behind the agreement. Actually, the Labour Intelligence Officer, with the sanction of the Government, had acted as an intermediary or as a point of contact between parties who would not meet, conveying the views of one party to the other, and, ultimately, collating and, to some extent, adding to them, with a view to making them agree. With the conclusion of the agreement and the forwarding of copies to the interested parties, his functions should normally have ended. Owing, however, to his peculiar position he had for several weeks following the conclusion of the agreement to act in a mixed capacity as a permanent channel of communication between two parties, one of which refused to correspond with the other, and, in respect of one party, as a sort of court of interpretation or appeal. Had the Labour Intelligence Officer not acted in this capacity, had he refused to have further dealings with Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy after the conclusion of the agreement, there is no reasonable doubt but that the agreement would have broken down and that the workers, who continued to be in an excited state, would have gone out again. In some cases, probably, Miss Das Gupta and her agents would have had difficulty in persuading the workers to go out, but where persuasion would have failed, picketing and intimidation would almost certainly have succeeded. Nevertheless, it was deemed advisable that the parties should be left to negotiate by themselves, and the Labour Intelligence Officer was directed to withdraw from the position of intermediary. Before he actually withdrew, however, the second crisis developed on the 31st August. If on that date he had not been able to bring Miss Das Gupta into direct communication with the managing agents of the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group of mills, the whole battle would have had to be fought over again. By achieving direct communication between Miss Das Gupta and Messrs. Begg Dunlop and Company, he was able to tell both sides that, now that one set of managing directors were willing to discuss grievances direct with Miss Das Gupta, there are no reasons why others should not do likewise, and that, therefore, he proposed to leave further negotiations to the parties themselves.

The position whereby Government may be made a third party in strikes and strike settlement is by no means satisfactory, and is under consideration separately. In Bengal, Government tend to be drawn into industrial disputes more than they need be, because of the fact that headquarter offices of the Government are situated near Clive Street. When serious strikes break out, the first impulse of managing agents is to ask for an interview with the Honourable Member in charge of the Police Department, whereas, normally, they should first approach the district authorities. Thus, in strikes in the metropolitan area, there is a tendency on the part of the industrial authorities to attempt to override the district authorities by having orders issued direct by Government. Experience has proved that the reports of the industrial authorities are sometimes based on incomplete information. Government have to depend on the district authorities for full reports, as they also have to depend on them for taking the necessary measures to keep the peace. The position of the district authorities, however, is not adequately appreciated by managing agents generally in the case of extensive or protracted strikes. When, in the present case,

a first approach towards an understanding of the position at Bhatpara-Jagatdal was made by the local authority, viz., the District Magistrate of the 24-Parganas, sufficient attention was not paid by the mill authorities to the possibilities of such a conference. Indeed, considerable resentment was felt at Mr. Bingemann's perfectly correct action in summoning representatives of the different parties to the conference, because the mill authorities had refused to meet representatives of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union previously. When representatives of the mills actually attended the meeting and found that Miss Das Gupta and other strike leaders were present they felt that they had been tricked. The atmosphere of the meeting, therefore, was not conducive to reaching a settlement. The managing agents of the mills, however, showed great readiness to come to a conference in Writers' Buildings, although they let it be known that they would not come to a conference at which Miss Das Gupta was present. By this time the strike had spread very much further, and the outlook was much more ominous. They were perfectly aware that Government had summoned representatives of the Kankinnarah Labour Union and Miss Das Gupta to separate conferences, but they would not concede the point of refusal to recognize the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Government thus came into the position of intermediary and though the Labour Intelligence Officer ultimately negotiated the items in the agreement on his own initiative, the negotiations were conducted with official cognizance and sanction. The terms of the agreement thus came to be looked on generally as having behind it at least a measure of Government approval, whereas, of course, not one of the items of the agreement had been taken into consideration of principle at any stage of the negotiations, or after the negotiations, by any department of Government.

4.—*The Employers' Side.*

The main facts on the employers' side have already been given. The Indian Jute Mills Association guides and directs the general policy of the jute companies which are members of the association with regard to general trade conditions. The Association does not interfere with the internal management of mills beyond the negotiation of agreements regarding output, which, of course, involves working hours. At no time of the existence of the association have wages and other conditions of work been regarded as an association subject. Some attempts have been made in the past by individual members of the association to secure some measure of standardization of wages and working conditions, but they all have met with failure. The jute mills have grown up as independent units and have rigorously preserved this independence, so far as it has been consistent with general trade policy.

When it became necessary for Government to attempt to bring about some settlement of the general strike, the first prominent feature brought to notice by the Committee of the Mills Association, which was the negotiating authority on the part of the association, was that the committee had power only to recommend certain measures to its members. The members of the committee, it is true, themselves represented about 65 per cent. of the looms, but they could give no guarantee that any recommendation that they would make, would be accepted by other members of the association. Therefore, any agreement that could be drawn up had to be drawn up in the form of " The Committee recommend to members, etc. etc."

There was good ground behind the committee's view, for perhaps in no industry in the world, situated in such a circumscribed area, is the wage position more inchoate. The mills grouped under different managing agents, work under wage systems which have developed many local idiosyncrasies during the long or short years of their existence. Even in mills under the same managing agents there are differences which to persons not acquainted with the position would seem incredible. Examples such as the following could be multiplied. In two mills, A and B, situated in the same area and separated from each other by little more than a boundary wall, under the same managing agents, there is practically not a single entry in the wages-books of the two mills which is the same. In three mills, X, Y and Z under the same managing agents, situated within a stone's throw of each other, the rates in one mill have for many years been higher than those in the other two mills, yet the workers have been aware of this and have continued working quite contentedly. In other groups of mills situated close to each other and under different managing agents, the wage-rates in individual mills are kept, or are supposed to be kept, strictly secret. The total earnings are not necessarily kept secret, but each mill prides itself in having been able to devise piece-rates or bonus rates which are better than the rates of the neighbouring mills. These rates, of course, can be ascertained by spy-work in the bazaar, but up to now, with individual exceptions, there has been no attempt at co-operation. Naturally, therefore, the committee of the Jute Mills Association had to agree to terms only provisionally, and that their position was warranted was subsequently proved by the fact that a small number of mills refused to co-operate in the agreement. This lack of co-operation is said to have arisen from

a claim on the part of the managing agents that the rates in these mills had been abnormally high previous to the strikes. During and after the strike, the number of claims by individual mills that they were the highest-paid mills on the river was remarkable : at least a dozen mills made that claim.

Even more remarkable than the traditional secrecy of wage-rates was the independent action taken by individual firms without consulting others when the change-over took place. Only at a very late stage in the strike did it come to light that some managing agents had made the concession demanded by the workers in the Begg Dunlop group, on the 1st of July. In one managing agency the concession was made to only a part of the whole group of mills of which they were managing agents. This group of mills, moreover, was represented on the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, which, as a whole, was entirely ignorant of the action which the firm had taken till the strike had developed into a public menace.

Again, when the post-agreement strikes broke out, it came to light that the Angus mill, which is a member of the association, had, in anticipation of possible labour trouble, granted on the 1st July the concessions which were ultimately incorporated in the agreement. This enlightened action, however, did not prevent the Angus workers going on strike for about 10 days after the cessation of the general strike. Later, misunderstanding was caused by the action of the Angus authorities after their strike ended. The managing agents of two mills in the neighbourhood inquired of the Angus authorities what concessions they had granted to the workers on their return. The Angus authorities replied that they had granted no concessions, a perfectly correct reply because the men went back to work unconditionally. The concessions, however, had been granted on the 1st of July. The inquiring managing agents promptly announced in their own mills that the men who were then on strike would have to come back unconditionally, that they would get none of the concessions at all. In one case, indeed, this action was taken after the men while on strike had been definitely promised the concessions.

When the second crisis arrived an attempt was made by the Alliance-Craig-Waverly managing agents and the managing agents of the Megna mill to take joint action, but at the very last moment, indeed on the day when the pay checks were distributed, the managing agents of one group altered the rates of a section of their workers without informing the others. This, in itself, almost precipitated a crisis, where such a crisis was entirely unnecessary, because the managing agents of the one set of mills were quite willing to make the adjustments which the other mill had made.

These are merely examples of the entire lack of co-ordination in the Bengal jute-mill industry, so far as working conditions are concerned. This lack of system was brought prominently to light in the case of the second Kamarhatty mill strike, which happened in the first week of September. The Kamarhatty workers demanded the rates of the Kankinnarah workers. Kankinnarah is situated about 16 miles further up the river than Kamarhatty and has developed its own local habits of work and pay. The Kankinnarah rates are admittedly higher than the Kamarhatty rates, but, though both mills are under the same managing agents, no attempts had been made to co-ordinate them. The Kamarhatty strike forced the Association to take action, because had the managing agents, for the sake of peace, granted Kamarhatty the same rates as Kankinnarah, then the areas neighbouring Kamarhatty would have been affected, and the wage trouble would have spread up and down the river again like so many recurrent attacks of influenza. The Indian Jute Mills Association, however, took up a definite stand on the subject and decided that no further concessions would be granted beyond those in the agreement, and that if strikes broke out as the result of unsatisfied demands for such concessions, then they would have to be fought to a finish.

Then there is the question of the non-association mills, now about half a dozen in number. These mills regulate their own hours of work. Some of them work the maximum possible hours under the Factories Act, viz., 81 hours per week, and they have to make their own arrangements as regards payment. The association has no knowledge of the rates paid in those mills, nor have these mills official knowledge of the rates paid by mills which are members of the association. The non-association mills are mainly new mills, and it is generally believed that new mills have to pay higher rates than older mills. This appears to be acquiesced in by the workers, at least until such time as new mills have developed sufficient age to become looked upon as old mills.

The most vexed question of all in the jute mills, so far as the wages are concerned, has already been referred to, i.e., *khoraki*. Double-shift mills pay *khoraki*, single-shift mills do not, yet *khoraki* has been, and is still, a bone of contention between the workers and the management. To the outsider, the institution of *khoraki* at all, or payment for no work done, would seem to have been a big mistake. Probably this is now generally recognized, but it has now grown into a custom or *dustoor*, and

its removal as an item from the wage-books will by no means be easy, as has been clearly demonstrated in the case of the many strikes which occurred when double shift mills changed over to the single-shift. No combined action has been taken with regard to *khoraki*, but at the conference between the members of Government and the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, the association declared its intention of undertaking the question of simplification of wages after the settlement of the strike. The question of standardization of wages is quite another problem. This was referred to by Mr. Laird, chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, in his speech in the Bengal Legislative Council. Standardization is not generally looked upon as feasible, although as indicated already, some members have from time to time pressed for it.

Much of the difficulty in the strike was occasioned by the attitude the Jute Mills Association adopted towards the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Employers in general are very averse from dealing with bodies the constitution of which they do not know. During the whole course of their existence, until after the war, the Bengal jute mills were free from trade-unionism of any kind. After the war, unions of some kind developed with almost bewildering rapidity, because in almost every strike some sort of labour body was formed, usually after the strike broke out. Such bodies had no permanence, no constitution, no regular membership, and their power to control the workers for whom they professed to be willing to negotiate was always extremely problematical. They bred not unnatural antagonism on the part of the management, for a friendly spirit does not develop easily when the introduction comes by means of assault and battery. Employers strongly resent the absence of notice or lack of opportunity for negotiation, which is so common in strikes in Bengal. As a rule, they are ready to listen to any grievance which the workers put forward, and they meet them in a reasonable spirit. No better proof of this can be given than the long record of industrial peace which the jute mills have had. In one or two instances, employers have negotiated with self-styled labour leaders, whether their claim to such was justified or not, but it was not till after the passing of the Trade Unions Act in 1926 that any indication was given of a principle which might be followed by employers with regard to labour bodies. The principle was that negotiation would take place only with registered trade unions. The first union to be registered was the Kankinnarah Labour Union. Indeed no other jute workers' union has been registered or has even applied for registration.

At the beginning of the unrest which led to the strike, the Kankinnarah Labour Union was active in pushing the case of the dissatisfied workmen. Although many of their letters were not acknowledged, a certain amount of negotiation did take place between them and the authorities of the group in which the trouble was coming to a head. These negotiations failed and the principle of negotiation with a registered trade union was considerably damaged. The jute mill authorities, however, till some time after the general strike was finished, resolutely refused to negotiate with the unregistered trade union, and in this they had considerable justification, for, as has already been indicated, in practically no case were the managements given an opportunity to discuss with their own workers the grievances which they professed to have. The feelings of the managements, however, were still more exacerbated by the fact that in the great majority of cases the workers stopped work without giving any notice whatsoever. The managers, the managing agents, and, indeed the whole superior staff of the mills were entirely ignorant of the workers' point of view. What they were aware of was that certain sections of their workers refused to work for reasons which could not be ascertained even from sirdars. The manner in which the mills stopped work also suggested that such grievances as the workers might have had were not of a serious character. The method of closure of the Anglo-India Mills is an interesting example of this. These four mills did not close down as a whole; they closed down gradually, mill by mill, the ultimate stoppage being caused by wholesale picketing. Then there was the clear evidence that though a part of the industry refused to work another part as stubbornly refused to stop working. The pre-agreement strikes, too, presented many quite incomprehensible features with regard to individual mills. Thus, while the South Shamnagar workers went on strike, the North Shamnagar workers on the opposite side of the river in the same company and under the same managing agency did not go out till last a few days before the agreement was negotiated. In the Sealdah group, as well as in Barnagore with its particular dispute, the workers went out and went in, in some cases as often as three times, during the general strike. In Barnagore, the workers are under the same managing agency and paid in the same terms as the Bally workers on the opposite side of the river. Yet the Bally workers at no time either before or after the agreement showed any disposition to strike. In Messrs. Bird & Co.'s managing agency the majority of mills did not strike till after the agreement, and the same is true of the whole of the mills in the Yule agency. The whole aspect of the strike, indeed, seemed incongruous to a degree, and the managing agents, ascribing the cause to the work of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and particularly

Miss Das Gupta, were not unreasonably opposed to according any official sanction to direct negotiations with a body of which they had no official knowledge, and the motives of which were very generally doubted.

5.—*The Labour Side.*

Two unions were involved, one the registered Kankinnarah Labour Union, and the other the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The Kankinnarah Labour Union which had been in existence for some years, was the only body involved in the earlier stages of the dispute. This was quite natural, as the dispute broke out in the particular area in which this union operated. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union did not come into the field until the trouble was reaching a head. Indeed, in a statement made during the course of the negotiations prior to the agreement Mr. Roy Chowdhury said that Miss Das Gupta realized the possibilities of the situation only when she heard him talking over the phone' about the trouble in the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group. The decline of the influence of the Kankinnarah Labour Union was ascribed by Mr. Roy Chowdhury to be due to the antagonism of Maulvi Latafat Hossain, one of the officials of the union, to illicit drug traffic, alleged to be common in the Kankinnarah-Bhatpara mill area. Maulvi Latafat Hossain had been pressing the police to take action against the smugglers, and this antagonized some powerful interests in Bhatpara, which started a campaign amongst the workers, advising them not to listen to the officials of the Kankinnarah Labour Union. A Barrackpore pleader, Babu Narendra Chatterji, also entered the lists against the Kankinnarah Labour Union for reasons which are obscure, and for some reasons which are equally obscure he very quickly obtained great ascendancy over the workers. The managing agents of the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group said that after they had granted the concessions which the workers had demanded, the workers refused to go back to work, unless they received a definite order from this pleader. Miss Das Gupta got into touch with Narendra Babu, and he was elected Vice-President of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The emergence of this gentleman as a labour leader led to great antagonism on the side of the employers. Unlike Miss Das Gupta's, his name had never previously been mentioned in any labour connection whatsoever. He had no knowledge of the jute industry and had never previously been known to have any business connections in Bhatpara, yet suddenly for no reason which could be ascertained by the employers and without any official position in any union, registered or unregistered, he seemed to get control of a considerable body of men. The employers flatly refused to have anything to do with him in spite of the fact that the workers said that they were willing to resume work on the terms which had been conceded if the employers would simply write a letter to Naren Babu and get his permission for them to return to work. The Naren Babu incident is not uncommon in local labour politics. It not infrequently happens that some person entirely unknown to the management or even to the majority of workers themselves suddenly assumes leadership during a dispute, whether it be petty or protracted. Such individuals, coming from and going to nowhere, breed more antagonism on the part of the employers even than political leaders, who may enter the labour arena for reasons connected more with politics than with the improvement of labour conditions.

With the assumption of control by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, the leaflet literature began and with it the general unrest. From the copies of the leaflets which are appended, it will be seen that the claims of the workers were put forward in not immoderate language. Several of the facts in the leaflets were woefully wrong, but, on the whole, the advice to the workers was couched in language which might have been used in an orderly strike under the leadership of a well-organized trade union in a more highly industrialized country. The pamphlets are interesting because for the first time, on this side of India at least, the 8-hour day and the minimum wage were introduced as issues in a big dispute. The part played by women in the strike and by a woman as leader was indicated by the demand for maternity benefits, which was also ultimately conceded in the terms of settlement. The demands for leave with pay and pay during illness are not uncommon features in strikes in Bengal. The pamphlets were issued in several languages and were printed on red paper. The fact that the contents of these pamphlets seem to have been so quickly assimilated by such a large body of workers suggests that there must be, in the jute mill area, considerably more literacy than the census statistics show. The colour of the pamphlet was said to have some connection with the strikes, as word had been passed round amongst the workers that on receipt of red pamphlets they were to strike. On the other hand, the pamphlet ultimately issued by the union calling for peace was also printed on red paper.

Whatever may have been the feelings of the workers regarding the strikes, the combined effect of the leaflets, Miss Das Gupta's own influence, the Jagatdal strike, picketing and intimidation, was to bring about closure in practically all the mills

on the Calcutta side of the river north of Calcutta. Miss Das Gupta's union, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, is supposed to be the lineal descendant of a union which used to operate in the Bhatpara area, called the Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union. This union took a prominent part in strikes some years ago, and it was run mainly by persons known to have extremist connections. Some of them, indeed, are at present under trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Although its locus was Bhatpara, the officials had a habit of suddenly descending on any area where trouble had broken out. The union, for example, was active in several strikes in the Bowreah-Chengail area. Local branches were formed as strikes broke out, but whether these branches were independent unions or branches of the Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union is known only to the persons most intimately concerned. In 1929, the union transferred its headquarters to Calcutta. Its reported activities were sporadic. While in Bhatpara, it had kept up a continuous existence and took close interest in the welfare of the workers. It was reported, for example, by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, in his reports for 1926 and 1927 to have been useful in furthering the claims of injured workers in that area for compensation. When the strike broke out, the union had changed its headquarters from Cornwallis Street, where its office was supposed to have been hitherto, to Harrison Road, and it was from Harrison Road that the shower of leaflets emanated and it was also from there that the organization was conducted. Local agents of the union seem to have been appointed in all the important mill areas. These agents were said to be good speakers in Hindi. The mainspring of the whole of the union, however, was the President, Miss Das Gupta. Miss Das Gupta previously had attained some position in the labour world by leading a strike of Calcutta sweepers in 1928. She was educated at Columbia University, New York, and at Frankfort in Germany. She was elected president of the union in place of one Kalidas Bhattacharya, who seems to have disappeared from public life about the time the Meerut case was started. After she entered the field, Miss Das Gupta threw her whole energy into the strike, and ultimately gained complete control, irrespective of any of the other officials or agents of the union, and the completeness of her control was early proved by the fact that after the agreement was reached she secured the return to work of all mills on strike within twenty-four hours.

The position of Government with respect to Miss Das Gupta was explained to her by the Hon'ble. Mr. Moberley, when she came for the conference referred to previously. The Hon'ble. Mr. Moberly explained to her that from general reports she seemed to be the leader of the strike, although, so far as Government were aware, her position was quite irregular. Her union was not registered ; Government had no information regarding its constitution, or her powers under the constitution, or of the organization of the union. As, however, she was the leader, Government, the Hon'ble. Mr. Moberly explained, wished to hear her point of view. The subsequent negotiations have already been described, but at a meeting it became quite evident that her knowledge of jute mill working conditions at that stage was of a very vague character. She also had a very vague idea of the local position in regard to hours of work and other matters. More surprising still, in spite of the debate in the Legislative Council, and of the publicity which the strike had occasioned, Miss Das Gupta was surprised to hear that the Trade Disputes Act had been in force since May. By this time, may be added, the rumour that some dealers in the hessian market were providing the money for the strike had achieved great prominence, and Miss Dass Gupta seemed distinctly averse from any action of the nature of a public inquiry. The Hon'ble. Mr. Moberly asked particularly who the members of the union were. Miss Das Gupta replied that every striker automatically became a member of the union. Asked why she had not registered the union under the Trade Unions Act, Miss Das Gupta said that she refused to register the union because such registration would involve charging fees from members. No member of the union, she said, was charged any fee, i.e., there were no paying members of the union. She financed her union herself, she said, from her own earnings (Miss Das Gupta has some interest in chemical manufacture in which a brother is engaged). The question of finance was not pursued further at a meeting, but there can be no doubt during the strike, and also after it, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union spent a great deal of money.

Where this money came from is one of the unsolved problems of the strike. The answer which is most generally accepted is that it came from some hessian dealers, who recognized in the strike an opportunity of lessening the loss which they had incurred, or were likely to incur, as the result of a fall in the hessian market. Hessian dealers who had bought forward were faced with the fact that prices had fallen considerably since they bought, and that a strike could be used for their own ends in one of two ways—either the price of hessians should be forced up or, much more important, mills should be prevented from delivering. In the contracts there is a special strike clause, which permits of notice of cancellation of a contract being given under certain conditions. It is not without significance that the Begg Dunlop, in which the trouble originally started, was perhaps the best " sold " mills on the river,

and that, while in the last 20 years the number of cancellation-of-contract notices sent to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was not 200, in one month during the general strike such notices amounted to nearly 2,000. Wild rumours became prevalent regarding the hessian gambling, and many names prominent in Calcutta business and politics were connected with the instigation of the strikes. Proof of the allegations is unfortunately not available. This aspect of the matter was one of the strongest reasons for the appointment of a court of inquiry under the Trade Disputes Act, but before conditions had developed to such a pitch that the court of inquiry could have been used for the calling off of the strike, the strike had been settled by negotiation. It seems indisputable, however, that hessian dealers were in some way implicated in the strike, as many Marwaris, never hitherto interested in labour matters, but known to be interested in the hessian market, are known to have taken an interest in the strike.

The alleged *modus operandi* of the instigators was the distribution of money amongst *sirdars* and local shop-keepers. Under the *sirdari* system, gangs of workers are under the immediate orders of *sirdars* and they are practically bound to go on strike if the *sirdar* so orders. Sufficient payment to a *sirdar*, or to a number of leading *sirdars*, in a mill is, therefore, adequate for the stoppage of at least one department of a mill, and jute mills are so organized that if one department closes down, the rest of the mill must also close. The position thus comes to be that for a thousand or two of rupees it seems possible to close down any mill in Bengal for, at least, a short time. Such closure may be given the aspect of a *bona fide* labour dispute by the circulation of a number of more or less hypothetical demands. In the general strike, however, unfortunately for the jute mill authorities, there was a perfectly *bona fide* labour dispute in the initial stages, viz., the question as to whether or not the 54-hour stent should be preserved for the 60-hour week. It is probable that knowing that the workers had a real grievance, the Marwari speculators came into the field with a view to lessening their own losses, or perhaps even increasing their gains by means of speculation in what is known as the *bhitar bazar*.

After the general strike was over and when the post-agreement strikes were in progress, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union officials fell out amongst themselves. Miss Das Gupta was deposed in a suddenly called meeting. The leaders of the dissentient movement were the General Secretary, Kali Sen, and the Organizing Secretary, Bankim Mukherji. Miss Das Gupta refused to recognize the constitutionality of the meeting and at a later meeting, said to be constitutionally called, she retorted by dismissing her dismissers, whom she replaced by Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza, General Secretary, and Babu Nripendra Chaudhuri, Organizing Secretary. The union now split definitely into two, and at the moment of writing it is not known which one has the prior claim to be called the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Both use the name. Voluminous press correspondence followed in which the two sections vigorously attacked each other, and from the attacks and counter-attacks certain interesting features may be extracted.

The following two extracts from the press indicate the difficulties of "recognizing" bodies which are not registered; they also throw some light on the finances of the strike.

The first is an extract from *Liberty*, dâk edition, of the 12th September :—

Charges against Miss Das Gupta.

More Light—Why she was Removed from Office.—Mr. Kali Sen, General Secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union has issued the following statement :—

"I would fain have ignored Miss Das Gupta's hysteric effusions in the press as well as the frantic outbursts of her gallant band of admirers, but the mischievous activities in which she is still indulging in the name of the union compel me to lay before the public the real truth with regard to the present situation.

She has been pleased to characterize the proceedings of the meeting in which the no-confidence resolution was passed as a huge joke. We know in the light of recent events that the labour movement is to Miss Das Gupta nothing more than good fun quite in keeping with her feminine caprices and frivolities. But, brought up as we have been in a different atmosphere, we have the misfortune to take the movement more seriously. We would, therefore, point out to her in all humility that the meeting of the Executive Committee in the union office in which she was dethroned was duly notified beforehand—at least as duly as the meeting which she convened subsequently at her private residence and at which only six members out of twenty-nine were present, failing thereby to form a quorum. She may be further interested to know that at the meeting in the union office no fewer than nineteen members out of twenty-nine took part in the deliberations and unanimously resolved to remove her from the position of the Acting President.

Out of these nineteen members who unanimously passed the no-confidence resolution, six have been prosecuted in connection with the present strike and these and the rest have a career of sacrifice and suffering unknown to the later Acting President. Some of the people "expelled" by her "ukase," have twice been prosecuted even during the strike.

These are the people whom Miss Das Gupta chooses to call as jesters and mercenaries. The public may well judge who is really so.

Charges against her.—In the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, held on the 24th August, the following principal charges were brought against her on which the vote of no-confidence was passed :—

(1) She never consulted the Executive Committee in matters vitally affecting the interests of the workers.

(2) She never took the Executive Committee into confidence over financial matters and she never consulted the Committee about spending the strike fund at her disposal. She spent money without the knowledge of the Executive Committee which had every right to know how the money was spent. She never submitted any accounts. She did not disclose what was the balance left in her hands when the strike was called off.

(3) She obstinately refused to form a Strike Committee for reasons best known to herself.

(4) She attended conferences for negotiations privately and without previously consulting the Executive Committee of the union.

(5) She did not consult the Executive Committee about the terms of settlement and arrived at a compromise without the sanction of the Executive Committee.

(6) On the 13th of August, Mr. Bankim Mukherji declared that the mills in the Southern Section would go on strike next week, thereby completing the general strike, and insisted on the strike being continued for another fortnight to ensure happy terms of settlement. She pleaded scarcity of funds, although subsequent events proved that she had been spending money lavishly even after the calling off of the strike. She appeared to be only too anxious to bring the strike to an end and arrived at a compromise on most dubious terms of settlement.

(7) She treated the officials of the union with discourtesy and carried on all sorts of vile propaganda behind their back. She called them mercenaries although she knew full well that in their social status they were her equals.

(8) She threw every obstacle in the way of those who undertook to release on bail the important officials of the union and the workers who were arrested at Champdany.

(9) Her speeches in asking the workers to resume work on pain of imprisonment under the Trade Disputes Act definitely disclosed her reactionary mentality.

The Constitutional Issue.—I have been noticing with amusing interest, reports and statements published in the press by Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza who styles himself as the General Secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. If Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza had any idea of constitution he would not be dragged into this dirty quarrel. He ought to understand that although by a long stretch of imagination the question of removal of Miss Das Gupta from her office of Acting President may be regarded as a disputed point, no one having the least amount of common sense in him will admit that a so-called meeting of the Executive Committee, called by an Acting President already removed from office, and attended by only six recalcitrant members who came in the Executive during the strike when new temporary branches sprang up, had any constitutional right to expel old and active members of the Executive and elect a General Secretary. I would again remind the public that 19 members of the Executive out of 29 are still with us and out of the six gentlemen who had the audacity to hold a meeting at Miss Probhabati's private chamber and seal the fate of the union, two, Mr. Nandokishore Sharma, Secretary, Shamnagar Branch, and Mr. Sk. Zaman, Secretary, Rishra Branch, have since cut off their connection with the so-called union of one, Anthony Bagan Lane, and have joined us.

History of the Union.—The public may be interested to know the origin and previous history of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and Miss Probhabati's connection with it. As the very start I may point out that the Bengal Jute Workers' union which is at present located at 41, Harrison Road, is not a mushroom union. It was established about six years ago after the Gourepur strike. Readers of *Atmashakti and Forward* may remember the articles written by Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee, the late Acting President of the union, in which the past history of the union was elaborately delineated. The head office of the union was located at Bhatpara and have all along been doing immense service to the jute workers, fighting their compensation cases, removing malpractices within the mills, viz., bribery and other zulums, and most of the juteworkers on both sides of the river know the Bhatpara Union and comrade Kalidas. It is affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress and has international connection and all previous records are in my possession.

How Miss Das Gupta came on the scene.—In January, 1929, Mr. Shibnath Banerji was elected President of the union. When he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for nine months in connection wih the Lillooah strike, Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee was elected Acting President by the Executive Committee.

In March, 1929, Mr. Radha Raman Mitra, General Secretary of our union, Mr. Dharani Gossain, one of the Vice-Presidents, and Mr. Gopendra Chakrabarty, Secretary, Bhatpara Branch, were arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy case and taken away to Meerut. After that unfortunate incident, the Executive Committee elected Mr. Kali Sen, Secretary, Calcutta Branch, as the Acting General Secretary and Mr. Bankim Mukherji, Secretary, Bowreah Branch, was appointed as the Organizing Secretary.

At that time Miss Probhabati Das Gupta who was aspiring to be a labour leader, tried to form a rival union at Champdany under the name of "Champdany Jute Workers' Union," although our union had a branch there with Mr. Nirode Chakrabarty as the Secretary thereof. Our policy all along being the formation of a big union of all jute workers we deprecated the idea of a rival union at Champdany. Miss Probhabati's attempt at Champdany also came to an end, as Mr. Shachinandan Chatterji on whom she depended as the Secretary of her rival union, joined the Central Organization and Mr. Nirode Chakrabarty being obliged to leave Champdany at that time, Mr. Chatterji was elected as the Secretary of our Champdany branch.

The Executive Committee then co-opted Miss Das Gupta as a member of the Executive Committee. When Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee after his arrest at Chandpur and subsequent release retired from public life, Miss Das Gupta was elected as the Acting President in his place. That is how she came into the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. I have to say all this to clear the constitutional issue once more, that a member co-opted by the Executive Committee and elected by the said Committee as the Acting President may be constitutionally removed from office as well as the union by the said Committee.

It is a pity that the vast body of working class people is not yet self-conscious, and for some time may be beguiled by the glamour of reactionary personalities who pose as their friends and treat them as pawns in a game of speculation and keep them dazed with promises and bluffs, but these tactics cannot hold good for an indefinite period and the next few weeks will show how far the workers recognize her as their leader.

Our union has all along adopted the policy of educating the workers in the primary tenets of trade unionism and have always stood against reactionary leaders who try to enforce their personalities on the uneducated workers in order to exploit them for their personal interests. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union is a left wing labour union and it will always stick to its political principles as such.

Miss Probhabati's journalistic friend's remark that "unions may come and unions may go but Dr. Probhabati will remain for ever" speaks for itself, and Miss Das Gupta's reactionary mentality cannot be depicted better.

I think I have sufficiently cleared the situation now and I hope the enlightened public will now understand the game that is being played by Miss Probhabati in the name of the labour movement. The *status quo* of the "Anthony Bagan Union," composed of adventurers and doubtful characters, whose identity we are going to expose shortly, will also be judged in its proper light."

The second is from the *Basumati* (English), of the 12th September, 1929:—

"BOURGEOIS" LEADERS AND THEIR "JOKES"—NEWSPAPER PROPAGANDA—

DR. PROBHABATI REFUTES THE CHARGES ONE BY ONE.

Who wasted the Money.—In a statement to the press, Dr. Miss Probhabati Das Gupta, who was removed from the office of the president of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union by an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee on 24th August last, referred to the charges against her, published in yesterday's *Liberty* (11th September), and said:—

A huge joke.—"I described that meeting as a huge joke and I would describe the charges published to-day as another joke. That was the only way to retain hope of working together with bourgeois 'labour leaders' in future in the cause of labour. They want to know how Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza, B.A. (Oxon.), came to be the general secretary of the union. Mr. Mirza might want to know how at the end of March, 1929, without any previous notice of any meeting of the union, at an informal meeting at my residence at No. 1, Anthony Bagan Lane, Mr. Kali Sen was made acting general secretary and Mr. Bankim Mukherji was made organizing secretary of the union. They appointed me president and appointed them secretaries at the end of March, 1929, shortly after the arrest of the men now undergoing trial at Meerut. As far as I remember, at that meeting we three were the only persons present. Then

no question of quorum arose. Within a month of that appointment there was no meeting, formal or informal, of Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Since 20th March, 1929, until the future sentence of banishment was pronounced upon me in my absence on 24th August, 1929, there were, as far as I can recollect, only two formal meetings of the executive committee, one about a month after the appointment by me of the general secretary and the organizing secretary, as stated already, and the second to appoint Mr. Naren Chatterji as vice-president early in August last, just before the strike. The union proceedings book should contain my signature to the minute. A good deal has been said about constitution. I want to know when was any constitution drawn up for Bengal Jute Workers' Union? Where is a copy of the constitution to be found? Was there any list of subscriptions collected, or to be collected, from members of the union? How much was collected from the members? Was it the president's duty to call a meeting of the executive committee to decide upon declaration of strike? Was it the president's duty, according to the constitution, to call a meeting of the executive committee to discuss the terms of settlement? Was any meeting called by the secretary, or held since the strike began, until the joke was perpetrated by surreptitiously including in the item 'Miscellaneous' the dismissal of the president and her banishment from the union? I cannot help asking, with a smile, 'Under what clause of the constitution, written or unwritten, was the order of dismissal and the sentence of banishment made?' Does the constitution justify banishment without even a notice that there was any charge pending? Who gave the executive committee that extraordinary power, usually reserved for the general body of members of the union in every democratic institution? And, lastly, what was the occasion for this indecent haste? Was it a financial necessity? Anything connected with 'the game of speculation' to which the general secretary refers? Surely it was a farce. I want to forget the mean and despicable aspect of this financial necessity of the bourgeois 'labour leaders' in want. So I call it a huge joke.

"*The Occasion for Mirth.*—It is not true that at the meeting in which Mr. Mirza was appointed general secretary, there were only six members present. There were at least half a dozen more members present at that meeting than at the meeting where I was sentenced to banishment. Of course, it does not suit the dismissed general secretary of the union to acknowledge these members as such any longer. That again is an occasion for mirth. The dismissed general secretary tries to trace the history, of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Of course, he is innocent of knowledge of that history, and refers readers to Mr. Kali Das Bhattacharjee in accurate articles in *Atma-Sakti*. That institution was never called 'Bengal Jute Workers' Union.' But the dismissed general secretary is not bound to state facts accurately or even to learn them from the pages of *Atma-Sakti*. That would be too much of a bother.

"*Story of Money.*—There is one subject about which I want to speak with restraint. The money I had at my disposal—and Mr. Kali Sen and Mr. Bankim Mukherji and a host of others personally derived benefit from it—was not a fund of the union. Long before I made Mr. Kali Sen general secretary I used to get funds and to spend for the union. But that never was the money of the union. The union never had any right to call for account of moneys I used to have at my absolute disposal, whether before, or during the strike, or since the end of the strike. I can, but will not, disclose the source from which money is coming to them, nor do I want any account from them, for that is no business of mine. Others are making unwelcome enquiries already. But surely I had a right to call for account of money I made over to Mr. Kali Sen and many of his colleagues. They were hardly seriously pressed to render account. If necessary, I shall publish full details, if Mr. Kali Sen and Mr. Bankim Mukherji and Mr. Nripen Khan invite disclosure. All I want to say is that I get money and I spend money for others. The hoarding instinct is foreign to my nature. The public will now understand why I like to treat the accusations as a joke."

The private sources of revenue referred to in the above statements are, so far as official information goes, mysteries. The outstanding fact about Miss Das Gupta, however, was her undoubted control of the strikers in the pre-agreement strikes. Even admitting her meagre knowledge of labour conditions and labour laws, and the doubtful origin of the money, which she was undoubtedly spending lavishly towards keeping the strike going, there is no doubt that, as she herself claimed, in the first interview at Writers' Buildings, that she had only to lift her little finger and the workers would obey. Ultimately, it is true, her influence proved of little avail in other areas, especially in the Budge-Budge area, but the fact remains that so far as the workers on strike during the general strike were concerned, she was able to control them absolutely, and the extent and efficiency of her control is amply proved by the expeditious way in which she had every one of these workers back to work within 24 hours. Such sudden rise to control can only be described as one of the peculiar

features of Indian industrial life. To the average jute mill worker, at the end of the second week of July, Miss Das Gupta was entirely unknown, yet for the next three weeks she was mistress of the situation, and, indeed, in respect of the area where she had power originally, remained mistress of the situation subsequently, in spite of the split in the organization of which she was the head.

In the post-agreement troubles, Miss Das Gupta tried her utmost to honour the word she had given with respect to original strikes. She failed in respect of most of the mills, but she certainly succeeded in preventing a recrudescence of the strike in the original area. After the resumption, however, the workers took advantage of her. Hundreds of alleged cases of victimization were put before her, which on examination completely broke down. False statements of wages were given her. Cases of corporal punishment were reported to her (all such cases, it may be noted, were not entirely without foundation). The false statements of wages in particular seem to have been furnished to her with the sinister reason of instigating another general strike, which they would undoubtedly had done had it not been for wisdom of the managing agents concerned in meeting Miss Das Gupta herself and explaining the ridiculous character of the statements which had been given her. Everything went to show that influences were behind Miss Das Gupta, attempting to compel her to use her influence to set the ball rolling once again, and, to the credit, it must be said, that she did not deviate from her set purpose of keeping the peace, at least for a time. Unfortunately, it came to light that the union asked the workers to keep the peace for only three months. Why this time-limit should be imposed upon the peace at the moment remains to be seen, but Miss Das Gupta has been personally impressed with the obvious results of further unrest. The agreement in this respect has come as a godsend to the jute mills, even although, originally, it was an unwelcome necessity. The jute mills have decided to adhere to it. In some cases, it is understood, the adjustment of wages has gone slightly beyond the agreement, but they are now on safe ground in refusing to go further, at least in the meantime. Indeed, it is understood that they have decided that no further concession will be given and that any demands for such concessions, which may lead to a strike, will be followed by a fight to a finish. Miss Das Gupta had been impressed with this point of view, but the effect of the information conveyed to her will be tested within the next few months. The dissentient branch of her union is said to be instigating further trouble, and in the confusion of advice, perhaps the common-sense of the workers themselves may ultimately prevail. But there is no denying the fact that the position is disquieting, for, on their own admissions, the two branches of the union are at loggerheads over money. Miss Das Gupta has admitted that she had funds from a private source; she has also admitted that the union has no paying members. And she has been repeatedly impressed with the advisability of registering the union if she wishes to remain in the labour movement. The Trade Unions Act requires an audit of accounts, though it does not (as she contended) require that subscriptions be paid. The public are not unjustified in feeling that there is something wrong somewhere, and till the labour side can put its house in order, and show that their actions are actuated only by the welfare of the workers, there is little hope of it commanding public confidence, or, what is even more important, the confidence and respect of the employers.

6.—*The Oil Depot Strikes.*

The narrative of the jute mill strike would be incomplete without some reference being made to the strikes in the oil depots at Budge Budge. The chief oil companies with factories at Budge Budge are the Burma Shell, the Standard and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company. They employ about 4,000 men direct, but this represents only a part of the total labour, as the work of loading and unloading is done by contract.

The oil workers went on strike at the same time as the Budge Budge group of jute mills. The strike was at first thought to be a sympathetic one. For some time previously, however, agitation had been going on among the oil workers. This was directed by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, who for some time had taken a leading part in the tin plate strike at Golmuri, Jamshedpur. The agitation was infructious till the jute workers went out. Mr. Bose's object was to bring pressure on the tin-plate authorities at Jamshedpur. The Burma Shell Company has a controlling interest in the Golmuri concern, and Mr. Bose attempted to force their hand by inciting strikes in all their factories. Thus, the position at Budge Budge was that the workers had to go on strike to help the Golmuri men, working in an entirely different industry, in a different province, and under a different Government. The one point of contact was ownership of shares in each concern by the Burma Shell Company. The Burma Shell Company is only one of the employers at Budge Budge, but the others, including the Standard Oil Company of New York, were included in the attack.

The strikes were given the appearance of a *bona fide* dispute by statements of "grievances" being sent to the managements, but the method by which they were presented shows clearly that the grievances were only a subterfuge. The strikes broke out on a Wednesday. At 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the manager of the Burma Shell Depot received an ultimatum from his workers, or a section of them; this ultimatum contained a long list of grievances the *bona fides* of which may be gauged from the fact that one of the demands was that the workers should be compensated for accidents, whereas they are automatically so compensated under the Workmen's Compensation Act. A reply was demanded within five hours. This was a clear impossibility, as the head office in Calcutta closed at 5, and the local manager obviously could not reply on his own initiative. In the case of the Standard Oil Company the demands which were not signed had been sent in on the previous Saturday. In the Indo-Burma Petroleum case the demands were sent in after the strike broke out.

Immediately after the strike broke out the employers exerted themselves to get into touch with their workers. They were not successful. They distributed leaflets intimating that any grievance the workers had would be discussed on resumption of work. They had no effect. The inevitable union was created, the Budge Budge Oil and Petrol Workers' Union, with a President, Mr. Subhas Bose, a treasurer, a secretary and a general organizer. The union put forward a set of demands. The demands were:—(1) Immediate settlement of tin-plate strike; (2) immediate recognition of the union; (3) fifty per cent. increase in wages in form of increment or bonus; (4) standardisation of rates and introduction of grade and time-scale system (uniform rates for same kinds of jobs in all the Oil and Petrol Companies); (5) six days work per week. Full wages to be paid if the company stops work of its own accord; (6) Eight hours' duty. Fifteen minutes' allowance to be given for attendance; (7) stoppage of suspensions and discharges without proper enquiry made along with union representatives; (8) leave and service rules: privilege leave, casual leave and sick leave to be given to all workers; (9) provident fund benefit, gratuity and pension scheme to be introduced in all companies and extended to all workers; (10) accident benefit compensation scheme; (11) arrangements for pure drinking water; (12) better housing, construction of workers' quarters; for the present some quarters allowance to be granted. The question to be thoroughly discussed with union officials; (13) Contractors' labour, such as soldermen, etc., to be guided under the same rules and service conditions.

Many strike leaders came from Jamshedpur to reinforce local leaders, but on August 29th Mr. Subhas Bose, in a statement issued in his newspaper *Liberty*, made the issue quite clear. The statement is reproduced here:—

"The situation at the Tinplate Company has reached a dead-lock. There is a general strike now commencing from Friday last. Both the new and old hands are out. For keeping up appearance the machinery is kept running but there is hardly any production. The management appear to be unbending. But while they refuse to treat with the union, they are doing all they can to cajole and tempt individual workmen. The big officers of the company including the general manager do not even hesitate to go from door to door in order to humour the workmen.

"The demands of the workmen are so moderate and the attitude of the local management so unreasonable and uncompromising that we, who have spoused the cause of the workers have no alternative but to fight to a finish. For this purpose we intend to have the local Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. The Tin-plate Company are holding out a threat that if protection is withdrawn they may close down for good and the Burma Company will then import tin-plates from abroad. If the threat is carried out the present fight will then develop into a fight between the Burma Oil Company and ourselves. In pursuance of that fight we shall approach every factory in India owned by the Burma Oil Company and shall create a situation such as we have created at Budge Budge. Steps have been taken in that connection The unbending attitude of the local management has converted a local issue into an All-India question. We, who are not tin-plate workers, but are helping them, have been dragged into this fight by the workers themselves. We waited for several months before we intervened, but when we found that the poor workers were engaged in a fight against heavy odds and the management were too obstinate we had to step in. Once we have intervened we have to fight till the bitter end."

The strikes in both the jute mills and the oil depots dragged on, with the usual leaflets, speeches and attempts by interested and disinterested people to reach a settlement. The jute and oil workers mutually encouraged each other in their hopes of success, but ultimately the jute workers tired and resumed work on the terms of the agreement, which had been promised before they went out. The oil companies acted with much forbearance and restraint. The Standard Oil Company replied to the Union, but refused to recognize it as did the others. The Standard Oil Company pointed out that they had no connection with Golmuri and that they were ready on resumption of work to listen to the workers' grievances. The other companies

also refused to recognize the union, which, it may be stated, did not even apply for registration under the Trade Unions Act. As for the workers they were told to hold out till the Golmuri case was settled, whereas not one out of a thousand of them knows any thing of the Golmuri case. Probably they had never heard of Golmuri at all. Yet in a leading article in *Liberty* of September 5th an article headed " Golmuri Strike " the following passage occurs :—

" The wails of the suffering people have reached to workers at Budge Budge where the same Burma Oil Company hold the major part of the shares of the petroleum plant. The Golmuri atrocities are having their repercussions at Budge Budge and it is not at all strange that 7,000 workers have struck and that all the works there are in complete deadlock. These people have their grievances—another example of how the Burma Oil Company have made it a profitable business not only to exploit the oil resources, but hundreds and thousands of our poor and hungry men and women and children. To-day is the 15th day of the strike. And what are their complaints ? They are employed for 18 or 19 days and are paid wages with which it is impossible for them to make both ends meet. They enjoy no leave or holidays, and the sick period is treated as absence without pay. There is only one municipal hospital with one doctor to cater to the medical requirements of so many people and Burma Oil Company have made no additional provisions which are badly required. Nor are the labourers supplied with pure drinking water, although the management can easily make arrangements to bring it from Calcutta. And to crown them all, the housing conditions in which they have to live are simply disgraceful. These are sufficient enough to lead the people to a conflict with the employers, but it is no use hiding the clear fact that, that is not the only cause of the Budge Budge strike. They have been moved by feelings of sympathy towards their suffering and persecuted brothers at Golmuri, and are determined to bring the Burma Oil Company to reasonable, if not a humane, frame of mind. There is yet time to mend, but will the Burma Oil listen to counsels of peace "

The Gilbertian situation of the Standard Oil Company of New York being asked to settle the tin-platers' strike at Golmuri in Bihar and Orissa was not sufficiently appreciated by the workers, otherwise they would scarcely have given up several weeks' wages for nothing.

The oil strikes almost inevitably raised issues that were brought to Government. The employers came in deputation to Writers' Buildings to discuss the situation, but it was pointed to them that, so far as the Trade Disputes Act was concerned, they were private concerns. Section 2 (*g*) (iii) of the Act makes light supply a public utility service but not oil supply, without which light may fail, moreover, the presentation of grievances, however *mala fide*, gave a *prima facie* aspect to the case of an industrial dispute, and section 16 of the Act could not be utilised. The wording of section 16 also, it was indicated, was such that even without statements of grievances it could not be utilised. Civil action, it was also pointed out, was for the oil authorities themselves to consider. The only thing Government could do outside appointing a Court of Enquiry or Board of Conciliation, which clearly would be useless under the circumstances, was to give adequate protection against attacks to oil installations and to workers wishing to continue in work.

Attempts were made by several persons to reach a settlement, Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury and the Vice-Chairman of the Budge Budge Municipality endeavoured to get the men back. But none of them could settle the Golmuri strike, and ultimately the Budge Budge workers went back in driblets in spite of Golmuri.

7. General Remarks.

A fact which stands out very prominently from the above account of the strikes is the lack of machinery in the industry for the settlement of disputes. In well-organized industries, Government intervention is normally a last resource, to be sought only after every possible method of negotiation within the industry has failed. In the jute mill strikes the negotiations in the industry were of a perfunctory character owing to the fact that the union with which the employers were willing to negotiate had lost control of the situation. The employers persistently refused to deal with Miss Das Gupta directly, on the principle that they would recognize only registered trade unions. Ultimately, however, they accepted an agreement which they knew had been accepted by an unregistered union. In the meantime the Government conferred with Miss Das Gupta, on the ground that she appeared to be the *de facto* leader of the workers. Government were thus forced into the position of intermediary because the Jute Mills' Association refused to meet direct a trade union leader with whom they ultimately came to terms through a Government officer. The position of the Jute Mills' Association was up to a point justifiable ; they let it to be known that unregistered bodies would not be listened to, but beyond that point their action was distinctly open to criticism. Government as well as the Jute Mills Association

prefer to deal with bodies which have some recognized status, but in industrial disputes the vital test of a trade union is not its registration certificate but its power to control the workers. Government took Miss Das Gupta into confidence on information that she was the leader, a fact of which the jute mills were also quite aware. In disputes of the magnitude of the jute mill strikes, scruples regarding theoretical principles may prove very embarrassing, even dangerous, as was recognized by certain employers in the post-agreement period. It is open to the jute mills in normal times to insist on registration of unions before they correspond with them, but insistence on registration in crises is a principle of very doubtful validity.

The strikes revealed palpable weaknesses in the organization of both employers and employees. The committee of the Jute Mills Association had power only to recommend certain action to it members. They had no authority to negotiate on behalf of members, and it is doubtful if they could have got such authority. Their weak position is due to the traditional attitude of managing agents towards wages. One of the clearest lessons of the dispute is that the Jute Mills Association must take some common action regarding wages and conditions of work. The present position can never stand against organized labour, and organization is bound to come in the future. The employers' wage case bristles with anomalies, and even if complete standardization is impossible, some measure of co-ordination is called for. The strike also revealed weaknesses in the relations between employers and their workers. The ease with which Miss Das Gupta, a newcomer, persuaded the workers to come out, and the difficulty the employers had, first, in ascertaining the case of their own employees, and, second, in persuading them that reasonable grievances would be looked into after resumption of work, points to a lack of confidence between men and masters.

This arises from the sirdar system. The immediate employer of a worker is his sirdar. The sirdar gives him his job, and it is by his will that the worker retains it The sirdar is the official channel of communication between master and man, and the sirdar's view must be the man's view. Otherwise, the man's job is gone. Thus it is that the sirdar who is more of a master and employer—he is a kind of contractor—than an operative paid a weekly wage, is the source of the management's information regarding the worker. Thus it is, too, that dissatisfied or suborned sirdars may initiate and maintain a strike, whatever the workers' views may be. Probably, in the power of the sirdars lies the explanation of the loyalty of the few jute mills which did not go on strike. The sirdars are the real masters of the men. They employ them and dismiss them, and, in many cases, they house them and can unhouse them. They may own or control the shops which supply the men with food. The operative, too, pays his lump or recurring sum to the sirdar to retain his job. His life, indeed, at every turn is coloured with sirdarism. Normally he does not object, for he argues, what the sirdar is able to do do-day, I may do to-morrow; in due time, I, too, shall be a sirdar and reap the rewards.

The labour movement, such as it is in Bengal, has so far approached the sirdar question very gingerly. But it has been approached, and there are signs that the sirdar is nearing the parting of the ways. The Kankinnarah Union, for example, has more than once declaimed against the iniquities of sirdars. In particular, the bribery system has been condemned. It is well known that in all concerns the sirdar takes a consideration from those under him. Clerks are credited with the same habit. The sirdar system, indeed, like the serang system, has bred a mass of corruption. The victim is always the man at the bottom, and the course of his salvation it is difficult to foresee. Organized unionism may help, but here the operative is in a vicious circle, for unions which attack sirdars will be assailed by sirdars and men refused permission to join. Employers are more or less helpless, for the reason that to offend sirdars is to have perpetual trouble among the workers as a whole.

Still, gradual improvement is possible and one method of bringing it about is for big concerns to employ officers whose sole duty is to look after labour matters. Properly chosen welfare officers could do much towards fostering good relations between employers and workers. In the first place, such officers might be recruited from the British training centres. For some years they would be of little use, for they would have to find their bearings, especially with regard to languages. The pay and conditions would have to be attractive to the best type of man, who, in due course, would have a very full day's work, for he could be given charge of all the dispensaries, lines and other departments of work directly affecting the workers. A regular service of such workers could with advantage be started on the banks of the Hooghly, and in due course it could be manned by properly trained Indians, of the type appointed to the superior services of Government.

On the employees' side, the organization at present is in an infantile stage, and little more can be expected till the workers have some measure of education. Organized unionism must rest on an appreciation of common ends, which appreciation must be translated into regular subscriptions. The time is still distant when the

mixed jute population—Bengalis, Oryas, Madrassis, Beharis, Bilaspuris, Hindustanis from the United Provinces—will pay into a common fund regular subscriptions which show no immediate return. For one thing, most of them are illiterate, and they have no common means of communication. For another, their experience of "unions" to which they have subscribed has not been uniformly happy, for many cases have happened where unscrupulous persons have raised funds to raise wages and have decamped with the proceeds. Again, the sirdar system will oppose unionism among the workers as a whole. Development must be slow, and for some years will have to be fostered from outside. The strength of unions for some time will depend on the type of leader who comes into the movement. Employers as a class are very suspicious of the *bhadralog* leader, and not without reason. One thing is clear, and that is that leaders should take such means as are at their disposal to prove their sincerity. One such means is registration under the Trades Unions Act, which at least secures a regular constitution and audit of the accounts.

Local unionism, like unionism in its earlier days in other countries, suffers from intense jealousies among labour leaders. In the jute mill strikes the one constitutional union was elbowed out of the way temporarily by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Personal feuds followed. Then the Jute Workers' Union split. More personal feuds followed. Counter unions were organized. At one stage, at some centres at least, three or four unions claimed the workers' attention and an attempt was made to organize a fourth after the Budge Budge strikes. Needless to say, this is disastrous to the cause of unionism, for the worker, confused, perhaps, as regards the original issues, is completely confounded at the end. Suspicious by nature of outsiders, he falls back on the man he regards as his natural patron and protector, his sirdar.

Under such conditions, the employer's task is as difficult as the man's. The great majority of employers, recruited from a country and industry in which they have been familiar with organized labour, recognize that properly organized unions would aid them in regulating labour conditions. But they are faced with the fact that there is no regularly organized union which can control the workers. If one succeeds temporarily in doing so, it will raise competitors who make the same claim. The numbers of interests which drive sirdars and workers this way or that way are many and mysterious. Disinterested outsiders, always suspect till their *bona fides* are proved, may gradually mould the workers' ideas into a common shape: but nothing permanent can be hoped for till the worker receives some education. With education and proper guidance, he inevitably will build up an organ to express his obvious community of interest with his fellows, first, probably, on general lines and then on functional. It is in the interest of employers and of the community at large that the basis of this organization should be well and truly laid, and one of the most vexed problems facing both Government and capital is how to safeguard the ground for proper organizers and workers as against those who wish to exploit the workers for their own or political ends.

Recent experience has clearly demonstrated that existing industrial legislation is not sufficient to cope with the problems which have arisen and which are likely to arise in the future. In the first place, the Trade Disputes Act has been shown to have at least one mechanical defect. The wording of section 3 is unfortunate. There may be cases in which it is desirable to hold a court of inquiry *after a strike has been settled*. The jute mills strikes were settled suddenly by negotiation. But the recovery left an open sore. Government recognized all through the strikes that it was desirable to have definite evidence on the hessian gambling allegations, yet they were not prepared to appoint a court unless the promise of a court could secure an immediate resumption of work. Even after the settlement it was desirable in the public interest that, if possible, the allegations should be examined by an authority possessing judicial powers. This course of action is not possible under the Act, and it is desirable that it should be.

In the second place, the oil strikes demonstrated the anomaly of defining "any industry, business, or undertaking, which supplies light" to the public as a public utility service, whereas an industry, which supplies the raw material of light and is not so defined, was brought into prominence.

In the third place, there is no provision in the Act for dealing with a so-called sympathetic strike like that at Budge Budge. The special provisions for illegal strikes and lock-outs were designed to prevent what is usually known as a general strike. The provisions are not applicable to a case like the oil depots strikes, where the workers were kept out because of a dispute at Golmuri, of which they were quite ignorant, and the responsibility for which had to be borne by other employers, other workers, and another Government.

In the fourth place, the existing law is not sufficient to cope with outsiders who instigate strikes for other than labour ends.

The last three questions raise a discussion on the principles underlying the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Acts. So far as the Trade Unions Act is concerned,

the strikes have raised a question, which was very generally discussed when the Indian Trade Unions Bill was under discussion of the compulsory registration of trade unions. The case was also raised after the Bill became law by Mr. Joshi, who proposed that the exemption conferred by section 17 of the Act should be conferred on registered unions. In England, the question of registration never became serious, because gradually the same law was applied to unregistered as to registered unions. In India, however, the law specifically confers exemption only on registered trade unions.

As regards compulsory registration, there is not much to be said. The compelling of registration is a matter between employers and employees, and even were compulsory registration introduced, employers could not very well be forced to recognize unions. And there is always the possibility that a body not calling itself a union may force recognition by virtue of its power. Employers should be alive to the possibilities of civil action against leaders of such bodies and also of unregistered trade unions. Such action is slow, and little likely to bring strikes to a close. It may, however, teach useful lessons to instigators. Unregistered bodies have, as a rule, no funds; there would therefore be no point in suing them. Their creators, however, are frequently men of means, and civil actions, with the expense and trouble they entail, would make them walk warily. So long as there are facilities for registration of trade unions, there is no excuse for fomentors of trouble, if they are genuine labour leaders, for not registering their unions, and, if, as might happen, advantage were taken of the Trade Unions Act to secure registration to escape liability, then that Act, the provisions of which are mild and innocuous, would have to be tightened up. It was passed by Government in good faith, in the belief that it would foster *bona fide* trade unionism. If it is used for other purposes, then provisions should be introduced requiring proof that the union either at its inception or a fixed period of years after its registration shows from its audited books that it represents a majority of its professed constituents. If it does not, the exemption from civil liability should be withdrawn throughout its entire existence.

Probably the reluctance of employers to utilize the civil law arises from doubt as to the legal position. The Taff Vale case in England and the Wadia case in Madras are sound enough precedents for action; but there would appear to be a case for examining the civil law with a view to making the position quite clear in India. The main issue is clear enough; it is that the field should be kept clear for *bona fide* labour workers, and that political or commercial exploiters should be rigorously banned. Such men are ruining the cause of labour.

Although compulsory registration is impossible, means may be adopted to make registration desirable. One is that employers should normally have the full support of Government in refusing to deal with unregistered bodies. "Normally" is used for reasons which have been made clear above. Exceptional circumstances may arise when, to save life or property, both Government and employers may have to negotiate with persons not connected with registered trade unions. These circumstances are rare; in ordinary disputes Government could refuse to appoint courts or boards, where unregistered unions asked for them, and utilize the means at their disposal under the Criminal Procedure Code to prevent an unregistered body supporting a strike and spreading disaffection among other workers. Such action would no doubt be interpreted as "taking sides," but it is always open to the body concerned to prove its *bona fides* under the Trade Unions Act.

The definition of "public utility services" in the Trades Disputes Act is entirely inadequate. It requires drastic revision. It does not include the supply of articles essential for everyday life, such as food, milk and coal, or the working of ferries, river services, or tramways. There are ample precedents for the inclusion of such services and, in Bengal, the inclusion of some of them is a matter of urgent necessity, e.g., the river steamer services, one of the main arteries of communication for passengers, mails, and goods in Bengal, in which there is regular agitation for increased wages every year just prior to the Pujas, the period of the year when stoppage would cause the maximum of inconvenience.

If the definition is defective, the special provisions regarding certain strikes in public utility services are ridiculous. The penal provisions apply to workers only. Experience in other countries, such as Australia, has amply proved that penal provisions cannot be applied to masses of men. In India, moreover, circumstances are such that in most cases the penal provisions should not be applied to workers, as they are not primarily culpable. Penalties should be made applicable to leaders and instigators, and in their cases the penalties should be of a substantially deterrent character.

Sympathetic strikes of the Budge Budge type could be regulated by a simple amendment to section 16 (1) (*a*) of the Trade Disputes Act, viz., by the substitution o "or" for "and" at the end of the clause.

The difficulty of drawing a fair line between the uses of the sympathetic strike and its prohibition is recognized, but there appears to be much more said for the

prohibition than against it. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose openly declared that he was to attack the Burmah Shell Company throughout India to settle the Golmuri strike. If he had been successful in his threat, probably there might have been an even more ridiculous case than Budge Budge. The Standard Oil Company of New York at Rangoon or at Tuticorin, for example, might have been set upon by agitators as an accessory after the Golmuri fact. In cases like these, the pawns are the workers. There is no question of " sympathy " between Tuticorin oil depot operatives and up-country tin-platers in Bihar. Were there real sympathy, there might be a case for permitting sympathetic strikes, but it is well known that it is not the sympathetic appeal that sends the workers out. The credulity of ignorant men is worked upon by specious promises till they flare up and strike. They are kept out for weeks, usually to resume unconditionally. The strike leaders do not pay them strike pay, nor, as a rule, do they remember the " grievances " after the return to work. The plain truth is that the workers are blatantly, dishonestly, and cruelly exploited to serve the ends of self-seeking individuals.

The utmost limit of sympathetic strikes should be the same industry and in the same area. Beyond these the law should not be on the side of mercy until at least the education of the working classes has sufficiently developed to let them understand the real issues on which they are asked to fight.

The penalties under the illegal strikes part of the Act are as little calculated to be effective as those in the public utilities provisions. In the case of either a sympathetic or a general strike, the leader would probably be a politician with a political organization and funds behind him. Neither he nor his organization would be likely seriously to take into account a maximum penalty of three months' simple imprisonment or a maximum fine of Rs. 200.

Outsiders who exploit labour for other than labour ends fall into two categories. One is the politician who wishes to secure political ends by means of general unrest. His sole interest in labour is to create general annoyance through strikes with a view to compelling Government to take a certain line of action. The other instigates strikes with a view purely to personal gain.

The alleged case of the hessian dealers furnishes an example of the latter type. Under the existing law it would appear that, had the allegations been brought home to individuals only, only a civil suit would have lain against them. It is not criminally illegal for individual dealers in a market to foment disputes in order to raise prices, in a non-public utility service, although had joint action on the part of several dealers been proved, they would appear to have been guilty of criminal conspiracy. Clearly there is a lacuna in the law here, for of all exploitations of workers, exploitation for personal ends is the worst. In the jute mill strikes rumours had it that the gains of the gamblers were large, and that therefore they could afford heavy contributions towards keeping the strike going. In such cases proof is always difficult, as bribery and corruption are usually perpetrated in back alleys and dark chambers. In strikes instigated for personal gain, however, some stand to lose, and there is a chance of the truth being revealed when blackguards fall out. The law requires to be made adequate to the issue, for nothing is more despicable than rich men swimming through sewers to greater riches.

The political and financial instigators work by similar methods. Both may work by the simple method of buying sirdars and shopkeepers. Or they may work through unions, registered or unregistered. They may cajole or buy themselves to office; or they may bribe the existing office bearers. If they work directly through hired agents, the strikes will in all probability take place over night. If they work through a union, probably some notice will be given, but the time permitted for a reply will be impossible. In any case, the " demands " will be impossible, such as the Budge Budge demands that the workers should get the Calcutta water-supply. The usual leaflet and platform campaign will follow. Well-paid orators will incite the workers; stealthy hirelings will visit the workers' houses in the silent watches and promise great gains or dire results. The workers will obey; they will serve the leaders' purposes for gain or for demonstration purposes, and then, after three weeks, they will crawl back beaten to the old rate of wages, with three weeks' total loss to their debit. By that time, the leaders will have disappeared.

At the moment of writing, the jute workers have gone back to work, it is said, for three months only. Why this period has been set is not clear. Some say it has been set to suit the hessian dealers, who have made contracts up to the end of the year, and who must have another excuse for cancellation. Or, it may be connected with the threatened general political strike at the end of the year. This strike is fomented on the ground of Dominion Status being granted to India. What grounds will be put forward by instigators to the illiterate workers is not known; but what *is* known is that it is beyond the wit of any agitator, Indian or non-Indian, male or female, young or old, to convince the jute-workers of Bengal that, if India is not given the status of Canada or the Irish Free State on the 1st January, 1930, then he must go on strike.

The worker must have some other inducement, for Canada, Ireland, and Dominion Status have never entered his vocabulary. The other inducement may set him aflame, and he will lose three weeks' wages, if not his life, for he may be dragged into civil commotion, of the ultimate cause of which he is entirely ignorant.

It is difficult to deal with such agitators in industrial agitation, as such legislation is normally framed on the assumption that disputes arise from *bona fide* industrial causes. The more appropriate place for the necessary provision is the Penal Code. In so much as *mala fide* leaders try to give a *bona fide* aspect to the disputes they foment, however, their actions must be taken into account in industrial laws. The methods of dealing with them must to some extent be based on their own methods of work, and from these methods arise the questions of the strike without notice, the sympathetic strike, contributions to support strikes, and, finally, the general strike.

The strike without notice has been a common feature of Indian industry for many years. In many cases, it is a lightning strike, arising from purely industrial causes, which are soon adjusted. The right to strike in this manner, though a nuisance to industry, is not a serious danger. In other, more prolonged cases the issues may also be industrial, in which case it is not desirable to interfere with the workers' right to strike. But there is the other *mala fide* class of cases, where the issues are not, properly speaking, industrial. It is admittedly difficult in many such cases to judge what causes are *mala fide* and what *bona fide*. A clear example of a *mala fide* case is the Budge Budge list of grievances which contained the workmen's compensation demand, and the settlement of the Golmuri strike. A possible method of meeting such cases is to declare all strikes without notice for a specific period illegal, and to leave it to Government, on the principles already contained in Sections 15 (4) and 16 (4) of the Trades Disputes Act to prosecute. This principle is not unknown in industrial legislation, e.g., in the 1918 Act, amending the New South Wales Act No. 17 of 1912 (*vide* Gilchrist, *Conciliation and Arbitration :* Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, No. 23, page 91). The New South Wales Act makes any strike illegal which commences prior to fourteen clear days' notice being given. Legislation of this type would not only help to prevent the *mala fide* overnight strikes, but, by eliminating the strike from genuine causes without notices, would gradually foster proper negotiations between management and labour.

Sympathetic strikes have already been partially dealt with. Sympathetic strikes in the same trade or industry in the same area cannot be eliminated : what it is desired to kill is the exploitation of workers in different industries and different areas under the name of sympathy.

As regards contributions. Australian legislation also furnishes parallels. In Western Australia, for example, as also in New Zealand, persons making gifts of money to strikers are liable to heavy penalties (*op. cit.*, pages 105, 116 and 130). Likewise, newspapers abetting or helping strikes are made liable in some cases, as in New South Wales (*op. cit.*, page 92). Similar provisions might be made in the Indian law, with heavy penalties.

The law governing picketing and intimidation, contained in the Penal Code, also requires reconsideration in the case of illegal strikes.

So far as the general strike is concerned, there is the existing provision in the Trade Disputes Act. It has been pointed out that the substitution of " or " for " and " in Section 16 (1) (*a*) would materially improve the Act, but, as it stands, the provisions would seem to be sufficient for a general strike with one important exception, penalties.

In all legislation directed against *mala fide* strikes two principles are of paramount importance. The first is that the penal provisions should be very heavy. The second is that the legislation should be aimed at leaders, instigators, or fomentors, and their instruments, and not at workers as a whole. So far as penalties are concerned, the existing provisions are useless. In the case of public utility services no penalty is provided at all for leaders, while in the case of a general strike it is a maximum of three months' simple imprisonment or a fine of two hundred rupees, or both.

These penalties may be compared with those in some dominion laws. The Lemieux Act of Canada lays down that " any employer declaring or causing a lock-out contrary to the provisions of the Act is liable to a fine of not less than *D 100 and not more than *D 1,000 for each day or part of a day that the lock-out exists. Any employee who goes on strike contrary to the provisions of the Act is liable to a fine of not less than *D 10 and not more than *D 50 for each day or part of a day spent on strike. A penalty of not less than *D 50 and not more than *D 1,000 is laid down for persons who incite or in any way encourage employers or employees who declare lock-outs or go on strike, respectively."

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* Dollar.

In New South Wales, the 1918 amending Act prescribes that "if any person, including an industrial union of employers, does any act or thing in the nature of a lock-out, or takes part in a lock-out, or instigates to or aids in any of the above-mentioned acts, unless the employees working in the industry concerned are taking part in an illegal strike, the court may order him to pay a penalty not exceeding £1,000."

Heavy penalties are prescribed in Commonwealth legislation (*op. cit.*, page 76), Queensland (*op. cit.*, page 108), and New Zealand (*op. cit.*, pages 129–31).

In India a minimum penalty is necessary, as well as a maximum, and the minimum penalty should be much more substantial than those prescribed in well-organized countries, where industrial disputes are usually confined to the industries in which they break out. A minimum penalty for leaders of Rs. 5,000 with a maximum of Rs. 15,000, with an alternative of a minimum period of two and a maximum of five years in gaol, or both, would quickly make exploitation of labour unpopular. The civil liabilities should also remain. Such penalties should be made to apply to all instigators of illegal strikes, and also to persons proved to have instigated or supported strikes for their own ends, or for ends which in the opinion of a competent court are not *bona fide* labour ends.

Incorporation of provisions such as those suggested above, together with the utilization of the existing powers conferred on magistrates by the criminal procedure code, should be sufficient to expel effectively the class of exploiter which has become all too common in India. Where the outsider attempts to get control of labour by becoming an official of a registered trade union and by "packing" the executive of the union with his own followers, the position is much more difficult. The only remedy seems to lie in amendment of the Indian Trade Unions Act, Section 22 of which allows one-half of the total number of officers of a registered trade union to be outsiders. This section, it is true, has a proviso to the effect that a local government may by special or general order declare that the provisions of this section shall not apply to any trade union or class of trade union specified in the order. The utilization of this proviso would be a matter of extreme delicacy and might antagonize the percentage of the officers who were employees in the industry concerned. A case has recently occurred in Bengal in which a well-known political leader has been elected president of a registered trade union, which, prior to his election, was practically entirely manned by employees in the industry. To serve an order on this union that the provisions of Section 22 should not apply to the union would almost certainly antagonize the officers of the union who were responsible for the election of the politician as president. Were the evil of interested outsiders capturing registered trade unions to continue, the proper remedy would be not the utilization of the proviso under Section 22 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, but the elimination from the Act of Section 22 itself and the insertion of a provision in its stead that a hundred per cent. of the officers of every registered trade union should be employees in the industry concerned. The insertion of such a provision, of course, would practically ruin *bona fide* trade unionism in India.

One other class of person has to be dealt with, and that is the sirdar, or other petty official in a manufacturing concern, who is "bought" by an outsider. As in all cases of bribery, the difficulty in this case is proof. If proof is available, the remedy lies mainly with the employer. Prevention also lies with the employer, as it is his duty to give his workers as a whole complete information regarding such machinations. Otherwise, an employee dismissed for this reason becomes a permanent menace to the peace of the area in which he resides, because he poses as a victim of a capitalist system and appeals to the sympathy of other workers. Militant trade unionism owes much to the dismissed employee, who continues to air his grievances amongst his late fellow workers, in all parts of the world, and Bengal is not behindhand in this respect. The removal of a dismissed employee from the area in which he used to work and in which he continues to agitate is an extreme measure, which can be justified only in the interests of general peace and order. Hence, it lies with the employer to inculcate in the minds of his employees such principles of fair-dealing and honesty as will prevent corrupt men from spreading corruption.

Employers, also, should not hesitate to use the existing resources of the law themselves to extirpate *mala fide* labour agitation. During the jute mill strikes, for example, there was well authenticated evidence to show that some agitators were using the methods of blackmail in order to force employers to pay money to keep their workers loyal. Several complaints were made to leading commercial men by jute mill owners that individuals, who were named, had approached officials in mills in their agency with a proposition that if they were paid so many thousands of rupees, they would abstain from calling their men out. The sums were refused, and the men went on strike. The complaints, however, were not communicated to the police by the managing agents concerned, who had an excellent opportunity of

publicly exposing a particularly pernicious type of extortion. The supreme duty of employers, however, is to foster that ideal type of industrial society where strikes are impossible, because there are no reasons for strikes. Far too little attention has been given in the past to study by employers of the conditions under which their employees work. They have been content to carry on meeting difficulties as they arise, but no general, co-ordinated work has been undertaken with a view to removal of grievances as a whole. As has already been indicated, the jute mill industry, to quote only one in Bengal, is full of anomalies, which could never exist were there a properly organized jute workers' union. Local variations in wages, differences in the size of cuts, differences in housing conditions, differences in the amenities of life, differences in hours, all require study from this point of view, and such study cannot adequately be undertaken until the necessary organization is created for this type of work. Government can pass stringent legislation to safeguard industry against *mala fide* strikes, but the universal experience of such legislation points to the fact that it does not prevent strikes. It is for industry to take measures to extirpate the causes of *bona fide* strikes, and when these are abolished, it will not have much ground to fear the operations of *mala fide* leaders.

Leaflet A.—To jute mill workers.

Brethren,—You all know that from the 1st July the mill owners have issued a new order that you will have to work for six hours more in the week.

By making you work for these extra six hours, by wringing the blood out of your body they will make a profit of lakhs of rupees.

And what will you gain ? Just look at this rough estimate : if you worked at the rate of 54 hours you would get :—

Size of a roll.	Remuneration for a roll, 100 yards.	Number of rolls.	Remuneration.	Reward.	Total for week.
			Rs.	Re. a.	Rs. a.
8 9 27" : sacking.	8 annas.	10	5	1 6	6 6

If you work at the rate of 60 hours, you would get :—

Size of a roll.	Remuneration for a roll. 100 yards.	Number of rolls.	Remuneration.	Reward.	Total for week.
			Rs.	Re. a.	Rs. a.
8 9 27" : sacking.	8 annas	10	5	1 0	6 0

Do you understand what you have gained ? For weaving ten rolls of sacking you will earn six annas less.

This is merely a rough estimate that we have put up. In the spinning, beaming and all the other rooms also the earnings will fall off.

If you quietly put up with it, know for certain that a month afterwards your weekly wages will be still further reduced.

If you put up with it, you are done for.

Do you know what is the remedy ?

If you want to live, you must fight. This is the opportunity. This is the opportunity for workmen in all the jute mills of Bengal to fight in combination.

Come brethren, combine—wherever any of you may be, let all unite and start a *hartal* in every mill. Stand up with chests inflated against the oppression of the pot-bellied owners.

There is no other way of surviving than starting a *hartal*. Victory is certain if you fight together.

Bengal Jute Mills Workers' Union,
Head Office, 41, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

Leaflet B.—To the labourers at the Jagatdal Chatkal.

Brethren.—This is a very critical time. If even a very small mistake takes place in your ideas great harm will be done. So beware ! It is said that some pleader has advised you to the effect that your wages would be realized by action in the courts. You are very simple folks, so you have been enmeshed in the plans of an ordinary pleader. The mill authorities have reduced your weekly wages. What can the courts do if you do not want to work on low wages ? They can do nothing. Did any contract take place between you and the mill authorities ? Did they give you

anything in writing that you will receive such and such wages every week ? Such a transaction did not take place. Then what can the courts do ? You want to sell a thing for Rs. 5 and another man wants to buy the same for Rs. 4. Then can you realize these Rs. 5 through the court ? Certainly not. If the customer has the necessity and need for it and you will not part with it for less than Rs. 5, he shall have to buy the same for Rs. 5. Where does the court come in here ? Ask the pleader to mention this matter before us, we shall give the right answer to him. If this pleader speaks out these things before the court he will lose his practice. Who has advised you to weave a piece of cloth or half a piece of cloth a day ? This will certainly cause loss to the mill authorities but it will also cause a reduction in your wages. Now there is going to be a strike and at this time you must have more money. Brethren ! We say again that times are delicate. Differentiate well between friends and enemies. Hear everybody, take their advice, but act upon the counsel of those who appear to you to be in the right. Greater the delay you are making in going on a strike, the greater will be the harm to your interests. So long as all the mills do not close down pressure will not fall on the mill authorities. Step forward with courage and others will follow you. Now become ready to go on a strike. If all of you bretheren act conjointly then victory will be yours because you have truth and right on your side.

(Sd.) Bengal Jute Workers' Union,
41, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

Leaflet C.—Oppression in the jute mills.

On either side of the Ganges are jute mills. With effect from the 1st of July, 1929, 6 hours more work is being taken. There is a great demand for jute-cloth, specially in this city and other cities. This is why the millowners want to get more jute-cloth prepared. Keeping the mills open for longer hours they take more work from the labourers. The millowners will thus cause greater profits to accrue for the share-holders and bring about an increase in the incomes of the managing agents. So they want more work every week. He who is a weaver will do more work. Why should men, women and children work more ? It is their intention that those who are drawing big salaries should get a bigger increase in their salaries without work and draw a gratuity of Rs. 100 per annum and Rs. 30 to Rs. 60 profits by causing the labourers to work longer hours.

Brethren ! You do very hard labour every day. How much wages do you draw during the week ? And the jute-cloth which is prepared by your labour profits the mill men after sales. Do ponder and think over the huge profits that have been made out of your 6 hours of longer work. Take an account of the profit which these 6 hours of longer work by you has given them. Should the fruit of your labours fill the bellies of the rich and leave you wringing your hands ? No, but you should make an effort to put down this.

Man is not made of iron. It is to be regretted that you people do not get any rest. Do you get any gifts or commission in lieu of longer hours of work ?

Every year the leaders of the labourers in England come and express sorrow at your condition and say that you people do not try for fixed hours of work and increased wages. There the weekly income of the labourers is high and they live in comfort. When they become ill they get some salary. Do you get anything ? Women after conception get some allowance without work at home there. Do your women get the same ? They say that work should not exceed 8 hours a day. What are you doing here ? There is a law there that the millowner fines the *sirdar* for making the labourers work beyond the fixed time. There is such a bad management about time in your place that no inspector can check whether you have been made to work more or according to law. Have you made any efforts to put down this cunning of theirs ?

Brethren ! After all you are men and not brutes. Be ready to act according to the following and unite with other labourers to make the demand :—(1) We shall not work for even half an hour more even on being paid for it, for we want rest ; (2) None of us whether men or women will work a minute more than 8 hours ; (3) Such an arrangement should be made that no man or woman should get less than Rs. 8 per week ; (4) Such an arrangement should be made that inspector should be able to find out if on any particular day work is taken more than 8 hours and the officials should be punished and their deceptions should be put an end to. ; (5) Half salary should be given during illness ; (6) Privilege leave with salary should be allowed every year ; (7) Women labourers should be allowed leave on full salary before confinement.

One strike to-day, another after 6 months will not make you realize your demands. Brethren ! act on the above unanimously. If your demands are not granted then go on a strike all together. If you work with unity then you will succeed.

(Sd.) Dr. Probhabati Gupta, M.A., Ph. D., Bengal Jute Workers' Union.
(2) Bankim Mukherji, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.
(3) Kali Sen, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.
(4) Abdur Rahman, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.
(5) Manindra Singh, Bruz Jute Workers' Union.
(6) Sachinandan Chatterji, Champdany Jute Workers' Union.
(7) Abdul Momen, Shibpur Jute Workers' Union.
(8) Promode Ghose, Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union.
(9) Mia Jan, Changail Jute Workers' Union.
(10) Sikandar, Budge Budge Jute Workers' Union.
(11) Satya Narain, Titaghur Jute Workers' Union.

Since the arrest of Kalidas Babu, the Union offices have been located in Calcutta. Address, 41, Harrison Road (at the Amherst Street Junction). If any labourer is oppressed upon or his body is injured he should at once report the matter here.

XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. *Effect of Repeal of Workmen's Breach of Contract Act.*—So far as the Government of Bengal are aware, the repeal has had no adverse effect on industry.

128. *Types of Contract commonly in use.*—So far as the Government of Bengal are aware, apart from special contracts such as apprenticeship agreements and agreements with seamen, the ordinary contracts of labour are daily, weekly, or monthly engagements. Enquiries are being made, and further information will be forwarded, if available.

129. *Extent to which* (i) *Civil*, (ii) *Criminal Law in available and used for Enforcement.*—Only civil contracts or agreements are now in use : hence the civil law only can be used for enforcement.

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LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, dated 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith the memoranda of the Government of Bengal on XVII—Administration and XVIII—Intelligence, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Royal Commission.

2. The local government have no remarks to make on items (134) (International Labour Organization), (137) (Effect of differences in law or administration in Indian States and British India), (140) (Mines inspection) and (141) (Railways, State and Company).

XVII.—Administration.

133. *Central and Provincial Legislatures— Action and attitude on labour questions.*—Since the introduction of the Reforms, there have been two nominated members in the Bengal Legislative Council to represent labour interests, and most of the labour subjects which have been discussed in the Council have been raised by them. In March, 1921, Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri, one of the nominated labour members, moved the resolution*, already referred to, regarding industrial unrest. The same member also moved a resolution, also referred to, recommending the establishment of industrial boards to determine minimum wages. The latter resolution was rejected without a division. Three more resolutions urging Government intervention in individual strikes were admitted in 1921, but were not reached in the session of the Council in which they were due for discussion. In February, 1922, Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri moved a resolution asking Government to institute an inquiry into the causes and agencies leading to the political exploitation of Indian labour. This resolution was withdrawn by the member after discussion in the Council. In December, 1925, Mr. Daud, also a nominated member representing labour interests, moved a resolution asking Government to grant a special franchise to the labouring classes by allotting at least eight seats to them to be filled by means of labour constituencies. This resolution, amended to exclude the actual number of seats to be allotted, was carried by the Council. One more labour resolution affecting industrial disputes was admitted during the July session in 1924, but was not discussed owing to the prorogation of the Council. In February, 1929, Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, an elected member of the Council, moved a resolution asking Government to appoint a committee to inquire into the condition of workers in Bengal. Effect was not

* Vide Memorandum on XV.—Industrial Disputes.

given to the resolution owing to the announcement which had been made by His Excellency the Viceroy prior to the moving of the resolution that the Royal Commission had been appointed. A motion for adjournment of the Council was moved by Dr. B. C. Roy in August, 1929, on the subject of strikes in jute mills. The motion was carried without a division, after a motion that the question be put had been carried against Government by a small majority.

Several resolutions have been either moved or given notice of in the interests of workers in particular industries, e.g., workers in the Bengal Government Press, Calcutta Tramways, and local railways. During general discussions on the budget, special questions concerning labour have been raised from time to time, e.g., on the starting of co-operative societies in mill areas by Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri in 1929.

During the existence of the reformed Councils many questions have been asked on labour subjects, most of them with a view to eliciting information regarding industrial disputes and measures taken by Government for their settlement.

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Generally speaking, the Bengal Legislative Council as a whole has not taken a deep interest in labour questions. The members nominated to represent labour have been responsible for most of the questions raised and resolutions moved. The Council as a whole has interested itself only in cases which have led to disturbances necessitating the intervention of the police, e.g., in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Strike at Kharagpore in 1927, and in the East Indian Railway Strike at Lillooah in 1928, or which have assumed prominence through their magnitude, as in the case of the recent jute mill strikes.

135. *Relations between Central and Local Governments.*—The relations existing between the Central and Local Governments, so far as labour legislation and administration are concerned, are generally satisfactory.

Minor causes of dispute have arisen in connection with important references from the Government of India arising from the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. In the case of several such references, the time permitted for replies was too short to allow proper consideration being given to them. The local government usually consult commercial and labour bodies on proposals to be discussed at Geneva, and such consultation requires considerable time, especially in the case of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which consults its affiliated associations. As the conventions of the International Labour Conferences have had appreciable influence in the moulding of Indian labour legislation since 1919, it is considered that more ample time should be permitted for the consultation of local governments by the Government of India.

The Government of Bengal also think that the Central Government would be well advised to arrange regular conferences between heads of provincial departments responsible for the administration of labour legislation. There have been no conferences of chief inspectors of factories for many years and no conferences of commissioners for workmen's compensation at all. The Government of Bengal are of the view that such conferences should be arranged at least once in three years.

Another point on which possible friction may arise between the central and local governments is the relative powers of local and central governments with regard to the creation of courts of inquiry and conciliation boards under Section 3 of the Trade Disputes Act, 1929. According to this section, if the employer is the head of a department under the control of the Governor-General or a railway company, the Governor-General may refer the dispute to a court of inquiry or to a board of conciliation. The local government have no status in such central disputes at all, but, as in the case of the East Indian Railway strike in 1928, the local government may be intimately connected with disputes arising from and entirely dependent on a dispute in a central concern. The East Indian Railway strike referred to was responsible for a great deal of unrest in private industrial concerns in the area of the East Indian Railway workshops. Had the Trade Disputes Act been in force at the time, the local government, under the Act, could have appointed courts of inquiry or conciliation boards in the private disputes; they had, however, no power to appoint a court of inquiry or conciliation board in the dispute, which was the origin of all the others. Whatever may be the opinion of the local government as to the merits of a strike in an All-India concern, which is causing subsidiary trouble in private concerns under the control of the local government, the local government are powerless to intervene. No instance in which difficulty has arisen has occurred since the passing of the Trade Disputes Act, but the local government consider that in such cases the right of appointing the court of inquiry or board of conciliation should vest in the local government. As the Act stands, the right of appointing the court or board rests with the employer, and the Government of India as employer is, as a rule, far removed from the seat of trouble. The burden and anxiety of the strike are borne by the local government and local community, both of which are likely to have a keener sense of the situation than the employer Government which is located in either Delhi or Simla. The Trades Dispute Act, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, should be amended accordingly.

136. *Administrative authorities in various Governments.—Work of special labour offices or officers.*—All industrial labour laws in Bengal are administered by the Government of Bengal in the Commerce Department. The Assam Labour and Immigration Act, so far as it concerns Bengal, is administered by the Revenue Department. The only special labour officer in Bengal is the Labour Intelligence Officer, who is also the Registrar of Trade Unions and Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce and Marine Departments.

The appointment of Labour Intelligence Officer was created temporarily for 2 years in March, 1922, to replace that of Industrial Intelligence Officer, which appointment had been created temporarily on the 1st July, 1920. The latter post, which was attached to the Industries Department of the Government, was created as a result partly of the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, and partly of the abnormal labour conditions that arose after the war. The purpose of the post was to provide intelligence of all kinds appertaining to Bengal industries, but practically the entire time of the officer was taken up by the labour work. In 1922, the office was converted into a purely labour office, the labour intelligence office, and the control was transferred from the Industries to the Commerce Department. Immediately after the creation of this office, it was recommended for abolition by the Bengal Retrenchment Committee.

The original intention of the creation of this post was that it should form the nucleus of a labour bureau or labour office in the presidency of Bengal. This intention, however, has never been carried out owing to financial stringency. The Government did not accept the recommendation of the retrenchment committee that the post should be abolished, but the office itself was not expanded. The office consisted of 1 clerk and 1 stenographer, the stenographer later being withdrawn and replaced by an additional clerk when the officer was made the Registrar of Trade Unions in 1927. In 1922, the Labour Intelligence Officer was given the duties of deputy secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce Department, which department, as already indicated, is responsible for the administration of all industrial labour measures in the presidency. In November, 1926, the Labour Intelligence Officer was also appointed deputy secretary in the Marine Department of the Government, and from the 1st June, 1927, the date on which the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, came into force, he was appointed Registrar of Trade Unions.

The Labour Intelligence Officer keeps a record of industrial disputes in the Presidency and also of the number of labour organizations. From time to time, as circumstances permit, he conducts special enquiries, partly as Labour Intelligence Officer and partly as Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department. The first enquiry undertaken, emanating from a suggestion of the Government of India, was a census of wages in 1922. This census had to be abandoned owing to the lack of staff. Enquiries into the system of fining in Bengal, the amount and type of welfare work done in the organized industries in the Presidency, and the method of payment of wages in industrial concerns and other labour problems have been conducted by the officer in his dual capacity of Labour Intelligence Officer and Deputy Secretary to the Government in the Commerce Department. Reference has already been made to the results of these enquiries.

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139. *Factory inspection.*—(i) *Adequacy of staff.*—Prior to the passing of the amended Factories Act in 1922, the sanctioned cadre of inspectors for the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and Assam, was one chief inspector and 5 inspectors, one of whom was to be an Indian. An attempt was made to secure an Indian, but the only suitable candidate for the vacancy accepted private employment on higher pay, and, after that attempt was made, the appointment of the Indian inspector was kept in abeyance owing to retrenchment. This cadre had been increased from the smaller cadre allowed by the Secretary of State after the passing of the Act of 1911, which consisted of one chief inspector and 2 inspectors for the three provinces. When this cadre was sanctioned, the number of registered factories in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and Assam, was 364, employing an average daily number of 135,610 operatives. By 1918, this number had risen to 647, employing 453,794 persons, and it was to meet this increase that the increased cadre referred to was sanctioned.

In 1921, the Government of Bihar and Orissa created a factory inspection staff of their own, but the passing of the amended Act in 1922, so increased the work for Bengal and Assam that an immediate increase in staff was necessary. The total number of factories in Bengal and Assam in 1922, was 1,070, employing an average daily number of 546,621 persons. That number has since increased to 2,062 factories, employing 618,921 persons. Since 1922, the factory inspection staff has been gradually increased, until, at present, it stands as follows :—(*a*) Chief inspector ; (*b*) 6 inspectors (5 Europeans and 1 Indian) ; (*c*) 3 assistant inspectors (Indians) ; and (*d*) 2 full-time certifying surgeons of factories.

The qualifications required of inspectors and assistant inspectors are as follows :—

Inspectors.—(1) a first class general education ; (2) A full apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer and training in the drawing office ; (3) (*a*) a degree or diploma in engineering of a British university, or technical college ; or (*b*) an associate membership of a recognised British institute of engineers ; or (*c*) a certificate of competency issued by the Board of Trade as extra first class engineer ; (4) Some years' experience in the profession of engineering in responsible posts ; (5) ability to deal with all questions connected with electrical and structural engineering that may occur in the course of an inspector's duties ; (6) Experience in the construction and maintenance of boilers.

Assistant Inspectors.—A good general education ; a full apprenticeship in mechanical engineering in recognized works ; a knowledge of machine drawing and design and the theory of engineering ; a general knowledge of the principles of sanitation ; and experience in responsible posts.

The terms of service are as follows :—*Chief Inspector.*—Pay Rs. 1,050–100–1,550 a motor-car allowance of Rs. 150 per mensem and overseas pay of £30 to incumbents who, at the date of their appointment to Government service, had their domicile elsewhere than in Asia.

Inspectors.—Pay Rs. 400–400–25/2–500–50/2–900, plus a motor-car allowance of Rs. 100 per mensem ; a compensatory allowance at the rate of Rs. 80 to Rs. 125 per mensem when posted in the Calcutta area and overseas pay from Rs. 150 up to a maximum of £30 per mensem to inspectors, who at the time of their appointment to Government service, had their domicile elsewhere than in Asia.

All inspectors of non-Asiatic domicile are given passages in accordance with the provisions of the Bengal Passage Rules, 1926.

Assistant Inspectors.—Pay Rs. 300–300–25/2–400–400/50/2–600 plus (*a*) a motor-car allowance of Rs. 100 per mensem, if a motor-car is maintained, or (*b*) a conveyance allowance of Rs. 50 per mensem, if no motor-car is kept.

The grade of Assistant Inspector was created in 1924 with a view to recruiting Indians. Experience showed that it was practically impossible to find Indians with the requisite qualifications as full inspectors. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to create a self-contained grade for the recruitment of young men with a good general education and some engineering experience with a view to training them in inspection duties, giving them at the same time a reasonable scale of pay and also the chance of promotion to the grade of inspector. Since the grade was instituted one Assistant Inspector has been promoted to the inspector's grade.

At present there are two posts of certifying surgeon attached to the department. These are full-time posts, and the holders have been recruited from the Indian Medical Department. The first full-time post of certifying surgeon was sanctioned in 1909 and the second post was added in 1927. The policy of the Government of Bengal is to place all certification work in the larger industrial areas in the hands of full-time specialist officers. In outlying areas, where factories are few, the work of certification continues to be in the hands of the civil medical authorities. At present, besides the two certifying surgeons, the following civil medical officers also perform the functions of certifying surgeons :—

The civil surgeons in the districts of Bakarganj, Bankura, Birbhum, Bogra, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Dacca, Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Jalpaiguri, Jessore, Khulna, Malda, Murshidabad, Naidia, Noakhali, Rajshahi Rangpur, Midnapore, Mymensingh, Tippera, Pabna and Burdwan, and the assistant surgeons of the subdivisions of Uluberia, Ghatal, Tangail, Jamalpur, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Serajganj and Asansol.

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The following statement shows the number of factories on the register of the year last under report, viz., 1928, the number of visits during the year, including special inquiry of investigatory work, and the number of factories which were visited once, twice, three times, and more than three times.

Number on register	1,446
Total number of visits paid during the year	2,478
Number of factories inspected during the year :—	
Once	887
Twice	233
Thrice	86
More than three times	121

In addition, 103 visits were paid during 1928 for various purposes to small concerns not on the factories register.

The figures show that the number of uninspected factories has gradually fallen from 442 in 1922 and 320 in 1923, the first full year during which the new Act was effective to 21 in 1928. It is clear, therefore, that the gradual expansion of the staff has proved sufficient to overtake the work that has to be done under the existing Act, provided Section 2 (3) (*b*) is not largely resorted to.

Since the passing of the amended Act in 1922, a certain amount of decentralization has taken place in the organization of the department. A separate office was opened at Barrackpore in 1926 and at Jalpaiguri in 1927. The jurisdiction of the Barrackpore office is the whole of the Barrackpore sub-division in the district of the 24-Parganas and the district of Hooghly and that of the Jalpaiguri office is the whole of the Rajshahi division. The creation of the Jalpaiguri office has greatly facilitated the regular inspection of tea-garden factories, which were brought under inspection by the amendment Act, of 1922.

The staff is not yet considered sufficiently strong to cope with the work, and administrative approval has been granted by Government to the creation of one new post of inspector and one new post of assistant inspector. The creation of a new post of Assistant inspector for statistical purposes is referred to elsewhere. Although no further decentralization is contemplated in the immediate future, it is probable that when finances permit, a new branch office will be opened in the Burdwan area. Owing to the increasing complexity of the work, it is, however, necessary to keep a number of inspectors at headquarters. At present, the chief inspector is overburdened with office work, and the Government of Bengal have approved of the conversion of one of the posts of inspector into that of deputy chief inspector. So far it has not been found possible in Bengal to organize specialized sections in the factories office, but it has been found necessary to keep at headquarters one or two officers who are engaged largely in making enquiries of a specialized character, e.g., into humidification. It is anticipated that enquiries of this kind will increase in the future, and that they will ultimately lead to an increase in the cadre of inspectors, as such specialized inquiries mean that inspectors for the time being cannot be engaged in the usual work of inspection. Additional staff is also necessary to meet leave requirements. Under ordinary circumstances, European inspectors are granted from six to eight months' leave every 3 to 3½ years, so that, on an average, the services of at least one inspector has to be discounted for about 8 months every year.

The further expansion of the Factories Department will depend on the gradual extension of the Act to premises employing less than 20 persons, whether using power or not. The policy of the Government of Bengal in this respect has already been indicated in the extracts given above.

The Government of Assam still require the services of the Bengal Factory Inspection Department, and the reports for that province are contained in the annual reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories, published by the Government of Bengal. It is understood that the Government of Assam are now making arrangements for a separate inspection staff. When these are completed, the factory inspection staff of Bengal will be relieved of a portion of their work, but the amount of work done for Assam by permanent inspectors at present is not so appreciable as to alter the policy of the Government of Bengal regarding the future expansion of the department.

(ii) *Uniformity of administration in different provinces.*—Reference has been made elsewhere to the view of the Government of Bengal that regular conferences of Chief Inspectors of Factories should be convened by the Government of India in order to obtain uniformity of administration in different provinces. Hitherto, such uniformity has, to some extent, been secured by correspondence between the factories departments of the different provinces.

In January, 1927, an informal conference between the chief inspectors of the two most industrial provinces of India—Bengal and Bombay—was held in Calcutta, and matters appertaining to the administration of the Act were discussed and an attempt made to obtain such uniformity as conditions in the two provinces would permit. As a result of this conference, exemption notifications, classification of accidents, departmental forms, etc., were brought into line, as far as possible. The agenda and conclusions arrived at at the conference were printed in pamphlet form and forwarded for information to the Chief Inspectors of Factories of Madras, Burma, Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces.

The last conference of provincial chief inspectors of factories, convened by the Government of India, was held in 1924, under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble. Member in charge of Industries and Labour, and this conference had some bearing on uniformity of administration. The main object of the conference was the consideration of amendments to the Act, and the ground covered included recommendations for the amendment of various sections, conditions governing exemptions granted under Section 30, unification of classification of factories for provincial reports and statistics, holiday returns and their usefulness, the recommendations of the

International Labour Office in regard to factory inspection, and the relative strength of the different provincial factory inspectorates. The results of the deliberations formed the basis for the amendments embodied in the amended Act of 1926. The preceedings of the conference were printed by the Government of India.

The extent of uniformity in administration cannot be judged by the Government of Bengal, as they have not got complete information regarding the differences which exist between the rules and exemption notifications issued by local Governments. It is, however, considered that owing to the wide difference in the nature and extent of industries in the various provinces, the different customs, and climatic conditions, complete uniformity in administration is not possible.

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(iv) *Prosecutions and their result.*—The following table gives a summary of prosecution cases instituted in Bengal under the Indian Factories Act, during the period 1922–1928 :—

Year.	Cases instituted.			Result of prosecution.			Extent of fines.			
	Jute mills.	All other factories.	Total.	Convictions.	Aquittals.	Withdrawals.	Rs. 25 and under.	Rs. 50 and under.	Rs. 100 and under.	Over Rs. 100.
1922 ..	3	13	16	16	—	—	4	4	6	2
1923 ..	17	10	27	22	4	1	6	—	5	11
1924 ..	29	10	39	36	1	2	9	14	5	8
1925 ..	73	114	187	170	8	9	105	23	24	18
1926 ..	41	116	157	142	12	3	61	35	11	35
1927 ..	52	68	120	111	4	5	35	40	28	8
1928 ..	55	80	135	127	5	3	88	25	9	5
Total ..	270	411	681	624	34	23	308	141	88	87

The table shows a very big increase in the total number of cases instituted from 1925 onwards, and it also shows that the great majority of cases resulted in convictions.

The results of the prosecution cases also show, on the whole, inadequacy of the fines. This has a considerable bearing on the adequacy of the staff for the enforcement of the Act ; for the smaller the fine, the more is the chance of a repetition of the offence and the greater is the need for repeated inspection. The biggest proportion of fines falls under the classification " Rs. 25 and under " and the Factories Department complain that the imposition of fines of such trifling magnitude has, to a certain extent, stultified and jeopardized the principles of the Act. The department reports that small fines are often met with indifference and have the reverse of the desired effect. This is particularly the case in illegal employment of labour in which the financial gain which accrues at the expense of a small fine is a direct encouragement to continued infringement of the Act.

In factories other than jute mills, the number of prosecutions under the various chapters of the Act has been fairly evenly distributed, but in jute mills, approximately 94 per cent. of the cases arise from the illegal employment of labour. Out of the total of 270 cases, shown in the table, a total of 253 were instituted on account of infractions of the labour provisions of the Act ; 126 were for illegal employment of adults ; 104 for the illegal employment of children ; and 23 for default in the maintenance of employment register. The multiple-shift system of working, which is still in force in about 50 per cent. of the jute mills, is reported by the department to be primarily responsible for the large number of infractions of the employment provisions of the Act. The working hours of these mills are spread over 13½ hours a day and are so arranged that no workman may be employed in excess of the legal provisions of the Act. The system of overlapping shifts readily lends itself to collusion on the part of time-clerks, sirdars, and the actual workers, with the result that it is often impossible for either managers or inspectors to check, even approximately, the total infractions which daily occur. It is seldom possible for an inspector to check the names of more than a few people discovered working illegally, as, when the news is spread that an inspector is in the mill, large numbers of children and adults

speedily leave the mill, or are driven out by the time-clerks and sirdars. Further, the department reports that in many cases, where illegal employment is evident, various means are resorted to by the time-clerks and sirdars to confound the inspectors, with the result that it is exceedingly difficult, and often impossible, to obtain evidence sufficient to support a prosecution. The department has also found it exceedingly difficult to get workmen themselves to give evidence of illegal employment. The workers are, in the first place, probably, themselves ignorant that they are illegally employed, and, in the second place, they are frightened of victimisation by sirdars if they gave evidence. It is significant that not a single workman in the Bengal jute mills, during the currency of the 1922 Act, has voluntarily offered to give evidence on infractions of the employment provisions of the Act.

Owing to the large number of prosecutions which have been instituted in the last few years, full advantage has been taken by managers of mills and their legal representatives of technical defects in the law. Particulars and comments on typical cases have been given in the annual reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories on the administration of the Act.

142.—*Plantations, Docks, and other Industrial Establishments.—Extent and nature of inspection.*—There is no official inspection of such establishments unless they come within the scope of special laws, such as the Indian Electricity Act. The Factory Inspection Department occasionally visits premises which are not statutory factories, particularly in connection with fatal accidents. Official plantations are subject to inspection visits by senior officers of Government, while in docks the superior staff regularly inspect the various departments. Small factories are subject to no regular inspection of any kind.

XVIII.—Intelligence.

143.—*Existing Statistics.*—Statistics relating to industrial labour are collected through two agencies; (1) the Factories Office, and (2) the Office of the Labour Intelligence Officer. The factories office, in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, gives all the statistics required for the returns prescribed under the Indian Factories Act, and, also, from time to time, a census of wages for the most important industries in Bengal. The most complete census of wages for industrial employees hitherto published in Bengal is in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for the year 1927, and the following extract from his report gives an indication of the method of collection, and also of the accuracy of the figures :—

" Greater attention has been given to the wages and general condition of operatives in order that the statistics of wages might convey a better representation of the earnings in the industries concerned. The collection of data for Appendix VI depends to a great extent on the goodwill of managers, and when the conditions in a factory are such as to necessitate the application of force for the proper administration of the Act, information which is outside the scope of the Act is either given with reluctance or withheld. In these circumstances, the averages of wages tabulated are rather in the nature of estimates deduced from register records of representative factories of the industries concerned, and are not the exact averages of wages of the total number of employees in these industries."

Appendix VI of the report referred to is headed " Estimated average monthly wages," but the averages were obtained from actual payments made in representative factories in the industries concerned. They may, therefore, be taken as accurate averages of a representative type.

Statistics of industrial disputes have been collected regularly since July, 1920, in the office of the Labour Intelligence Officer, Bengal. The results are not published locally; they are sent quarterly and annually to the Government of India, by whom they are issued for publication in the press.

The statistics collected cover the whole range of industries and trades in Bengal and also include other services which employ manual labour such as the telegraph, telephone, transport, and municipal services. No dispute, however, is taken into account which does not involve at least 10 men and last for at least one full day.

The main source of information regarding industrial disputes is the District Magistrate, but occasionally, figures are collected directly from employers involved in disputes. In no case have figures been furnished by trade unions. For each dispute in progress or reported to have come into existence, information is required from local officers under the following heads :—(*a*) the place where, and the dates on which, the strike or lockout has occurred ; (*b*) the concern or concerns, etc., involved ; (*c*) the full strength of the concern or concerns ; (*d*) the number on strike ; (*e*) the number affected as the result of the strike ; (*f*) the general and immediate cause of the dispute ;

(*g*) whether a trade union had been formed, and, if so, details of its organization; (*h*) specific demands of the strikers; (*i*) any evidence of outside interference; (*j*) general attitude of strikers, non-strikers, and employers; and (*k*) other items of special interests or importance.

The above heads give the preliminary facts connected with a dispute as well as any unusual circumstances that may be connected with its origin or continuance. Supplementary information, however, is usually necessary regarding the course of a dispute and its termination. The supplementary reports usually concern (1) the extension or reduction in the number of concerns affected by the strike or in the number of employees on strike; (2) the course of events, and (3) the date and terms of settlement.

After the strike has been declared to have terminated, the data are analysed and dealt with statistically according to recognised methods. In the case of each dispute the aggregate duration and the total economic loss to the concern are expressed in terms of man-days—a quantity measured on the basis of two factors, viz., (1) the average number of vacancies in the establishment concerned for each day of the dispute and (2) the number of actual working days during which the dispute lasts. The issues involved in disputes are classified under the following heads:—(i) pay, (ii) bonus, (iii) personnel, (iv) leave and hours, and (v) others.

The results of the disputes are indicated from the point of view of workers only, and are based on a general appreciation of the results which have been achieved. The following classification of results is self-explanatory:—(i) success, (ii) partial success, (iii) failure, and (iv) indefinite.

The accuracy of the statistics compiled on the above methods depends on the information which is collected. So far as disputes in small concerns involving only a few workers are concerned, the figures may be said to be reasonably accurate. In the case of disputes affecting large concerns, however, the calculation of the aggregate economic loss in man-days is more of the nature of an estimate. This is due, in the main, to the peculiar character of strikes in India. In long-drawn-out disputes it usually happens that the employers make an attempt to keep work going by means of such labour as they can obtain, either from the strikers themselves or from outsiders. Their number varies from day to day, and, in the absence of any definite statements from employers of the actual numbers employed from day to day, the number of vacancies not filled up daily has to be estimated on rough figures. It not infrequently happens also, that employers may succeed in working for a few days with a skeleton staff in the middle of a strike, but that the skeleton staff later joins the strikers either through conviction or because of intimidation. In such cases, especially where the period of intermediate employment during the strike is very short, the final estimate usually discounts work of this type, and the total of man-days lost is taken over the whole period irrespective of sporadic attempts to start up work in the meantime. The most incalculable element in strikes, however, is the actual date of cessation. In many strikes work starts up on a given date, but the full staff does not rejoin for some considerable time after the strike has been officially declared closed. This is due to the fact that, especially in prolonged strikes, workmen either go to other concerns or leave for their homes. An outstanding example of this is the East Indian Railway strike in 1928, when the terms of settlement included a fairly long period of grace during which workers who had been on strike were permitted to return to work. Accurate estimation of the actual number of man-days lost to industry through strikes would require detailed statistics for varying lengths of periods after the strike is officially declared to be over. In very few big strikes in Bengal does a concern start up immediately after the cessation of the strike with a full complement of workers.

Wages statistics for agricultural workers are collected quinquennially by the Agriculture and Industries Department. These statistics include wage-rates not only for agricultural labourers, but also for selected artisans, e.g., blacksmiths and carpenters. These returns are collected on a sample basis. The sub division is adopted as the unit of collection, and 20 villages in each sub-division are selected for the collection of material. The census is conducted by sub division officials under the general supervision of collectors. Non-official returns are also collected and checked by means of the official returns.

Statistics arising from the Workmen's Compensation Act are published in the annual reports of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal.

144. *Possibility of Improvement in Statistics.*—The improvement of existing statistics depends mainly on staff. The Government of Bengal have given administrative approval to the appointment of a special statistical assistant, in the grade of Assistant Inspector of Factories, in the office of the Chief Inspector of Factories, whose duties will be entirely connected with statistics relating to factories, including wages. In Bengal, as in other provinces in India, there is no Statistics Act, under which figures can be compulsorily obtained, but the Chief Inspector of Factories has access to the

wages-books in the ordinary course of his duties under the Indian Factories Act, and it is anticipated that, with the necessary extension of his staff, the census of wages which have hitherto been appended to the annual reports will be considerably enlarged.

Without a considerable extension of the office of the Labour Intelligence Officer, no improvement can be expected in the compilation of statistics of industrial disputes. Personal investigation by full-time officers would lead to more accurate statistics. Accurate returns cannot either be enforced on, or expected from employers, so as to cover the whole loss that individual disputes entail.

145. *Nature of Special Investigations Conducted.*—Special investigations have been made from time to time into particular problems, e.g., welfare, and maternity benefits.

No cost-of-living enquiries have been instituted by the Government of Bengal. The question was fully considered in 1921, arising from the Government of India, letter No. L.-919, dated the 8th March, 1921, in which the Government of India asked :—(1) Whether the construction of cost-of-living index-numbers on the lines suggested by the Government of India in the letter referred to was generally concurred in; (2) whether arrangements could be made with the least possible delay to collect family budgets; and (3) whether the system of collecting and publishing retail prices, as suggested in the same letter by the Government of India, was considered suitable by the local Government.

The reply of the local Government, in their letter No. 261 T.—Com., dated the 1st October, 1921, contained their views on all these questions. An extract from this reply is reproduced below :—

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7. Briefly, then, the view of the Governor in Council is that the construction of cost-of-living index numbers is not necessary or even desirable in the present stage of industrial development in Bengal, that untrustworthy statistics would be worse than useless, and that the compilation of trustworthy statistics would occupy much labour and time and would entail expenditure out of all proportion to the value of the results to be achieved. The last consideration is specially relevant in Bengal at the present time, since the income of the Presidency is insufficient to meet its necessary recurring expenditure, and the recent decision of the Government of India to limit financial relief to a remission of the provincial contribution for three years necessitates a curtailment of many essential administrative functions and renders it impossible for the Local Government to undertake any economic experiments of the nature now under consideration. The Governor in Council fully appreciates the importance of doing all that is possible to grapple with new development of the industrial problem in Bengal, and, with this object in view, he is carrying out the policy laid down by the Committee on Industrial unrest, which will provide many opportunities for acquiring knowledge and information regarding the economic condition of the working classes. But for the reasons given above, he is unable to concur in the construction of a cost-of-living index number on the lines suggested by the Government of India.

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The question has not been reconsidered since, because, owing to financial stringency, there has been no prospect of creating official machinery for statistical work of this type.

146. *Future Developments Necessary.*—The Government of Bengal have not considered in detail the future developments necessary in connection with labour statistics for the reason that no money has been available for the extension of existing work, and that, when the provincial finances improve, other and more urgent schemes have a prior claim. It has been indicated above that Government have approved of the creation of a special post of statistical assistant in the Factories Office, and it is hoped that the creation of this office will result in fuller and, if possible, more accurate statistics with regard to wages in factories. As regards other concerns, such as transport and municipal services, wage-rates are collected from time to time by the various departments concerned, but no co-ordinated census is possible until the work is in charge of a special office. As already indicated it was proposed in 1921 to create a special Labour Bureau for this purpose, but this office has not been established for financial reasons.

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The following deals with a number of headings of the List of Subjects in respect of the Asansol Coal Mining Area :—

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

Dated 21 Oct.-12 Nov., 1929.

I have the honour to enclose herewith 40 copies of a Report on Labour conditions in the coal mines of the Asansol sub-division by Mr. J. A. Beale, who is at present sub-divisional officer of Asansol. Mr. Beale was placed on special duty for the collection of the information contained in the report at the beginning of July, and, owing

to the shortness of the period at his disposal, was instructed to conduct his enquiries on a sample basis. Mr. Beale, however, while utilizing the sample method in some instances, has been able to compile information which is applicable to all mines in the Ranigunge field. As sub-divisional officer of Asansol, Mr. Beale is also *ex-officio* vice-chairman of the Asansol mines Board of Health and has had access to the reports and papers of that Board. His notes on the health sections of the list of subjects may, therefore, be regarded as authoritative.

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3. The opinions expressed in Mr. Beale's report are personal opinions, but in the main the local Government agree with them. Their views on "I. Recruitment:—(3) Methods of recruitment: (iii) public employment agencies; (*a*) desirability of establishing (*b*) possibility of practical schemes; (7) Unemployment: (iv) unemployment insurance (*v*) application of International Conventions relating to unemployment" have already been forwarded to the Commission. Under item "V.—welfare (other than health and housing, but including education)," the Commission have included an item, viz., "No. (39) possibility and desirability of a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund." This is a subject which the local Government have not hitherto considered, and on which they are not prepared at the present stage to give a categorical opinion. As Mr. Beale points out, apart from medical relief, very little welfare work is undertaken in the Ranigunge coalfield, but whether at the present stage it would be advisable to start a fund for the encouragement of sample welfare activities in the mine-fields as a whole is a subject which would have to be considered in the light of definite proposals. If such a fund is instituted, the local Government consider that it should be centrally administered, as, presumably, it would be applicable to all the mine-fields of India.

4. The most important items in the list of subjects on which the Royal Commission require the views of the local Government are "IX—Hours—B—mines—(66) possibility of reducing maxima; (67) suitability of the law relating to shifts; (68) possibility of introducing an effective daily limitation; (71) adequacy of existing provisions" and "X—special questions relating to women, young adults, and children—B—mines—(91) exclusion of women: (i) suitability of regulations (ii) probable effect on industry (iii) economic effect on workers (iv) speed of withdrawal." These questions have been considered by the local Government since the passing of the Indian Mines Act in 1923. Generally speaking, the local Government have been in entire agreement with the policy of the Government of India in respect of these. They consider that the existing hours-of-work provisions of the Mines Act are satisfactory and should not be altered at present, although they would recommend reconsideration of the higher limit for surface workers were the maximum limit of hours for factories to be reduced. They are also in agreement with the policy of the Government of India with regard to the exclusion of women and the institution of a system of shifts.

5. The above questions were all fully considered in connection with the Government of India letter No. M. 665, dated the 22nd June, 1923. This letter raised the two questions of the employment of women in mines and the introduction of a system of shifts in coal mines, and local Governments were asked for their opinions on the questions generally, and, in respect of the shift system, with particular reference to the following points:—(*a*) whether the introduction of a compulsory system of shifts is practicable and advisable; (*b*) what period of grace should be given before any legislation enforcing such a system should be imposed; (*c*) what limit should be placed on the working day, and what particular system of shifts should be enforced; and (*d*) whether such legislation should apply to any mines other than coal mines, and, if applied only to coal mines, whether it should be enforced to coalfields without exception.

6. With regard to the proposed introduction of a system of shifts in mines, the local Government replied in their letter No. 720 Com., dated the 26th January, 1924, extracts from which are reproduced below:—

"From the communications of the public bodies and officers who were consulted,* copies of which are enclosed, it will be seen that there is a very marked division of opinion on the main issue, namely, whether the introduction of a compulsory system of shifts is practicable and advisable. The two bodies which represent the colliery industry, the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation, are both definitely against the proposal, as also is the Mines Board of Health, Asansol. The district magistrate, Burdwan, within whose jurisdiction are practically all the collieries in this presidency, agrees with the sub-divisional officer, Asansol, in opposing the proposal; on the other hand, the Commissioner of the division favours it, in common with the chief inspector of mines, the district magistrate of Bankura, and the mining and Geological Institute of India. The opinions on either sides are weighty, and in

* Not forwarded here.

deciding in favour of the shift system, the Governor in Council is fully cognizant of the difficulties which the reform will entail, and the opposition which its enforcement may involve. On the other hand, he is convinced that the difficulties will only be temporary, and that the coal mining industry, the only mining industry with which this Presidency is intimately concerned, will be healthier on account of the introduction of shifts and ultimately grateful for a reform which at present is opposed on grounds not of principle, but of fear that such a vital industry will be prejudiced by adjusting an ignorant labour force to new conditions.

"As the Government of India are aware, the labour conditions of the Bengal coalfields differ somewhat from those prevailing in Bihar and Orissa. Under present conditions, the restrictions of section 23 (*a*) and (*c*) of the amended Mines Act will not bear hardly on either field. Very few miners in either Asansol, Ranigunge or Jheria work for more than four days a week or more than 54 hours. The average is very much less. In the Jheria area, however, there is a much larger semi-settled labour population. The miners settle down on or near the mine in which they work for a considerable period of the year, during which period they earn just enough to provide themselves with food and liquor. Once that is earned, nothing will compel them to work longer and earn more. They go into and leave the mine very much as they choose, but as contrasted with the Ranigunge miner, the Jheria miner does not work for very long spells. He can work for shorter periods because his temporary home is near. In Ranigunge, on the other hand, a large proportion of the labour force comes in from the neighbouring villages. The miners work intensively for about three or four days, and then return to their farms, to work or rest as their inclination may be. While at the mine the Ranigunge miner allows himself little leisure for food, sleep or recreation. He works intensively and continuously, in order to allow him to return to the leisure or casual work of his farm. His long rest periods are spent at his own home. It may be said that the balance of hours is in favour of the time off per week, though it is not distributed over his period of work in the method which the recognized principles of efficiency demand. It is obvious that the shift system will radically alter the methods of work of the Ranigunge miner, and it is equally obvious that, at the outset at least, a system which will compel him to go down and leave the mine at a given time, and to work for only what he considers a small portion of the day and night will be distasteful to him.

"The introduction of the shift system will mean spreading the miner's work over a longer period in the week, and it is probable that a number of miners may prefer staying on their farms to settling down at the mines, for, spreading the time of work over a longer period will compel all the farmer-miners, save those who live within an easy radius of the mine, to settle down at the mine. The type of person most likely to be affected is the miner who at present comes in from a distance of 8 or 10 miles. To this extent, therefore, the shift system would affect the labour supply, and it is against this contingency that the arguments of the mining interests are directed. The Governor in Council recognises the importance of this side of the question, and were he persuaded that it is a final argument he would oppose the proposal for the introduction of shifts. He is aware that the mining industry suffers from a short supply of labour, but he is not convinced that the shift system would materially accentuate it. Other considerations, moreover, have to be borne in mind, and the balance of argument in his opinion undoubtedly comes down on the side of the Government of India's proposal.

"In the first place, particularly so far as the Asansol-Ranigunge miner, as distinct from the Jharia miner, is concerned, it does not appear reasonable to expect that the need which impels the former to seek employment in the mines will disappear. He leaves his farm to earn more money, and the shift proposal in itself will not alter this fundamental fact. The farmer will continue to require the additional income, but the income will have to be earned under conditions, which, though temporarily distasteful to him, will bring the mining industry into line with regulations universally accepted as necessary to the good of the industry, and with practice common in all parts of the civilised world. The miners will gradually come to the knowledge that they must work on a system, and that, outside that system, no work can be done at all, and no income earned. If the income is not needed, the farmer will stay on his farm, but the experience of the Jheria field plainly shows that when the income is needed the farmer settles down, for a period, to become a miner. There is no reason why this should not be so in the Bengal colliery areas in respect to that section of miners which comes to the mines from a distance. In the second place, if, as the Government of Bengal recommend, the shift system is made universal in coal mines, much of the ground of the present fear of the coal owners' interests that labour will leave the mines, will disappear. As conditions are at present, both in Jharia and Ranigunge, the mine manager cannot enforce time discipline because if he did so, the labourer would leave him for a mine with less stern discipline. No mine manager at present can afford to recruit labour to lose it to others, and the result is a general

lack of discipline which, while it accords with the free and easy disposition of the present type of miner, is usually ascribed to the nature of the miner, when the real cause is the lack of a unified attempt on the part of owners and managers to enforce it. When discipline is universal, this cause of labour loss will disappear, for the wandering miner will fail to find a mine where he is his own master in respect to time of work. The stricter discipline of the shift system will require stricter inspection, and the Government of India doubtless have borne this in mind when making the proposal. This aspect of thec ase, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, requires some emphasis, as it is only fair that managers who do their best to obey the law should not be handicapped by the existence of a number of mines, the management of which will not hesitate to evade the law in order to increase their output.

" The reasons for the application of the shift system, as enumerated by the chief inspector of mines are that the present irregular nature of the going and coming of the workmen—(*a*) increases the difficulties of keeping a proper record of the number of persons in the mine—a most important point in the event of a serious accident; (*b*) complicates supervision, as workmen who have commenced work under the direction of one overman, or sirdar, may finish work under another; (*c*) may result in the overcrowding of the workings of the mine due to one group or gang of workmen arriving at a place of work before the previous group or gang has left; (*d*) increases the number of accidents, as long hours tend to laxity and carelessness; and (*e*) reacts adversely on the general supervision and discipline in the mine.

" The shift system will eradicate these evils, and, it has to be added that under the amended Mines Act, it is a legal obligation for managers to know the number of days and hours a miner works. Apart from this, there can be no doubt whatever that from the point of view of mine management alone, a regulated system of work is preferable. The letter of the subdivisional officer, Asansol, shows that there is no agreement among the mine managers on the general issue of the shift system, but it goes without saying that every manager must prefer regulation of his labour supply to the present haphazard system. The method may be debateable, but, were the mine manager persuaded that he would not lose labour, there seems little doubt that he would support the shift system, as the Mining and Geological Institute, on which the technical side of mining is well represented, has done. The remarks of the chief inspector of mines on the subject of safety also require the most serious consideration. As he points out, the present system increases the number of accidents, owing to the fact that long hours lend to laxity and carelessness. In deep mines in which the menace of a fire damp or coal dust explosion is ever present, a system of shifts, he regards as essential; and the Government of Bengal, desire strongly to support his view. The danger to human life, added to the other arguments, appears to them conclusive.

" One further consideration has to be taken into account. During the last few years increasing attention has been given to the condition of Indian labour, both in India and outside. Her high place in the international world of labour demands that India should exert herself towards improving the condition of labour in accordance with the recognized principles of more highly industrialised countries. While not advocating rapid reforms among a class which does not appreciate reforms, the Governor in Council contends that the time is ripe for sowing the seeds of progress. The proposal of the Government of India is a mild one. The shifts are liberal, and combined with the period of grace advocated by the Government of Bengal, they should lead to no insuperable difficulties. The system proposed provides ample opportunity for the necessary readjustments in the present system, and will not only remove a present abuse, but show that India is eager to maintain the reputation in the international world which the amended Factories and Mines Acts have already secured for her. The enforcement of the provision proposed only requires good will on the part of the mine owners and managers, just as the new provisions of the Factories Act require co-operation on the part of factory owners and managers. The lack of this good will in instances may hamper the reform but His Excellency in Council is of opinion that the reform will in due course prove its own worth and disarm all opposition.

" The second question to which the Government of India desire an answer is what period of grace should be given before any legislation enforcing the shift system should be imposed. The opinions on this point vary. A period of five years is favoured by the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, the Mines Board of Health, and the District Magistrate, Burdwan, and three years, by the Chief Inspector of Mines. After careful consideration of the question, the Government of Bengal have decided in favour of the five years period. This will give ample time for the mine owners and managers to warn their labour and make all arrangements necessary for the change. The longer period of grace will moreover mitigate the mine owners' opposition.

"On the next question—the limit that should be placed on the working day, and the system of shifts to be introduced, the Governor in Council supports the two shift system from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. He also agrees that at present the question of a shorter working day with definite rest interval should not be raised. As the Government of India remark, as the labourers become used to the stricter regulation of hours which a shift system postulates, the time will come when a shorter working day with definite rest intervals will have to be imposed.

"The Government of Bengal are not intimately concerned with the fourth question, whether such legislation should apply to mines other than coal mines; but on general principles they would support the extension of the system to all mines.

"On the last issue, namely, whether the system, if applied to coal mines only, should be enforced in all coalfields without exception, the answer of the Government of Bengal has already been given. The grant of exemptions would defeat the whole object of the proposal."

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The subsequent developments in the shift question were concerned with matters of detail, in most of which the local government have accepted the views of the Government of India.

7. As regards the employment of women in mines, the views of the local government have undergone some change. They have, however, all along accepted the principle that the employment of women should be forbidden in mines. In their letter No. 1258 Com., dated the 20th February, 1924, they replied to the points raised in the letter of the Government of India mentioned above in the following terms—

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"The subject of female labour in mines came under the consideration of the Government of Bengal in connection with the prohibition of the presence of children below ground, which was carried into effect by the passing of the amended Mines Act in 1923. In their reply to the Government of India on this subject, the Government of Bengal, in their letter No. 5869 Com. dated the 13th December, 1922, stated the opinion that in all probability the prohibition of child labour would result in the cessation of female labour underground, and "for this most desirable end," it was deemed advisable to give a period of grace before the actual prohibition was carried into effect. In principle, therefore, the Government of Bengal accept the general proposition that female labour should be abolished in the coal mines. But they are not willing at present to fix a date by which such prohibition should become operative. The actual effect of the prohibition of children still remains to be seen, and if this prohibition creates or accelerates a tendency for women not to work in the mines, it will in itself give an index both to the Government and to mine owners as to the future course to be pursued with regard to female labour. To set a date, however, for the actual prohibition of female labour in coal mines is in the opinion of the Governor in Council premature.

"The Government of Bengal have consulted the usual bodies whose opinions they take on references such as the present, and it will be seen from their replies copies of which are enclosed,* that the weight of opinion is undoubtedly against the prohibition of female labour or the setting of a given date by which it should be prohibited. The bodies intimately concerned with the coal mining industry are unanimous in their opposition; and it will be noted from the replies that bodies which were emphatic in the support of the shift system in coal mines are equally emphatic in opposing the abolition of female labour. The Chief Inspector of Mines stands practically alone in supporting the abolition of female labour. He does so on the general principle that such prohibition is inevitable at some time in the future. With this general statement the Government of Bengal are in full agreement. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that at some time in the future, female labour in coal mines will be prohibited either by Government or by the force of communal feeling in the coal mining population. The note of the Chief Inspector however is by no means convincing in favour of giving a period of five years' grace for the prohibition. In fact, the figures which he gives go to prove that a five years' period is much too short a period to enable the coal industry to readjust its labour supply to conditions in which female labour would not play a part. As things are at present two factors stand out prominently, one is that female labour underground in the coal mines forms a big percentage of the total labour force. In Bengal it amounts to 34·5, while in Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces it is 45·3 and 34·6, respectively. The average works out at considerably over one third and a proposal which affects so big a proportion of the labour supply in the coal mines obviously warrants the very gravest consideration. It is a truism to state that the coal industry suffers from a perennial shortage of labour, and it seems beyond question that the abolition of female labour even

* Not forwarded here.

at the end of a 5 or 10 year period would very materially affect the numbers at the mines. It may be argued that female labour could be replaced by male labour or machines. In the present state of colliery labour supply this seems exceedingly doubtful. The evidence goes to show that the prohibition of female labour will mean a diminution in the male labour supply, for a system of family work is deeply ingrained in the aboriginal colliery labourer and there is good reasons to fear that the prohibition would result in many male labourers seeking labour in other directions, for example, the tea gardens where their female folk could go and work with them. The replacement of labour by machinery is largely a matter of capital. In the larger mines, coal cutting machinery and mechanical transport have, to a certain extent, already been installed, but it would be unreasonable to except all mines within the next few years to be able to instal mechanical devices to save labour. The policy of installing machinery is largely an economic one. Where concerns find that it pays, they instal it, but in every case it costs a considerable amount of money, and at present the smaller concerns are not able to find the money for the purpose. The abolition of female labour and the consequent loss of labour supply thus, in all probability would mean the closing down of several of the smaller mines, which the Government of Bengal think very undesirable.

"The Governor in Council would particularly invite the attention of the Government of India to the fact that the present class of labour in the coal mines is opposed to the proposed prohibition. This in itself, of course, is not a final argument, for the particular class of labour concerned is opposed to most reforms imposed from above. It is, for example, opposed to the reform already recommended by the Government of Bengal, namely, the introduction of the shift system. The question of the abolition of female labour, however, and the shift system are not quite on the same plane. The one is a matter of the enforcement of the law and the regularisation of the conditions of work in mines. The abolition of female labour is a social and moral matter which arose originally from the feeling that the risk of danger to the health of female workers was very great in mines. It has not, however, as yet been conclusively proved that the female worker suffers from working underground, and, in this connection, the Government of Bengal would invite the attention of the Government of India to the reply of the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, an officer who has had long experience in the administration of the Division which includes practically all the coal mines in this presidency. There is evidence to show that the female underground worker is as healthy as, if not more healthy than, the woman who works outside the mines—in loading or in general coolie work. From the moral point of view, the mining community will for many years be better served by the continuance of the present system than by breaking up the family method of working. Ever since the colliery industry started, it has been the recognized custom of the aboriginal workers to work together in family groups, and this custom is so universal, and so deep seated amongst the people, that to break it at the present stage of development must mean either a very considerable diminution of the labour supply of the coal mines, or a jolt to the normal family moralities of the communities involved. The Government of Bengal consider that the opinion of the great majority of the workers on this question should not be lightly cast aside. The tendency of much of our modern labour legislation is to give a considerable place to the will of the worker and in the present instance, although the result of that may not be in accord with what Western practice considers to be best for female workers, its unanimity gives reason to pause before enforcing in a community with a relatively low standard of development what in the West is regarded as socially and economically sound. The Government of Bengal recognise that it is essential in many cases to go against the will of such communities and to force them to adopt habits and methods which are opposed to their traditions, but in the present case, there is not sufficient justification to do so. Moreover, there are signs at present that the customs of the people may change naturally in the direction of the abolition of female labour. The evidence shows that when the miner rises in the social scale he refuses to allow his women kind to go down the mines. How far this tendency may develop it is not easy at present to say. The Government of Bengal are of opinion that before the drastic change involved in the abolition of female labour is contemplated more study should be given to the tendencies which the growth of industrial communities in the mining areas naturally brings about. If, in the course of a few years, the tendency among the people is to prohibit women from going down the mines the question of the final prohibition of such labour may again be reopened. In the meantime, the Government of Bengal are definitely against the prohibition of female labour now, or at a fixed date in the near future. On the other hand they are of the view that every reasonable precaution should be taken to ensure that the female worker in the coal or other mines is guarded against physical danger, and to this end they are ready to support every reasonable measure, restricting hours of work, guaranteeing safety during work and of providing maternity benefits to female workers."

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8. In 1927, the Government of India, in their letter No. M. 1055, dated the 20th May, forwarded a draft of regulations under section 29 (*j*) of the Indian Mines Act for the purpose of definitely prohibiting the employment of women underground in mines, and on this draft the Government of Bengal, after consulting the Mining Board, Bengal, replied as follows, in their letter No. 4497 Com., dated the 25th August, 1927 :—

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" In reply, I am to forward* for the information of the Government of India, copy of the reply of the Mining Board in their letter No. 84 M.B., of the 30th July, 1927. From that reply it will be seen that there is a marked divergence of opinion on the Board with regard to the prohibition of the employment of women underground. On the general question, however, the Government of Bengal propose to offer no remarks as the principle has already been accepted by them, *vide* letter No. 1258 Com., dated the 20th July, 1924. In accepting the principle of the abolition of female labour underground, the Government of Bengal were definitely against the prohibition then or at a fixed date in the near future. The Government of India now propose to abolish such labour gradually with effect from the 1st July, 1929. It is doubtful whether any marked tendency has developed amongst the mining classes against women going down mines in the last three years, but the Government of Bengal accept generally the view that the process of abolition should be spread over a number of years starting from 1929. At the present stage they are not prepared to say how many years this process should be spread over, but there seems to be no adequate reason for fixing a period of seven years as against ten years, which would give an annual percentage of 10 per cent. for each of the years in question.

" The Government of Bengal are not concerned with mines other than coal mines, so they do not offer an opinion on the absolute prohibition of female labour underground in mines other than coal mines from the 1st July, 1928. With regard to the further proposal that the prohibition should apply only to deep coal mines and not to inclines and quarries, the Government of Bengal are definitely of the opinion that no distinction should be made between those classes. It is doubtful whether the conditions of women's work are easier in quarries and inclines than in mines proper, and on this ground alone it might reasonably be contended that no distinction should be made. From a commercial point of view, however, the argument against discrimination is overwhelming. The Government of Bengal offer no opinion as to whether the proposed abolition of female labour underground is likely to mean economic gain or loss to the concerns affected, but if it may involve the latter, then it is essential that coal mines of all types should be placed on the same basis. Where deep mines are forced to give up female labour underground there seems to be a reasonable probability that there will be a flow of labour from such mines to inclines and quarries giving the latter an undue advantage. No discrimination should be made, and the Government of Bengal trust that the proposed distinction will be removed before the regulations are finally circulated for criticism.

" I am to say that the proposed token system is, in principle, approved by the Government of Bengal."

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9. In 1928, in their letter No. M. 1055 (1), dated the 16th June, 1928, the Government of India forwarded to local Governments a copy of a notification publishing for criticism, in accordance with section 31 (1) of the Indian Mines Act, a further set of draft regulations for the prohibition of female labour underground, and the local Government replied in their letter No. 2014 T.—Com., dated the 29th October, 1928, as follows :—

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" I am to say that after careful consideration of the various views which have been expressed, the Government of Bengal generally accept the revised draft regulations, subject to the following remarks. In the first place, they wish to re-emphasise the views expressed in paragraph 3 of their letter No. 4497 Com., dated the 25th August, 1927, and in this connection they invite the attention of the Government of India to the very strong case made out by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, in their reply to the present reference, for the extension of the regulations to quarries. The Government of Bengal doubt whether, under the existing law, viz., Section 29 (i) read with Section 3 (*f*) of the Indian Mines Act, the Government of India could not extend the regulations to open workings ; in this connection I am particularly to invite the attention of the Government of India to the remarks of the Indian Mining Association in paragraph 6 of their letter, and to the appropriate passage in the report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for 1927, pages 6 and 7, read with plate I, opposite page 8, and they are convinced that, on grounds of equity, no distinction should be made between quarries and mines. If, however, the Government of India

* Not forwarded here.

are of the final view that, under the law as it stands, the extension of the regulations to open workings is not possible, then I am to express the considered view of the Government of Bengal that the necessary additional powers should be sought without delay from the legislature.

" In the second place, I am to say that after fuller consideration of the token system in the light of the criticisms which have been received, the Government of Bengal prefer the alternative principle mentioned in paragraph 5 of the letter of the Government of India, and they recommend for adoption the scheme advocated by the Bengal Mining Board, and the Chief Inspector of Mines in paragraph 4 of his letter."

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The local Government still adhere to the above expressed views.

REPORT ON LABOUR CONDITIONS IN THE COAL MINES OF THE ASANSOL SUBDIVISION.

I.—Recruitment.

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3. (i) Special attention has to be given to the recruiting of coal-cutting and loading labour; all other labour is more or less easily obtained. The following methods exist in the coal mines here for the recruiting of labour:—(*a*) through recruiters or sirdars who are advanced money for train fares, food, etc., to recruit labourers from their native districts; (*b*) through contractors; (*c*) through recruiting staff who go round villages and pay advances, especially in the case of local labour; (*d*) through chaprasis for local labour; (*e*) through head sirdars, by payments made to them of a tonnage on coal cut by the miners they bring in; (*f*) occasionally through recruiting Babus who are paid advances; but this method is not so common as it used to be; (*g*) sometimes through zemindars, who are paid to send their tenants as labourers; (*h*) sometimes through representatives kept in labour districts, they attend to the wants of miners at home by advancing money for special requirements, such as cultivation, weddings, etc. Contractors sometimes try and keep a hold over the people in this way.

Sometimes a gang of labourers moves round the Mining Settlement seeking employment; when engaged these people work for a few days, and then move on to the next colliery after having received " khoraki " and other concessions.

" Poaching " of labour is not generally resorted to nowadays, but it is not entirely absent.

(ii) It is generally considered that the existing methods of recruitment are satisfactory. But it is also considered that better results might be obtained if the villagers could be induced to co-operate with each other in connection with the cultivation of their fields.

(iii) (*a*) It is generally considered undersirable to establish Public Employment Agencies. Mining labour is independent, and will only work at collieries which the individual thinks suits him. He will leave a well-appointed colliery when the coal is hard, the lead from the tubs to the face long, and the galleries wet, for a badly appointed one where the coal is soft, the lead short and the galleries dry. It is considered that in view of the fact that the expenditure on recruitment of labour at some collieries approximates 4 annas per ton of output, the necessity for the establishment of employment agencies does not arise. There are, however, other considerations which favour the establishment of public employment agencies. There is no check on the expenditure recruiters are supposed to incur. Expenses are unnecessarily increased by competition between rival parties for particular gangs of workers. There are losses caused by labourers taking advances, etc., from one recruiter and going over to other recruiters. There are losses due to recruiters absconding and to labour leaving after a day or so on a colliery.

Recruiting expenses could be controlled, and the chances of losses would be reduced if employment agencies were established.

Moreover, arrangements could be made at villages regarding the cultivation of fields so as to maintain a more regular supply of labour at collieries.

For good and satisfactory results all labour agencies must be ensured against partiality to any particular colliery.

(*b*) Colliery labour settlements under public agencies near the coalfields could be tried now that there are more facilities for transport. But fixed hours for working would have to be adopted for satisfactory results. Moreover, it is not desirable to have such settlements as the management of the collieries would have no control at all over the work people, and would not get to know the men properly. Whole settlements could be induced by mischievous people to go on strike at times of agitation.

4. There is no disturbance of family life as far as the resident and locally recruited labour is concerned. There is very little disturbance in the case of outside labour. Wives are sometimes deserted by men of outside labour. The percentage of labour at present working in families is as follows :—(*a*) 80 per cent. for local labour, and (*b*) 55 per cent. for outside labour. It must not be presumed that all the so-called "families" working underground consist of husband and wife, for there are many unattached women who work along with the men. The percentage of unattached women working underground in the whole "Raniganj" coalfield may be put at 25, and the corresponding percentage of women working with their husbands at 65. The Chief Inspector of Mines in India in his note on the proposed prohibition of women in mines in 1925 put the percentages at 30 and 60, respectively, a conclusion which he arrived at after conducting a partial census of women employed underground. The former percentages are probably more accurate now as the elimination of women is being given effect to. The remaining 10 per cent. may be taken as representing the percentage of women who are related in other ways to the men with whom they work.

Conditions will alter as the elimination of women from underground work proceeds, and there will probably be a greater disturbance of family life in the case of the outside labourer.

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7. (*i*) There is no unemployment among miners and other colliery labourers.

(ii) Clerical and technical staff (as overmen) have lost appointments by the closing down of some of the smaller mines and by retrenchment.

(iii) No means of alleviating or remedying any distress can be suggested.

(iv) There is no unemployment insurance, nor is such insurance considered necessary.

8. It is very difficult to obtain figures for the purpose of ascertaining labour "turnover" as some collieries apparently do not maintain statistics of labour. Some managements cannot even give an estimate of the normal labour staff and the number of recruitments made in a year. It is not understood how expenditure on recruiting is accounted for if no figures of recruitments are kept.

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A statement showing annual normal staff and the numbers recruited in the year has, however, been prepared from figures supplied by other selected collieries and is attached (Statement F).

(i) The same conditions are not found in every part of the coalfield. Generally speaking, skilled labour works more or less throughout the year. In some collieries permanent labour—resident and local—works the whole year except during the agricultural season and festivals. About 2 per cent. of this labour leaves, and has to be replaced. But many collieries have not a real permanent labour force. Outside labour work from six to nine months in the year, but not continuously; they are absent from 10 to 14 days at a time. At the most they work for two or three months continuously. About 25 to 50 per cent. of this class of labour leaves during the year, and has to be replaced. Sometimes almost the whole force leaves at different times during the year. The same man may be recruited more than once.

(ii) Casual labour is mostly employed for brick making, building, earthwork and the repairing of huts. Here again it is difficult to obtain figures—actual or approximate—from some collieries. Percentages or figures have, however, been obtained in the case of certain selected collieries, and these are given in Statement G attached.

(iii) (*a*) Miners are very independent, and turn out to work just when and as often as they like. They certainly never consider their collieries, nor do they worry about any loss in wages. There is one day in the week which the workers have as a general holiday; it is Sunday at practically all mines. In most cases miners absent themselves from work on Monday or the day after the holiday. They begin coming in to work the following day, but some still absent themselves. The local labourers are the biggest offenders in this respect. Excluding holidays miners are absent from work invariably for one day and sometimes for two days. At some collieries miners work for a month and stay away for ten days to a month before thinking of returning; the colliery concerned has to incur expenditure to engage workers for these periods.

(*b*) As has already been stated the largest number of miners are absent during the agricultural season. They also go away for marriages which generally take place in the months of March, April and May, and are absent for about four days per marriage.

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II. Staff Organization.

12. (i) There is no special recruitment of the subordinate supervising staff. There are some five centres in the coalfields for scientific technical training and a mining college at Dhanbad. The following institutions grant the degrees, diplomas or certificates specified against them :—Benares Hindu University—Degree of Bachelor of Science in Mining; Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur—Diploma in Mining; Calcutta University—Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in the Branch of Mining Engineering; Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad—Certificate in coal mining and Diploma of Associateship in Mining Engineering.

The following Technical Institutions teach surveying for certificates specified against them :—Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur—Certificates of the third year course in Engineering; Mainamati Survey School—Certificates granted to candidates successful in the survey final examination.

The students are then taken on in the mines, sometimes, as paid apprentices or assistants. Men of the better classes who have served in the mines in minor capacities are selected and appointed. Examinations have to be passed by those who wish to have higher appointments.

Workmen who appear to be a little intelligent and command a certain amount of respect are picked out and appointed as sirdars after they have obtained the necessary certificates which are given on their passing an oral examination. Sirdars, overmen and assistants come for work. The manager appoints all under him.

The superior supervising staff are selected and appointed as noted above.

(ii) *Facilities for training and promotion of workmen* —There are lectures and classes conducted by the Government Mining Lecturer at various centres, and facilities are given every one for attending them.

There is practically no actual training of the miner; a new man is put in with the old workers and learns his work from them. As stated above, promising men are selected for promotion to sirdars, and they are encouraged to pass the examination.

13. *Relations between Staff and Rank and File.*—Relations between staff and rank and file are good. Mining labour is very independent, and would not work at any mine where it did not receive good treatment. The managements fully realize this.

There are no works committees in existence in these coalfields. Direct access of labour to the management is encouraged, even in the case where recruiting contractors are employed. Intermediaries are in no way necessary.

14. *Timekeeping, Piecework, Contract and Attendance Registers.*—(i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—The timekeeping register is kept and checked by the timekeeper, who is called the " Hazri " Babu.

Piecework is looked after by overmen and sirdars.

Contract and attendance registers are kept by the attendance clerk.

All these registers are checked by the manager.

(ii) *How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.*—A clerk called " munshi " supervises loading of tubs underground and gives the miner a chit for the number of tubs loaded; the miner presents the same to the cashier who pays him and takes his thumb impression on the reverse of the chit.

15. *Contractors as intermediaries.*—(i) *Extent and character of work given on contract.*—The character of work given on contract varies on different collieries, but generally speaking works of construction, building and the manufacture of stores are given on contract. These works include items such as underground main gallery driving, sinking of shafts, erection of buildings and the manufacture of bricks.

The raising of coal is also given on contract by some collieries, the contractor receiving a fixed rate per ton of coal raised to the surface and loaded in wagons, and being responsible for all expenses connected with running the mine, but not for the supervising staff under the Act.

The loading of railway wagons is also given on contract sometimes. Loading is usually included in the contract for raising and despatching.

The recruiting of labour is done for some mines by contractors.

(ii) On the whole there is very little sub-contracting. It is not favoured by most managements. Recruiting, building, and occasionally raising contractors sometimes resort to sub-contracting.

(iii) The management exercises full control over the working conditions which are regulated in accordance with the legal provisions. The management supervises all the work through its technical and supervising staff, and sees that everything is done to ensure safety. The manager is responsible.

(iv) There are advantages in having the work done through contractors. In most cases it results in economy in working; the managing staff also has a certain amount of relief.

III.—Housing.

16. (i) Housing is provided by all collieries for all classes of workers who wish to stay either permanently or temporarily on the colliery premises. All labour recruited from outside the sub-division and those of the sub-division who live at a distance from their place of work are provided with quarters by their employers. There are also arrangements for resting places for the local labour who live in neighbouring villages. About 80 per cent. of the labour in the Asansol mines live on the premises in quarters provided by the employers. The percentage of quarters provided by collieries in the case of certain selected collieries is given in Statement H.

(ii) No quarters are provided by Government or other public agencies.

(iii) It is not known whether any workers rent houses from private landlords in their own districts, but probably a few do. The miner being an agriculturist has invariably his own house in his native district. There are no houses provided by private landlords on the colliery premises.

(iv) Local labourers provide their own houses in their villages. In practically all cases the collieries pay towards the expenses of repairing these houses. Roughly about 20 per cent. of all the colliery labour live in their own houses outside the collieries. The extent to which quarters outside the collieries are provided by the workers themselves in the case of certain selected collieries is given in Statement H.

17. Land cannot be acquired for collieries for workers' houses under the Land Acquisition Act. There are no facilities, and private arrangements for land have to be made. As property which a colliery holds for mining purposes is undermined in the course of extracting coal, many collieries find it very difficult to select and set apart suitable sites for houses. The concerns owning zemindaries have not this difficulty.

18. (i) Most quarters are in barrack form, but some are detached. Generally speaking, there are five different classes of quarters on the collieries; they are as follows:—(*a*) pucca, (*b*) pucca and kutcha-pucca (brick built in mud mortar) walls with Raniganj tiled roofs, (*c*) kutcha-pucca walls with ordinary country tiles, (*d*) kutcha-pucca walls with straw thatched roof, and (*e*) kutcha walls with straw thatched roof.

There are also some quarters with currugated iron roofs. The several types of houses found in certain selected collieries is given in Statement I.

No class of labour, except perhaps the Sonthal, has any special choice for housing. Sonthals generally prefer to live in kutcha houses (mud built with thatched roof) in open plots of land away from others. These houses have not a single window, and not a ray of light enters into them. Small groups of these houses are built at the expense of the managements. But the Sonthals have not now any very strong objections to living in houses with pucca roofs and pucca or kutcha-pucca floors; many of them are actually living in such houses.

The workers do not object to live in back-to-back quarters, but such type of house is being replaced by other types as it has been declared unhealthy by the Asansol Mines Board of Health.

The quarters provided are suited to the workers' demands, and fulfil the minimum requirements of the rules laid down by the Asansol Mines Board of Health for the construction of quarters or " dhowrahs " as they are called.

(ii) The existing best types of houses are those built according to the plans and specifications of standard dhowrahs as laid down by the Asansol Mines Board of Health. These are considered to be best types of houses from the health point of view. The following are the specifications and requirements of the Mines Board of Health: (*a*) All dhowrahs of whatever material built must be weather-proof. (*b*) Each block of huts must be separated by at least 15 feet from the nearest block of huts either in the same line or parallel to such block. (*c*) The floor area of each room must be at least 96 square feet. (*d*) The air space in each living room must be at least 1,100 cubic feet. (*e*) The width of the verandah must be at least 7 feet. (*f*) Each room must have a door of at least 2½ feet by 6 feet dimensions and an open window in the wall opposite the door of not less than 4 square feet for securing through ventilation. The window should be built at a height not less than 7 feet from the floor level. (*g*) The plinth and floor level must be at least 1½ feet above ground level. (*h*) The construction of dhowrahs back-to-back is forbidden. Many of the existing dhowrahs have no windows and in the majority of houses the windows have been closed with bricks or tins. The miner does not see the necessity of having a window, especially when he finds the rain beating in through it.

(iii) Each miner is provided with a small unprotected smoking kerosine light; kerosine oil is supplied.

Good wells are provided for drinking water in different parts of the colliery.

There are no latrines except for the clerical staff. Workers prefer the open fields. Sweepers are employed to keep the premises clean.

Dustbins are provided under orders of the Mines Board of Health; these are generally used for collecting ash for the paddy fields.

Tanks are provided for bathing purposes.

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20. All houses on the collieries are occupied free of rent.

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22. Only one family lives in each quarter in one or more rooms as necessary. Housing conditions are not to any very great extent responsible for immorality. Some of the labour have not ordinarily a high moral code. Compound walls to each set of quarters may make an improvement with the privacy they would give, but they are not as a rule considered beneficial to health.

IV.—Health.

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23. (ii) In the matter of birth rate and infant mortality the neighbouring villages are as much concerned as the collieries themselves, and the two cannot be separated for these figures. Very many of the outside female labourers go away to their native villages for the birth of their children, and the local labourers stay in the neighbouring villages. The birth rate and infant mortality for the whole mining settlement of Asansol for ten years (1918 to 1927) will be found in Statement J attached. The Asansol mining settlement has an area of 413 square miles, and in it there are about 263 collieries and 490 villages having a population of 329,356 and an approximate floating colliery population of 1,00,000.

The sanitary assistants of the Asansol Mines Board of Health are the recognized birth and death registrars for the above area. There are 13 sanitary assistants entrusted with this work. The municipalities of Asansol and Raniganj have their own arrangements. Each assistant obtains information of occurrences from the village chaukidars at the weekly chaukidari parade held at the police stations, and later personally verifies the reports. He also makes independent enquiries during his visits to the villages. A register of births and deaths is maintained by him, and he submits copies of it weekly to the board's office at Asansol, where a consolidated return is prepared for the whole settlement.

(iii) Working conditions at work places are on the whole satisfactory. Old arrangements are constantly being improved, and new and better arrangements made. Attention is given to ventilation and temperature. Humidity increases underground during the monsoons, as the air passing into the mine contains excessive moisture. This of course causes some discomfort. The larger mines have the advantage over the smaller mines as far as the arrangements underground are concerned. No discomfort worth the mentioning was experienced in the main galleries of the Ningah Mine, some 1,400 feet underground. It will not be out of place to say that the most up-to-date methods are being employed at this colliery, and excellent arrangements are being made for housing, welfare and the general comfort of workers of all classes.

The conditions at home are also good, and all collieries are improving the houses of workers—some rapidly and some very slowly. At two or three collieries visited there were complaints of water leaking through the roof; no great attention seems to be given to these little complaints. It should be added, however, that the visits were made during a period of very heavy rain daily. The miners earn just what they consider sufficient for their requirements and savings; many of them could earn very much more than they care to. They are consequently able to provide themselves with sufficient clothing and food.

(iv) Rice is the principal food of the workers. Some workers—generally all up-country men—eat the handbread made from flour. Dal and vegetables curried in oil are taken with the rice. Fruit is also eaten. Some workers eat meat, generally goat's flesh, but sometimes fowl. It is a great pity that the majority of the workers throw away or give to animals the rice water, though they probably all know its value, for nursing mothers sometimes drink it. The lower classes take country liquor which is brewed from boiled rice and which they consider essential to their diet; they will not, however, drink the fresh rice water.

The worker has two meals a day, and eats about three-fourths of a seer of rice each day. It costs a single person Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 a month to feed himself. The cost per head for a family is less.

(v) On the whole the workers are hardy, particularly the women. The people recruited from outside this subdivision—Sonthals, Koras, Bilaspuris, etc., have a better physique than the local low class Hindus who are called Bouris.

(vi) The Bouri class of labour are regarded as not having a very high moral code. The aboriginal labourers are rather better in this respect, and the Sonthals have very definite moral codes which are rigidly adhered to by the majority of the men and women.

(vii) It cannot be stated what part housing plays in connection with mortailty as special observation has never been made. In the year 1922 the Asansol Mines Board of Health prepared standard plans for quarters according to hygienic requirements, and the collieries were required to adopt the same in all future constructions and renewals. A census taken three years later in 1925 showed that 14 per cent. of the houses conformed to standard plan. The percentage has considerably increased now.

The figures of mortality in the collieries are given below :—

Year.	Total number of deaths.	Year.	Total number of deaths.
1920	1,716	1924	960
1921	1,445	1925	669
1922	1,055	1926	959
1923	970	1927	724

No specific relation between housing and mortality can be inferred from the available data ; all-round sanitary improvements were responsible for the decrease of mortality during the period shown. It can, however, be inferred that improved type of houses had something to do with the good results attained.

24. (i) Medical facilities are wholly provided by the employers. All collieries have medical men, mostly of the sub-assistant surgeon class, and have well equipped dispensaries. Groups of collieries have a senior medical officer. Some collieries have hospitals also, and all have isolation huts. All medical attendance is free. There are trained men for ambulance and first aid work.

(ii) There are no medical facilities provided by Government.

(iii) There is an excellent hospital with dispensary in Asansol town, aided by the municipality and the district board of Burdwan with a Government assistant surgeon in charge. Some colliery accident cases are sent to this hospital. The Asansol Mines Board of Health, which is maintained by cesses on collieries calculated on raisings and by cesses on royalty receivers, has a fully qualified health officer and a staff of qualified inspectors and assistants whose main duty it is to procure proper observance of the regulations and rules for general health and the prevention of epidemic diseases. Free vaccination is done by the vaccination staff of the board. Midwives employed by the board attend women at childbirth free of charge when called in or informed.

(iv) A few collieries are reported to employ dais or village midwives temporarily to look after their female labour for a week during the lying-in period.

The Asansol Mines Board of Health has a staff of three midwives whose work is to visit houses and give *ante* and *post natal* advice and assistance to women requiring it. This small staff is not able to render very much assistance beyond a limited area. It is worth considering whether maternity aid should be made one of the functions of the Board of Health under the Bengal Mining Settlements Act.

25. (i) Generally speaking, medical facilities are utilized freely by all labour. Only some of the outside recruited labour do not care about such facilities ; people like the Sonthals prefer to take their own herbs, and when these have no effect they go to the dispensary.

(ii) The above applies to women as well as men.

26. (i) There are no latrines at work places. There are specified places for fouling underground when necessary. Sweepers clean up or earth is put over the foul matter. There are no latrines at home, as already stated.

(ii) Running water is obtainable underground. There are wells for drinking water, as has already been stated.

(iii) Good tanks are provided for bathing purposes.

27. (i) The Asansol Mines Board of Health was appointed by the local Government for the Asansol Mining Settlement. The board consists of the following nine members :—Four *ex-officio* members—the district magistrate of Burdwan, the subdivisional officer of Asansol, the civil surgeon of Burdwan, and the chief inspector of mines in India ; four members nominated by owners of mines or their representatives ; one member nominated by receivers of royalties, rents or fines from mines.

The Board's sanitary staff consists of a fully qualified health officer called the chief sanitary officer, 6 sanitary inspectors, 13 sanitary assistants, 3 anti-malarial investigators, 3 midwives, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of school hygiene.

The following are the Board's outdoor activities :—(1) Notification of epidemics; (2) suppression of epidemics; (3) vaccination; (4) collection of vital statistics; (5) anti-malarial investigation; (6) provision of burning ghats and burial grounds; (7) improvement of water supplies; (8) lectures on elementary hygiene to school children; (9) medical inspection of school children; (10) provision for aid to women in childbirth; (11) education of the public on health, etc.; (12) miscellaneous.

The details of each of these items of work are given in the attached Statement K. The beneficial results of the work carried on by the Mines Board of Health are well known.

(ii) *Inspection of Plantations.*—All mines are regularly inspected by the chief sanitary officer and the Board's inspecting staff. Officers of the Department of Mines do not make special inspections regarding health, but during the course of their ordinary inspections note whether local government rules made under Section 30 of the Indian Mines Act are being observed.

29. (i) Industrial diseases are practically non-existent among the mine workers. There may be some cases of miners' nystagmus, but none have come to the notice of the managements or the health officers.

The number of cases of anæmia reported from collieries during the year 1928 was 13 and there were 9 deaths.

Accidents in 1928 and respiratory disease during that year have been shown in the attached Statement L.

(ii) The main work of the Mines Board of Health is to fight cholera and smallpox, which diseases occur from time to time in epidemic form. Cases of malaria have been considerably reduced by the activities of the Board's staff. The attached Statement M shows the number of cases of cholera, smallpox and malaria, and the number of deaths from cholera and smallpox for a period of ten years (1918 to 1927). This statement is for collieries only. As a large number of the workers live in the villages within the mining settlement, a similar statement for cholera and smallpox has been prepared and is attached (Statement N); only cases of these two diseases are reported and investigated by the Board's staff as far as the non-mining area is concerned.

The majority of the labour is infected with hookworm, but Ankylostomiasis as a result of it has been rarely reported. Hookworm is prevalent throughout all classes of labour in India, and is not confined to the mines. Kala-Azar is not known here.

Figures, as reported from the collieries, of cases of leprosy and filariasis, the other two tropical diseases common in the mining settlement, would be no criterion of their actual prevalence. There are a very large number of cases in this sub-division. It will not be out of place to mention that the leper asylum at Raniganj is doing excellent work to relieve and cure and care for sufferers from the dread disease of leprosy. This good work is limited for the want of funds.

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31. The collieries have no schemes for maternity benefits. The women usually go home. Some collieries pay 4 annas a day for subsistence while the woman is absent from work, but still on the colliery premises. Some collieries pay Re. 1 in the case of a male child and 8 annas in the case of a girl born on the colliery.

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There seems to be room for legislation to provide for a period of compulsory leave, the payment of a reasonable bonus or a daily subsistence allowance during the period of absence and also for adequate and expert attention. Provision for the last item is very necessary as the untrained local dais or village midwives frequently do a deal of harm by their unscientific and unclean methods.

V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

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34. (i) There are no provisions for refreshments and creches. Workers supply their own food. Most collieries allow a vendor of groceries to occupy one of their quarters for the convenience of the workers. There are Government liquor shops conveniently situated for most collieries. Unoccupied quarters are used as shelters.

(ii) and (iii) In a few collieries will be found a football field, a football club and a reading club. It is only the clerical staff that benefits by these. The miners may play football if they want to, but they apparently do not care about it, probably because they are bashful and backward to join in with the clerical staff and superior caste men. Nothing is done to induce or encourage the miners to participate in any form of healthy exercise or recreation. In one or two collieries there are attempts

at sports for feats of skill and strength. There is a story told that a manager once held some sports for miners and that when the village champion was defeated by a man of a rival village in one of the events there was a regular riot. That manager did not make another attempt at sports. The lack of education was responsible for the trouble.

The Mingah colliery, mentioned previously, is making provision for a good sports ground for the workmen. But this colliery has no use for the Sonthal labourer and employs other classes of labour.

35. The results achieved are nil as far as the miner is concerned. The clerks and some boys from schools which are given footballs occasionally and small donations by certain collieries, get a certain amount of exercise and recreation.

36. There are no provisions for educational facilities by employers. There is no such institution as a colliery school with the exception of one school or perhaps two schools. One of these schools was visited ; it was the Ghusick Colliery School. It was pleasing to find boys of only the poorer and lower classes at this school. The classes are accommodated in a building of the colliery. There are 51 boys, all of whom are sons of men working on the colliery, many being coal-cutters' sons.

There are village schools throughout the mining settlement and some of the miners' boys attend these schools. Some collieries pay Rs. 2 or more to some of these institutions. The Borera village has 29 boys and 4 girls, who read in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes ; 15 of them are miners' sons. The Boria colliery gives the school Rs. 2 a month. In the Jamuria School, on the other hand, only 2 boys are miners' sons of a total of some 40 boys. The Rai Sahib U.N. Mandal Primary School newly opened at Sanctoria, has some sirdars' sons, but 50 per cent. of the boys are the sons of colliery clerical and medical staffs.

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VI.—Education.

40. As has been stated above, there are village schools throughout the mining settlement. There are also middle schools and high schools in this area. There are 9 high English schools, 11 middle English schools, 180 primary schools (village schools), 45 Madrassahs and muktabs for Muhammadans, 3 tôls for Sanskrit, within the mining settlement. The boys of all classes of workers are at liberty to attend any of these schools.

41. There is one industrial school ; it is run by the mission at Ranigunge. Carpentry is taught.

42. Practically none of the workers are educated. Their standard of living and their industrial efficiency would certainly improve. The worker does not realize the necessity of improvement. As more machinery and improved methods of working are introduced and when the elimination of women from underground is complete, the worker must move with the times and improve himself. If he does not, the present class of labour will probably not find employment on the coalfields. In the present time, as has already been noted, one colliery has no use for the Sonthal.

The following true stories related by a colliery manager will show the necessity for, and the effect of, education. Both the incidents referred to in the stories occurred on his colliery. The manager, after some trouble, induced a miner to bring down a large quantity of coal by under-cutting and side-cutting and firing a few shots. The miner was very pleased to see the quantity of coal, but was worried about the loss he thought he would incur during the period of preparation prior to the coal coming down. The manager did his best to put his mind at rest on this point. Then the miner found it was impossible for his wife, who was working with him, to remove all that coal herself. The manager advised him to get others to assist in removing the coal. But the miner did not see the point of this at all, his contention was that no one beside his wife and himself should get any benefit from the coal which he had taken the trouble to bring down. Thereafter he would have nothing to do with this method of working, but went back to his old method of cutting and bringing down just enough coal for his wife to remove.

The other story is equally interesting. The manager had two Sonthal brothers who were young coal-cutters. They left him and went to a school. Some time later one of the boys returned. He was apparently taking a little more interest in himself as far as personal appearances went. He asked for work. The manager offered him the work of a coal-cutter. The young man refused this and said that he had bettered himself by going to school and was above cutting coal along with the uneducated people, and begged to be given some other work. The manager put him on to the electric pump and trained him to work it. He was very pleased to get that work and did very well. Moreover, he took a keen interest in all machinery, and used to watch the manager whenever the latter examined and attended to machinery.

There are indications that workers would welcome schools to which their children could be sent. Sonthals at a certain colliery headed by a man who had received a small education complained that there was no school in the vicinity of their colliery.

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IX.—Hours.

B.—Mines.

63. (i) Underground labour attend work from six to nine hours a day in most collieries by custom—some miners preferring to work at night and some during the day. Other labourers attend work from six to ten hours a day and surface labourers take a couple of hours off for meals. They work for about 50 hours a week. Outside labour work for longer hours.

(ii) The number of hours that a miner actually works is four or five; he is resting the rest of the time. He comes and goes when he likes. Other labour, such as enginemen, winding men, firemen, etc., are at work during the whole period of their attendance; but their work is intermittent.

(iii) Workers are on call only during the actual hours that they stay to work. The engineering staff is always on call in case of emergencies and accidents.

64. Underground workers work four to five days per week and the surface workers five to six days. Miners who do not stop on the colliery but live at their homes some distance away come to the mine two or three times a week and return home after doing double shifts.

65. The present restrictions are 54 hours for underground work and 60 hours for surface work; furthermore the mines are closed for one day in the week.

(i) Formerly a proportion of the miners used to come in and work daily, some resting one day and others another; but now the supervising staff, haulage staff, etc., have a day of rest. Labour do not appreciate the restrictions as more "actual" work has to be put in. Local labour living at a distance in some cases experience difficulty. But actually, on the whole, the effect of restrictions is practically nil, as the workers never worked for the full number of hours a week allowed them (i.e., 60 and 54 hours). Their earnings have not been reduced, but their attendances have not increased.

(ii) The industry has not suffered, and the output per man shift has not been adversely affected; as a matter of fact the output has risen. Machine coal-cutters are probably responsible for the increase in a measure.

In some cases expenditure may be increased to engage extra men; but on the other hand it is more economical to work a colliery for six days a week instead of seven days, since the same quantity of coal is raised in six days as in seven and the wages for the seventh day of trammers, haulage hands and others are saved.

66. As the miner never works the full period during which he is underground, the maxima could be reduced without adversely affecting the output. If the hours per week are reduced, the hours per day must necessarily be reduced also. This would necessitate the introduction of three shifts of eight hours each. The miner would have to improve his attendances and work for more days a week than he does at present. A reduction of the maxima would, however, hit the local non-resident miner living six to eight miles away. He would probably continue coming in two or three times as usual and work his double shifts each time by doing one shift in one mine and a second shift under another name in an adjoining mine.

67. The above applies to the introduction of shifts. As long as all the labour is not resident, it is considered undesirable and perhaps impossible to introduce a regular system of shifts. It must be remembered that the workers are primarily agriculturists, and those living at a distance would require a certain amount of elasticity of hours; they would not leave their homes to live on collieries. The workers being illiterate and undisciplined do not understand the necessity for punctuality. The advantages of a regular shift system are acknowledged, but it is generally felt that this is not the proper time to introduce it and that the law relating to shifts which limits the daily working hours to 12 is sufficient for the present.

It has yet to be seen what the effect of elimination of women from underground will be as it proceeds.

68. There is already a provision for daily limitation of hours to 12. The law on the subject will be in force in 1930. It is generally considered that it is neither desirable nor advisable to make any further limitation at present. What has been said above (*vide* (66)) applies here also. Regular shifts and the limitation of hours coming on top of the elimination of women from underground will turn most of the miners away from the collieries, as, they being ignorant, will not understand the object of new legislation and will not appreciate any advantages that may result.

69. (i) Workers take rest and intervals when they like. The miner underground spends a good deal of his time resting.

(ii) Two hours in the day (12 noon to 2 p.m.) are allowed for meals and rest. But the miners underground as a rule do not require or take an interval for meals ; they have a meal in the morning and another in the evening, to which they are accustomed.

(iii) All the festivals, all Sundays or days of rest, and generally the weekly market days are taken as holidays. The number of days of religious festivals and Sundays is 76 in the year. Miners take any day off they like. These holidays do not include the long periods taken for cultivation purposes and marriages.

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71. The existing provisions are considered suitable by all, as the rule *re* 12 hours' maximum shift is considered sufficient safeguard against the exploitation of labour. The number of hours per shift may be reduced later when the miners have become accustomed to working under the 12-hour rule. Some managers are wisely trying to regulate the coming on and going off of workers to get them accustomed to regular shifts. Punctuality has been achieved in certain cases, but labour from distant villages require some elasticity in hours.

72. The exempting provisions under Section 25 of the Indian Mines Act are considered quite adequate. Little use has been made of them when only the number of hours worked per week are restricted at present. The provision will be taken advantage of on more occasions of emergency and breakdowns when the hours worked per day are restricted.

X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

B.—Mines.

90. The Act of 1923 has been applied successfully and strictly. It has not diminished the number of women going underground. The elimination of children is generally considered a correct move. The provisions are rarely put into operation as the managers do not employ any child about whose age the inspector may have some doubt.

91. (i) The regulations are considered suitable for the object for which they are framed, but they should be extended to quarries where work done by women is often more arduous than in mines and not suited to women. It is feared in some quarters that State quarries will benefit at the expense of private concerns. The regulations are expected to improve the industry later.

(ii) The effect on industry will probably not be apparent for 2 or 3 years. A few smaller collieries are feeling the effect already, and consider the regulations neither desirable nor necessary. Collieries that have coal-cutting machines do not feel it. Modern methods of loading coal by machinery will be introduced by all well-equipped collieries and working systems will have to be modified to meet the new conditions. Mines that do not equip with modern devices will not be able to compete with those that do. There will be an increase in the cost of production and some shortage of labour for a while.

(iii) The miners, including women, are dissatisfied with the regulations. The miner will earn less and will demand an increase of wages. To make up the loss of the earnings of his wife he will have to be more regular and work harder. With the introduction of more up to date methods of mining the present-day class of miner will gradually disappear from the mines and will be replaced by quite a different class of miner, a class that is educated a bit and skilled. There will be a certain amount of hardship at first for families and especially for unattached women, but they will probably turn to tea gardens for an occupation.

(iv) It is generally considered that the time fixed is sufficient for the industry to adapt itself to the new conditions, but at the same time it is considered that the time should be much shorter, so that whatever dislocation there might be, may be faced and overcome as soon as possible.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The average daily earnings in the mine field of this sub-division during the year 1927, will be found on page 5 of the annual report of the chief inspector of mines in India for 1927. The earnings in 1928, were more or less the same, there being a decrease in the case of some classes of labour and a slight increase for other classes.

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99. All payments are in cash. Besides, wage-workers are given free houses, coal, oil, tools and medical attendance. They also receive " baksheesh " on occasions of festivals, and an allowance for grog for a birth or a death in a family. Some receive extra rates for special days, Mondays. On some mines settled labourers are given land free of rent or a donation in lieu thereof.

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109. There are no bonus or profit-sharing schemes in force. Varying commissions are paid for good work by most collieries ; the miner, for instance, in some collieries is paid at the end of the week 9 pies per ton on the coal cut by him. The supervising staff of some collieries receive a bonus at the end of the year.

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XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. The subordinate supervising staff is now more efficient through the added requirements of the law relating to mines and through additional educational facilities provided. There has been a marked improvement in the last 10 years in the efficiency of skilled Indian workers, such as enginemen, pumpmen, mechanics and electricians.

There has been no change in the mine workers due to their objection to, and disregard for, more scientific methods of coal-cutting. They have no sense of personal duty or responsibility. Statistics show a gradual increase in the output per person employed in Indian coal mines, but the improvement is due to the greater use of coal-cutting machinery, and the large outputs won from recently developed open quarries. No increase is apparent in comparatively deep mines.

113. The mine worker in India is lazy and considerably less efficient and skilful than those in other countries. The worker here has immense possibilities of producing large outputs provided by the nature and the comfortable working conditions that obtain generally underground, but the worker is inefficient, suspicious of innovations and reluctant to try new methods of mining. His prolonged absences for agricultural purposes, his insistence on observing innumerable feasts and ceremonies, his low vitality, his lack of ambition and his laziness, all effect the efficiency of the Indian mine worker. The only foreign worker found here is the Chinese carpenter who is far superior to any Indian carpenter.

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Statement F.—Labour Turnover.

Average normal staff and recruitments in certain selected collieries.

Colliery.	Annual normal staff.		Number recruited in the year.			
			Burdwan district.		Other districts.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
Joyramdanga	235 (Permanent force). 100 (Recruited).	165 (Permanent force). 50 (Recruited).	60	30	140	70
Victoria	884	381	Nil.	Nil.	269	174
Central Kajora	210	106	80	75	325	200
Jote Dhemo	187	115	50	45	463	241
Searsole	166	64	100	50	260	150
Kuardi	60 per cent.	40 per cent.	Nil.	Nil.	75 per cent.	25 per cent.
Jambad	203	48	159 (male and female).		411 (male and female).	
Sodepur, pits 9 and 10 / Sitalpur .. .. / Choto Dhemo ..	2,450 (male and female).		3,384 (male and female, all localities).			

Statement G.

Casual employment during a year in certain selected collieries.

Colliery.	Number of workers on casual employment.
Dishergarh	A very small number every year. A few are employed for brick making, hut repairing, and earth cutting.
Aldih	
Joyramdanga	Twenty persons for periods varying between 1 week and 3 or 4 months.
Victoria	Less than 1 per cent.
Sodepur, pits 9 and 10 ..	Approximately 1 per cent. of the whole labour.
Sitalpur	
Choto Dhemo	
Central Kajora	53 persons.
Jote Dhemo	15 males and 25 females.
Kuardi	3 per cent. of the whole labour.
Jambad	About 250. Several new quarters are being constructed.
Searsole	10 males and 25 females.
Jamuria	30 or 40 persons.
Sibpore	Very little.
Bara Dhemo	Ditto.

Statement H.

Houses provided by employers at collieries and by workers in their villages.

Colliery.	By employers. Per cent.	By workers. Per cent.
Dishergarh	85	15
Aldih	80	20
Victoria	95	5
Sodepur, pits 9 and 10..	90	10
Sitalpur	90 about	10 about
Choto Dhemo	90	10
Central Kajora	86	14
Kuardi	50	50
Jambad	95	5
Searsole	80	20
Jamuria	100	Nil.
Sibpore	100	Nil.
Bara Dhemo	73	27

Statement I.

Showing different types of houses and the number of each type in certain selected collieries.

Colliery.	Roof.				Walls.			Floor.	
	Thatched.	Tiled.	Pucca.	Corrugated.	Cutcha.	Pucca.	Cutcha-pucca	Cutcha.	Pucca.
Dishergarh ..	800	150	40	Nil.	800	40	150	950	40
Aldih	238	164	26	Nil.	238	26	164	428	Nil.
Joyramdanga ..	50	12	20	Nil.	50	32	Nil.	62	20
Sodepur, pits 9 and 10.	150	200	140	Nil.	100	Nil.	390	490	Nil.
Sitalpur ..	364	170	87	Nil.	364	257	Nil.	621	Nil.
Choto Dhemo ..	180	40	Nil.	Nil.	180	Nil.	40	220	Nil.
Central Kajora	20	42	Nil.	4	Nil.	Nil.	66	48	18
Jote Dhemo ..	35	36	Nil.	31	Nil.	Nil.	102	All but few cutcha.	
Kuardi... ..	177	100	30	Nil.	30	277	Nil.	277	30
Jambad ..	9	99	50	28	Nil.	50	136	All but few cutcha.	
Searsole ..	5	113	Nil.	5	5	Nil.	118	123	Nil.
Jamuria ..	600	45	21	Nil.	600	66	Nil.	600	66
Sibpore.. ..	692	280	Nil.	70	692	350	Nil.	942	100
Bara Dhemo ..	50	130	Nil.	16	50	Nil.	146	196	Nil.

Statement J.

Birth rate and infant mortality for ten years in the Asansol Mining Settlement.

Year.	Birth rate per 1,000.	Infant mortality per 1,000.
1918	28·6	169
1919	23·6	141
1920	25·3	147
1921	25·1	171
1922	28·0	146
1923	26·1	154
1924	26·0	146
1925	28·9	117
1926	27·7	137
1927	24·2	133
Average for 10 years	26·3	146·1

Statement K.

Extent and nature of work done by the Asansol Mines Board of Health.

1. *Notification of epidemics.*—The chief epidemic diseases in the settlement are cholera and small-pox. Under the regulations for the prevention and control of these diseases as formulated in the Bengal Mining Settlements Act—(*a*) it is incumbent on the owner, agent, or the manager in the colliery areas to immediately notify the occurrences of cases of either disease by sending a special messenger with notification to the nearest member of the Board's outdoor staff; (*b*) it devolves on the male member of a house in the non-mining areas to notify within 24 hours either personally or by the village choukidar the occurrence of cases of either disease.

Prompt notification and location of cases are further facilitated (1) by the reward of Re. 1 which is given for supplying first information of the occurrence of these cases, (2) by supplying choukidars with coloured printed cards—red for notifying cases of cholera and blue for notifying cases of small-pox—with the name of choukidar entered on the card by the assistant, the location of the case becoming easy even if the assistant is out on his round and the choukidar is thus unable to report to him verbally as the card is left behind, and (3) by making it compulsory for medical men to notify immediately those cases which they attend.

2. *Suppression of epidemics.*—The spread of cholera is prevented by the closing and chlorination of contaminated water courses and by guarding drinking water supplies, by the disinfection of the patient's dejecta and by the systematic administration of the prophylactic the Essential Oils Cholera Mixture to all house contacts.

In the case of small-pox besides isolation of the patient—possible only on collieries —wholesale vaccinations and re-vaccinations of the contacts and those residing in the neighbourhood successfully check all outbreaks, mild or severe.

3. *Vaccination.*—All children born within the mining settlement have to be successfully vaccinated by the sanitary assistant before the age of 1 year. The sanitary assistant maintains for this purpose a register in which the births of all children in his circle are recorded week by week, village by village, he being the officially declared birth registrar of the area.

4. *Collection of vital statistics.*—The vital statistics are collected by the sanitary assistants through the village chukidars during the weekly choukidari parade held at the police station. The assistant verifies these occurrences during the week by

personally visiting the villages. He also makes enquiries in each village in his area, which he usually visits once a month, regarding any births or deaths which may not have been reported by the choukidar. A permanent register of corrected returns of births and deaths is maintained by the sanitary assistant, who submits copies of it weekly to the Board's office, thus making the preparation of a consolidated return for the whole settlement possible.

5. *Anti-malarial investigation.*—Throughout the malarious season of the year when any outbreak of fever is reported the anti-malarial investigator is sent to the area to ascertain the splenic index and to examine all tanks and water courses in and around the area with a view to discover which of them is infested with malaria carrying Anopheline larvæ. Clearing of such tanks of weeds either by the well-to-do owners at the request of the chief sanitary officer or by the Board has led to the subsidence of fever and usually to very satisfactory results.

6. *Provision of burning ghats and burial grounds.*—Before the establishment of the Board cholera was frequently spread in the settlement by contamination of the rivers, as corpses of those who died of cholera were buried in the river bed sand or thrown uncremated or partially cremated into the streams. The Board, being so empowered under the Act, selected the most suitable of the existing sites commonly used as cremation grounds—burning ghats—in the settlement and gave them "recognition" and closed the remainder. These burning ghats are kept in sanitary order by the sanitary assistants with a staff of Domes employed by the Board. It is the duty of the latter to see that all bodies are thoroughly cremated or effectively buried. The cost of such cremation of cholera corpses has sometimes to be borne by the Board to prevent contamination of water courses.

7. *Improvement of water-supplies.*—(*a*) The chief sanitary officer recommends the most sanitary sites for wells which the local board wish to excavate in the villages in the mining area. More than half the villages now possess local board wells. These wells, besides being inspected by local board officers are regularly inspected by the staff of the Mines Board of Health, who report on their condition.

(*b*) Recommendation for the construction of wells for the provision of drinking water on the collieries is made to the management by the chief sanitary officer. The construction of such wells has to conform to the standard sanitary plan laid down by the Board. The Mines Board does not contribute anything towards the cost of construction or maintenance of either these wells or the local board wells.

(*c*) During the epidemic season tanks are reserved with the consent of the owners for drinking or bathing purposes, and contaminated water supplies are sterilized and guarded at the board's expense.

8. *Lectures on elementary hygiene to school children.*—These lectures are delivered weekly by the sanitary assistant in the primary schools of his circle. A primer on elementary hygiene in simple language compiled by the chief sanitary officer is distributed free to all scholars. The pupils are periodically examined on the subject-matter of the primer and prizes are distributed annually to the boy or girl in each school who is best acquainted with the subject.

9. *Medical inspection of school children.*—A qualified Sub-Assistant Surgeon is employed for this purpose. Common defects of children of the school-going age in the settlement are thus ascertained. In the case of a child being found defective a report is sent to the guardian suggesting the remedy, which is not infrequently profited by when the guardian is literate.

10. *Provision for aid to women in childbirth.*—A staff of three midwives is maintained by the Board. No charges are made. The work of the midwives lies almost entirely among the colliery population. They visit houses and give *ante* and *post natal* advice and assistance to women requiring it.

11. *Education of the public on health, etc.*—(*a*) During the cold weather and time of epidemic, lectures on public health illustrated by magic-lantern slides are delivered by the sanitary inspectors.

(*b*) The midwives when visiting the houses of women deliver simple lectures on domestic hygiene and cleanliness.

(*c*) Baby shows are held annually in selected places.

12. *Miscellaneous.*—(*a*) Sanitary precautions are taken by the Board's staff at annual fairs and festivals in the settlement.

(*b*) The Board's inspecting staff looks into the sanitary conditions of the pachwai shops and recommends improvements when necessary.

Statement L.

Name of month.	Respiratory diseases.										Accidents.	
	Influenza.		Pneumonia.		Bronchitis.		Phthisis.		Total.			
	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.
1928.												
January	53	—	41	13	254	7	2	1	350	21	405	3
February	171	—	65	20	314	7	2	1	552	28	475	1
March	484	—	90	31	336	7	2	1	912	39	417	5
April	296	—	83	27	229	4	3	2	611	33	389	4
May	65	—	53	27	181	3	7	4	306	34	345	7
June	32	—	35	11	168	1	2	1	237	13	430	2
July	61	1	32	12	232	7	2	1	327	21	264	—
August	134	—	40	14	257	4	5	1	436	19	304	3
September ..	202	—	22	9	104	2	2	1	330	12	233	1
October	442	—	57	15	308	4	3	—	810	19	336	9
November	8	—	38	14	232	1	2	2	280	17	272	1
December	32	—	51	18	182	3	3	2	268	23	247	3
Total ..	1,980	1	607	211	2,797	50	35	17	5,419	279	4,117	39

Statement M.

Showing the number of cases and deaths from cholera, small-pox and malaria in the mining area.

Year.	Cholera.		Small-pox.		Malaria.
	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.
1918	182	82	29	4	20,865
1919	1,849	949	73	2	27,066
1920	113	45	201	14	21,440
1921	260	119	22	2	21,704
1922	99	46	24	—	23,982
1923	112	60	11	—	20,769
1924	205	115	17	3	20,549
1925	51	22	76	6	13,089
1926	247	162	684	65	9,640
1927	75	30	126	11	9,475

Statement N.

Showing the number of cholera and small-pox cases and deaths in the non-mining area.

Year.	Cholera.		Small-pox.	
	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.
1918	260	143	51	3
1919	1,662	852	125	11
1920	255	125	594	51
1921	990	498	52	8
1922	252	123	28	—
1923	233	123	43	5
1924	330	202	58	7
1925	143	67	586	77
1926	744	408	1,053	131
1927	213	90	416	61

INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (BENGAL PROVINCIAL BRANCH).

(The Welfare Department of the Society is affiliated to the Bengal Council of Women.)

V.—Welfare.

32. The Titaghur Mills Welfare Centre has functioned since 1924.

Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co. established a welfare centre at their Kankinarrah Jute Mills in 1926.

The Reliance Mill Welfare Centre was opened on 15th October, 1929.

The plans of a Model Bustie Welfare Centre have been approved, which Messrs. Bird & Co. will erect in connection with their " Kinnison " and " Standard " Mills at Titaghur, in the near future.

The advantage of the Bustie clinics.—It will be a building of the same type as the homes of the employees, and the people will be shown that it is possible to keep them clean and sanitary, which is so important in maintaining health. It is anticipated that the Bustie Clinic will be the type used by mills where the employees live outside the mill lines.

These welfare centres are run under the auspices of the Bengal Branch Red Cross Health Welfare Division.

The Kesoram Mills Management is contemplating a welfare centre.

The Dacca Maternity Trust has carried on maternity and child welfare work since the end of the war.

Darjeeling Welfare Centre has functioned since 1924.

Under the Health Welfare Division of the Bengal Provincial Branch, Indian Red Cross Society, the following welfare centres function in Calcutta :—The St. John Ambulance Sisters' Clinic for Anglo-Indians, since March, 1921 ; The National Indian Association Clinic since May, 1921 ; The Northern Centre Clinic since March, 1922 ; The Kidderpore Centre since December, 1922 ; The Entally Clinic since July, 1923.

In the Mofussil Districts.—Orakandi Welfare Centre opened March, 1929 ; Chapra Welfare Centre will start January, 1930 ; Ratanpore Welfare Centre will start January, 1930.

33. These welfare centres are conducted by qualified health visitors.

34. The women and children attend the welfare centres and clinics. The former are advised as to the proper feeding of and rearing their children ; childish ailments are treated, anything more serious is referred to the mills medical officer. The children are bathed. Sewing classes are held for women and children. The women are visited in their lines and are advised on the best way of keeping their homes clean and food protected.

The very important subject of ante-natal care has special attention. All child-bearing women are examined and advised as to the best way of maintaining their health in their condition. These women receive maternity benefit, i.e., receive pay, but are exempted from work for four weeks after confinement.

The instruction of indigenous Dais is an important part of the work. Classes are held and these Dais instructed in the best and most sanitary methods of conducting confinements.

VII.—Safety.

46. The Bengal Provincial Branch, St. John Ambulance Association, carries out extensive propaganda by the means of instruction to the employees of mines, railways, docks, tramways, etc., and the general public in " First Aid " and prevention of accidents.

Mr. W. J. HERRIDGE, MANAGER, CALCUTTA CLAIMS BUREAU, CALCUTTA, ON WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

I give evidence on behalf of (1) the Calcutta Claims Bureau, of which I am manager ; (2) the Calcutta Accident Insurance Association ; and (3) the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

. . . . . .

The Calcutta Claims Bureau was set up by most of the leading insurance companies in the Calcutta area, with effect from 1st July, 1924, especially to handle Workmen's Compensation claims on behalf of employers who insure their liability to pay compensation under the Act with those companies.

51. (i) *Extent of use.*—The Act is now fairly generally known in all the larger industrial areas throughout the country, but is still unknown to workmen and employers in most of the less important areas and in rural areas in the mofussil. Experience shows that the Act is made greater use of in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras which have, with certain minor exceptions in the case of Bombay, appointed one official as commissioner for the whole Presidency whereas, in the other Provinces, the district official is usually the commissioner appointed under the Act in his local jurisdiction. Thus, the appointment of a single official for the Presidency as a whole has done much to make the Act better known, more capably administered, and reduce to a considerable extent delay in the disposal of cases. The appointment of such an official is, therefore, much to be commended.

Trade union officials, where trade unions exist, notably in the jute mill and engineering industries locally around Calcutta, and legal practitioners, particularly in the Ranigunge and Jharia coalfields, have been active in filing claims on behalf of their members or clients, as the case may be, in the last two years, and this has given the Act wide publicity. Again, the increasingly large number of workmen who have received or claimed compensation under the Act, most of whom have at some time or other appeared personally before the commissioner, has been responsible for the spread of knowledge that the Act is in existence.

Generally speaking, however, it may be said that workmen employed in isolated areas in the mofussil, such as employees in cotton gins and presses, rice mills, oil mills, printing presses, workmen on buildings and employees of small indigenous colliery concerns do not make use of the Act owing to their ignorance of it.

(ii) *Comparison with extent of possible claims.*—The following table, published in the Fifth Report of the working of the Calcutta Claims Bureau, containing details of the total accidents reported and registered year by year since the commencement of the Act, shows that, with the exception of the year 1927–28, the percentage of cases in which compensation has been paid to the total number of possible claims has steadily increased, while, on the other hand, the percentage of cases filed as " no claim " has steadily decreased :—

Claims disposed of by years.

Year.	Claims reported.	Compensation paid.		Filed as " No Claim."		Outstanding on 31st Dec., 1928.*	
		Number.	Per-centage.	Number.	Per-centage.	Number.	Per-centage.
1924–25 ..	1,901	717	38·0	1,184	62·0	—	—
1925–26 ..	2,295	914	40·0	1,381	60·0	—	—
1926–27 ..	2,878	1,279	44·0	1,599	56·0	—	—
1927–28* ..	5,181	1,802	34·8	3,363	64·9	16	0·3
1st July to 31st December, 1928	2,593	586	22·0	1,476	57·0	531	21·0
1924–28 combined.	14,848	5,298	36·0	9,003	60·0	547	4·0

The proportion of cases in which compensation is paid to the number of possible claims will continue to increase, year by year, in future.

The number of claims shown in the " claims reported " column in the above table includes *all accident cases reported however trivial they may have been* as the principle adopted in the insurance of risks is that every accident is reported to the insurance company. Thus, the numbers of claims shown to have been filed as " no claim " include also those cases in which the disablement did not exceed the " waiting period " of 10 days and in which no compensation was, therefore, legally due.

*This year was abnormal owing to a large increase in the number of trivial accidents reported by a certain new concern.

Taking the total figures for the period 1st July, 1924, to 31st December, 1928, during which 14,848 accidents were reported, the following shows, approximately, the disposal of the cases :—

(i) Cases in which full compensation was paid ..	36 per cent.
(ii) Cases in which no compensation was due (disablement less than 10 days)	40 ,,
(iii) Cases filed as " no claim " owing to denial of liability, cases contested and won, workmen returning to their villages without notice, " time-barred," etc.	20 ,,
(iv) Pending	4 ,,
Total	100 ,,

(iii) *Effects on industry.*—Whilst the cost of paying claims under the Act has fallen directly upon industry, in both insured and uninsured risks, the cost has been insignificant as compared with the total cost of production.

Insured employers have little or no increased work under the Act as they are advised regarding the disposal of every claim. In the case of the companies connected with the bureau, the procedure adopted is briefly as follows :—

Insured employers report all accidents occurring in their establishments, on special claim forms supplied for the purpose, to the insurance company concerned which, in turn, forwards these reports to the bureau. The bureau then corresponds direct with the employer and advises him as to the disposal of every claim, authorises payment of the correct amounts of compensation, registers agreements, arranges for examination and special treatment of injured workmen, appears before the commissioner whenever necessary on behalf of the employer, and, in short, does everything which is necessary to be done by the employer to comply with the provisions of the Act until the claim is finally settled. The papers of the claim are then returned to the insurance company and the insured is reimbursed for the total amount of compensation paid and all other expenses incurred in the claim.

Uninsured employers, therefore, have more responsibility under the Act, especially as regards procedure: The compensation payable for a single serious accident to an employee may involve payment of a very large sum and consequential heavy loss, especially in the case of small employers, and it is the latter class of employers who appear to evade liability under the Act.

(iv) *Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.*—All the leading insurance companies operating in India conduct workmen's compensation insurance business and from time to time have advertised freely in the press or by special pamphlet their willingness to accept the responsibility imposed on employers of labour under the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act, at a consideration. In addition, the respective companies are represented by agents in all parts of the country and the facilities for all employers of labour to obtain the protection and the security offered by the insurance companies are present if those employers wish to avail themselves of them. However, a very large number of small employers have not protected themselves by effecting insurance.

In view of Section 14 of the Act, insurance by the employer of his liability is the only sure guarantee of payment of compensation to the injured worker, especially during times of trade depression. Moreover, the insured employer has the advantage of the experience of the insurance company, or its organization, in the handling of the claims and the injured worker in such cases gets an equitable and speedy settlement. In other cases, arrangements are made for special treatment, wherever necessary, thereby conferring greater benefits on workers than would otherwise be the case. Moreover, the principle adopted by all insurance companies from the outset has been to pay compensation to injured workers automatically when, in their opinion, liability to pay such compensation appears to be clear. The injured worker's claim is, therefore, settled without recourse to legal proceedings in the vast majority of cases which is not the case in uninsured concerns.

(v) *Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.*—Any scheme of compulsory insurance, at any rate in the case of unorganized industries, would, however, be attended with serious administrative difficulties. So far as organized industries are concerned, compulsory insurance is neither necessary nor desirable. Very few large employers are uninsured. The one or two large employers of labour who are not insured have established their own funds to meet compensation claims. It would be undesirable to compel such employers to insure merely because smaller employers

have not insured or may be unable to meet claims. No departure from the voluntary system of insurance as in England, which was favourably commented upon by the Holman-Gregory Committee of Enquiry in 1920 in that country, is called for. The same committee reported against the advisability of any scheme of state insurance and such a scheme is neither desirable nor necessary in India.

The interval between the occurrence of an accident and the injured workman making a claim to compensation is short. This interval will be reduced as the Act becomes better known. There will normally, be little possibility of the employer becoming insolvent in the meantime. Some protection should, however, be given to the dependants of a deceased workman to ensure that they institute their claims as soon as possible after the accident. To this end, a practical course, which would not impose an unbearable burden upon employers, would be to compel them to submit a report to the workmen's compensation commissioner of their district of every fatal accident ; this report should be submitted at the time of submitting the usual report to the inspector of factories or mines or the police. The initial report should be followed at an interval of, say, not more than one month, by a supplementary statement as to whether liability to pay compensation in respect of the accident is admitted or not.

52. *Desirability of extending Act to other occupations.*—No great extension of the scope of the Act is at present possible if the principle of including only those persons employed in industries which are both organized and hazardous is adhered to. It is certainly neither practicable nor desirable to extend the Act to include all classes of manual labourers, as in the case of England and other countries more highly industrially developed than India. Workmen employed in unorganized industries, particularly rural labour, cannot be brought within the scope of the Act. The Act might, however, gradually be extended to all workmen in branches of industries which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension, and little difficulty would now be experienced in extending Schedule II to cover the following :—(*a*) Workmen employed by public bodies such as corporations and municipalities, or their contractors, in road-repairing work and scavenging. (*b*) Workmen employed in earthworks and excavations exceeding 20 ft. below the level of the surrounding surface, as opposed to excavations for the purpose of searching for or obtaining minerals. This would bring within the purview of the Act such work as the construction of docks and/or harbours. (*c*) Members of crews of inland steam vessels, as defined in section 2 of the Inland Steam Vessels Act, of registered tonnage of less than 100 tons. (*d*) Durwans, peons, bearers and messengers in the employ of the Government of India, local governments, municipalities, local bodies and registered companies when employed within the limits of a municipality or corporation. (*e*) Workmen employed in laying down, taking up, repairing or maintaining any underground telegraph or telephone lines or electric cables and in electric sub-stations.

At present Indian seamen employed on ships not registered under any Act in India are not, strictly speaking, covered under the Act, but most shipping companies operating in India have by a special agreement agreed to pay compensation to such seamen under the terms of the Act, which agreement is entered on the articles of the crew. The shipping companies have honoured the terms of the agreement and paid compensation to Indian seamen injured on their ships but it is within the rights of these companies to withhold payment of compensation in certain cases, especially in the case of death. In fact, the agreement does not apply to the dependants of Indian seamen at all as they are not parties to it. I appreciate that this question involves certain international difficulties but I consider it deserves the attention of the Government of India as it is necessary to see if some steps can be taken to mitigate the existing hardship to Indian seamen and their dependants.

Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers who might be so covered.—The same remarks as contained in the reply to Item 51 (v) apply here. These classes of workmen referred to above, in respect of whom Schedule II might be extended, are all employees in organized industries, or of large employers of labour, and are not likely to sustain any loss owing to insolvency of their employers.

53. *Suitability of provisions relating to*—(i) *Scales of compensation.*—The adoption of the principle underlying the recommendation of the Seventh International Labour Conference regarding the minimum scales of compensation would involve a considerable enhancement of the existing scales. The present scales of compensation are reasonably adequate and should not be enhanced either for the more poorly paid workmen or for workmen generally. The scales of compensation for death and permanent disablement are on a liberal basis. In the case of temporary disablement, the amount of compensation provided is sufficient to maintain a workman during his disablement. A suggestion to reduce the present waiting period is referred to later. If the scales for temporary disablement were increased, one of the greatest safeguards to the employer against malingering would be removed. With the standards of

living as they are at present in this country, and as they are likely to remain for a considerable time to come, the temptation will be in favour of resting as long as there is no incentive, such as need of funds, to bring a man back to work.

(ii) *Conditions governing grant of compensation.*—These are generally suitable and no changes in the underlying principles of the provisions governing the grant of compensation should be introduced until longer experience is obtained of actual working conditions. Any radical amendments, which tend to complicate the settlement of claims, will have an important bearing on the ultimate cost to the employer. It is, therefore, highly undesirable to introduce many radical changes at a single step. The present Act, since its introduction in July, 1924, has worked remarkably smoothly, but it is still premature to gauge the effect of material changes until more experience is gained.

There is, however, some case for the " waiting period " to be reduced as the present period of ten days, combined with payment of only half wages, causes some hardship. Any principle of " dating back " in India is, owing to the strong temptation to malinger, most undesirable, but the disadvantage to the workman of the present period of ten days can be mitigated by reducing it to seven days. This reduction of three days would involve an increase of about 25 per cent. in the number of possible cases and an increase of about 10 per cent. in the average cost of all cases of temporary disablement. The change would not cause any administrative difficulty, as all large employers are fully acquainted with the method of payment of compensation for temporary disablement and it is, without doubt, more desirable to effect such a change than to introduce any principle of " dating back."

(iii) *Industrial diseases.*—The Act at present covers the industrial diseases of lead and phosphorus poisoning (and sequelae) and anthrax for workmen employed in occupations in which these diseases occur. So far as I am aware, not a single case of anthrax or phosphorus poisoning has come to notice. Compensation has been paid for a number of cases of lead poisoning. The existence of industrial diseases, other than those specified, is almost unknown and there is no necessity to increase the present list.

(iv) *Machinery of administration (a)—Wholetime Commissioners.*—The Local Governments of Bengal, Bombay and Madras have appointed one official as commissioner under the Act for the whole Province (in the case of Bombay for all important industrial areas) but in other Provinces, district magistrates or, in the case of the Central Provinces, district and sessions judges have been appointed commissioners in their respective districts. In view of the material changes in the Act likely to be effected in the near future and the growing complexity of the handling and disposal of claims, it now appears desirable that one commissioner should be appointed for those Provinces in which no single commissioner at present exists. The disadvantages of the present system of appointing district officials as commissioners are briefly as follows :—(1) Hardship caused by delay in the disposal of cases ; (2) Inconvenience to the parties ; (3) Absence of an expert commissioner acquainted with workmen's compensation law ; and (4) The undesirability of an executive officer being called upon to adjudicate in contested claims.

Experience shows that district officials are, generally speaking, already fully occupied with a large volume of other judicial and executive work and are not able rapidly to dispose of the cases which come before them. Such officials are not available for consultation with employers' and workmen's representatives and, in view of pressure of other work, workmen's compensation cases are, not infrequently, protracted by numerous postponements. Moreover, these district officials' courts are not adequately equipped with clerical staff and other appliances necessary for the speedy handling of claims and the correspondence connected therewith.

With regard to inconvenience to the parties, factory and colliery managers and other important officials are frequently detained at courts much longer than should be necessary. It is undesirable that the official appointed commissioner for the administration of the Act should be the same person who is liable to be called upon at any time to hold an official enquiry, in executive capacity under the orders of the local Government, into the circumstances of an accident.

(b) *Medical Referees.*—The time has come when a Medical Referee for each important industrial district or Province as a whole should also be appointed. The appointment of such a medical referee would eliminate a number of the contested cases which now arise owing to differences of opinion between the medical advisers of workmen and employers. The likelihood is that the opinion of an entirely impartial medical officer, in the capacity of a medical referee, would generally be accepted by both parties without question.

(v) *Other Matters—(a) Suits for recovery of full wages for period of disablement due to accident.*—A case has recently arisen in Calcutta in which a workman, who has already been paid full lump a sum compensation for the loss of sight of an eye, i.e.

30 per cent. loss in earning capacity under Schedule I, has instituted a suit for recovery of full wages from his employer during the period of his incapacity prior to receipt of the lump sum as compensation on the grounds that throughout the period he was under treatment prior to the lump sum settlement, the relations of master and servant still subsisted. The injured workman was not paid any half-monthly compensation prior to the receipt of the lump sum. Had any such payment been made, it could have been deducted from the lump sum under the proviso to Section 4 (1) D. During the period of disablement in respect of which the worker claimed full wages, he was not working in any capacity but was temporarily totally disabled and receiving treatment for his injured eye.

It was not intended that a workman should be able to claim full wages for temporary disablement in addition to compensation as laid down in the Workmen's Compensation Act In England, it has been held that absence from work due to illness or incapacity by accident does not terminate the contract of service, neither does the receipt of compensation terminate the service. It has, however, been held that " a workman who has received or is receiving compensation cannot sue for any of his wages during the period of incapacity " (Elliott *v.* Liggens (1902) 2. K. B. 84).

To prevent the possibility of such suits being instituted and the employer being put to much inconvenience and expense, they should be declared not maintainable in any civil court. An amendment to this effect should follow Section 3 (5) of the present Act, which precludes a workman from instituting a civil suit for damages in respect of an injury against the employer or any other person if he has instituted a claim for compensation in respect of the injury before a commissioner and *vice versa*.

The suggested addition to Section 3 should be as follows :—" After Section 3 (5) the following new sub-section should be added :—Where a workman is in receipt of, or has received compensation, either for temporary total or permanent disablement, as laid down in this Act, no suit for recovery of his ordinary wages in respect of the period of temporary total disablement, or for the period he is unable to obtain work as a result of his disablement, prior to or after receipt of a lump sum as compensation, shall be maintainable in any Court of Law."

(*b*) *Computation of wages in the case of casual labour.*—It is necessary to insert an amendment to Section 5 to facilitate the calculation of monthly wages where the workman has been in the service of the employer only for a short period. Such a suitable amendment was included in Bill No. 26 of 1928, published by the Government of India in the *Gazette of India* dated September 8th, 1928, but, for some unaccountable reason, when the Bill was passed into law and became Act V of 1929, the proposed addition was completely dropped.

The following proposed amendment to Section 5, which follows that originally proposed in Bill No. 26 of 1928, should be made :—

" In sub-section (1) of Section 5, Clause (*b*) shall be re-lettered as Clause (*c*) and after Clause (*a*) the following new clause shall be inserted, namely :—

" (*b*) Where the workman has been in the service of the employer during a continuous period of less than one month immediately preceding the accident, his monthly wages shall be deemed to be the average monthly amount which, during the twelve months immediately preceding the accident, was being earned by a workman employed on the same work by the same employer or, if there was no person so employed, by a workman employed on similar work in the same locality."

The following further slight change will be necessary to give effect to the above :—

" In the proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 5, for the words and letters ' Clause *a*) or Clause (*b*),' the words, this sub-section, shall be substituted."

54. *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers' Liability Act,* 1880.—The original Workmen's Compensation Bill presented to the Legislative Assembly on 13th September, 1922, contained a chapter (Chapter II) relating to Employers' Liability, which closely followed the provisions of the English Employers' Liability Act, 1880 (Sections 1 and 2). The latter Act, whilst providing for the payment of damages in respect of proved negligence, abolished the defences of " Common Employment " and " Assumed Risk " for certain classes of workmen, established by the famous case of Priestley *v.* Fowler (1837) in which the maxim *volenti non fit injuria* (injury cannot be done to a person who willingly incurs the risk) was applied. Clause 3 of the draft Bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly was designed to remove the defence of " Common Employment " and Clause 4 the defence of " Assumed Risk." Clause 5 laid down the period in which the claim could be made. No mention was made of any scales of compensation recoverable. The compensation recoverable under the Employers' Liability Act of 1880 is a sum not exceeding the earnings during the three years preceding the accident. No scale of weekly compensation is provided. The damages are payable in one lump sum.

The Joint Committee of the Indian Legislature, appointed to consider the Bill and replies received from bodies thereon, stated in paragraph 3 of their report :—

"Perhaps the most important alteration which we have made in the Bill is the elimination of the provisions relating to employers' liability. The majority of us are not satisfied that it is either necessary or wise to retain these provisions in the Bill. It has not been demonstrated to our satisfaction that the Courts in India will apply the judge-made doctrines of common employment and assumed risk. If these doctrines are accepted by the Courts in India, legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880 (43 and 44 Vic. cap 42), will have to be considered. But in that event the defences of common employment and assumed risk, if they are regarded as inequitable, should be removed not merely for the very limited classes of workmen to whom this Bill will apply, but for all workmen. On the whole, therefore, we are of opinion that it is wiser to restrict the scope of the present Bill to Workmen's Compensation and to avoid anticipating a difficulty which may not arise, and for which the Bill, as drafted, contained only a partial remedy."

The chapter relating to employers' liability was, therefore, completely dropped. The experience gained in the period the Act has been in operation still does not warrant the inclusion of any such provisions. As pointed out by the Joint Committee, if the defences of "Common Employment" and "Assumed Risk" are accepted by Courts in India they should be removed for all workmen. There is absolutely no case for this to be done at the present stage.

The compensation payable in respect of the death of a workman under the Indian Act is thirty times the "assumed wages," and that for permanent total disablement forty-two times the "assumed wages." The introduction, therefore, of any scale of compensation or damages similar to that of the Employers' Liability Act of 1880 will confer no greater benefit upon workmen in India than they at present enjoy under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The present Act has been in operation for just over five years, and as it is still in its infancy it is highly undesirable to consider such a drastic change which may introduce serious complications and increase litigation. It is infinitely more desirable to extend the scope of the present Act and take adequate steps to ensure that employers, especially the smaller employers, do not evade their liability, than to introduce any litigious provisions relating to employers' liability.

THE INDIAN IRON AND STEEL CO., LTD., BURNPUR.

Introductory Particulars.

We beg to submit the following particulars regarding the Hirapur works of Messrs. Indian Iron & Steel Co., Ltd. :—

Nature of Business.—(1) Pig iron manufacture ; (2) coke manufacture ; (3) By-product manufacture.

Output.—(1) Pig iron, 40,000 tons per month ; (2) coke, 45,000 tons per month ; (3) sulphate of ammonia, 500 tons per month ; tar, 1,400 tons per month.

Period of Operation.—The firm started construction in 1919, and production commenced at the end of 1922.

Number of Employees.—Men, 2,800 ; women, 750 ; boys, 5 ; girls, nil.

These figures do not include contractors' labour, which vary anything from 1,000 to 1,500 according to the quantity of raw materials handling required.

I.—Recruitment.

1 to 3. There is no recruitment of labour as :—(*a*) From the days of construction, we have trained up, by careful selection, a labour force which is practically permanent ; (*b*) there is always available in the district sufficient skilled and unskilled labour to meet our requirements ; (*c*) migration of labour is seasonal and practically confined to unskilled and coolie labour ; (*d*) the greater proportion of coolie and kamin labour is engaged in the handling of raw materials and this work is exclusively carried out by contractors.

The proportions of our daily labour are approximately :—Hindu, 77 per cent. ; Mahomedan, 20 per cent. ; Christians, 2½ per cent. ; others, ½ per cent.

As far as we are concerned, we do not see that public employment agencies would assist us.

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8. (iii) Absenteeism is generally fairly low at this works. This is due to the fact, as practically all our plant is continuous production plant, it has been necessary for

us to adopt a very strict attitude in dealing with absence without leave. Otherwise, on a plant such as ours, it would be necessary to carry a large number of excess labour in order to fill the places of absentees on each shift.

Generally, there is no marked difference in the number of absentees on different days of the week.

Skilled labour and process men are generally more regular in attendance than unskilled labour.

Total absenteeism due to all causes is about 8·5 per cent.

During August, 1929, the number of man-hours lost due to absenteeism on account of sickness totalled 7,400.

The above statements refer to our own labour only and do not apply to Contractors' labour.

Absenteeism amongst our own labour shows only a slight increase during the cultivation seasons, and this is mainly on account of unskilled labour absenting themselves in order to go to their fields.

Amongst contractors' labour, there is a marked increase in absenteeism at the times of the cultivation seasons, but we are not able to state the extent of this.

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II.—Staff Organization.

12. Since this works is comparatively new, practically the whole of the subordinate supervising staff has had to be trained under the direct supervision of European managers and foremen, and this close supervision has led to the development of a very efficient subordinate supervising staff.

Generally, workmen start at a lower position, and are trained, and as improvement is shown, promotion is given. We have found this to be a good policy, and generally speaking, as far as possible, when a vacancy occurs a man in a lower position is promoted to fill the vacancy.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file are very good. Foremen of sections are essentially in close touch with their labour and generally deal with minor matters brought to their notice. All labour, however, are free to approach their departmental managers if they wish.

Works committees do not exist as we have never considered that they would be of any material use.

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15. The whole of the loading, unloading and general handling of raw materials is given out on contract. When it is necessary to handle pig iron by labour (this is comparatively rare, as the work is usually done mechanically), this is also done by contract labour.

In the handling of raw materials we believe sub-contracting is fairly general, but we have no detailed information.

The work of all contractors is directly under the supervision of the manager of the department in which the contractor's work is being done.

The system is generally found to be good: (*a*) The contractor is engaged solely in the handling of materials and is therefore able to give far more supervision to his particular job than would be possible for a manager with many other duties to perform.

(*b*) It is to the interest of the contractor to employ suitable labour in order to get his work carried out properly, and also to give his labour proper treatment in order to retain them.

III.—Housing.

16. The greater part of our labour is housed in Burnpur town and in Napuria village, both of which have been built by us and are under our control. Other labour live in Asansol and villages near Burnpur. It is only of our own town that we are able to give information.

Approximately 1,500 of our labour are housed in Burnpur, and which represents about 54 per cent. of our male labour. We have no figures concerning housing of female labour.

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17. Our whole area including works and town is being acquired under Government land acquisition and acquisition for areas for quarters is therefore included in this.

18. We have had no demands from labour except a request that each unit of our coolie type quarters should be provided with a small courtyard, and this was met. There are 172 such units.

There are the following quarters for labour : 29 blocks of Khalasi quarters, each block of ten units ; each unit consists of one room, one verandah and one courtyard ; 20 blocks of single, and eight blocks of double Mystry type quarters ; each single quarter has two rooms, one verandah and one courtyard ; the double type quarter contains double the accommodation of the single type. Each block consists of six units.

All the above quarters are pucca buildings, cement floored and tile-roofed.

Artificial lighting is not provided inside quarters.

Conservancy is under the the direct supervision of our medical and sanitary department.

The whole town is provided with first class filtered water, samples of which are sent regularly for examination by government analysts. During the hot weather and monsoon, the water supply is chlorinated. Hydrants are provided at suitable points throughout the town, but it is not possible to lay water lines inside quarters owing to the wastage of water which occurs.

19. Full advantage is taken of all accommodation available.

20. All quarters are provided rent free.

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IV.—Health.

24. Free medical attention and medicines are provided to all staff and labour and members of their families. We have our own hospital with four qualified doctors and necessary hospital staff. The hospital has two wards, dressing rooms, a dispensary, and an operation room where both major and minor operations are conducted.

25. Labour generally avail themselves to a very large extent of the facilities offered.

The hospital is not largely used by women, but a large number of women are treated in their homes.

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V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

The company has provided an association for Indian staff and labour. This is run by a committee elected by the members.

There are no particular welfare officers, as the whole of the town is under our direct supervision.

Provisions for refreshments are made by local dealers in the bazaar, all of which are under our supervision. Creches do not exist.

The Indian association has its own tennis court, gymnasium and football club. Necessary assistance and support is given.

36. (i) A year ago with the assistance and arrangements made by the Director of Industries, Bengal, a series of technical classes were started. About 80 students enrolled but many did not continue the course. The second session is now due to commence and 20 students, all of whom attended the classes last session, have enrolled. It is proposed to arrange for the technical classes to cover a three years' course. The curriculum is mainly arranged on lines in conjunction with the practical work which students are doing on the plant.

(iii) The company, with Government assistance, has built and maintains The Mary Fairhurst M.E. School, where the children of our staff and labour receive education. A scheme is also on foot at present for the early provision of a primary school.

(iv) Full advantage is taken of the facilities offered.

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VII.—Safety.

46. Every precaution possible is taken to prevent accidents. Safety rails and barriers are provided at every point in the works where persons may come from a concealed corner and cross running tracks. All precautions are taken in the matter of prevention of electrical and mechanical accidents, suitable guards being provided and implicit instructions given to all foremen and overseers. We have not found that Safety First posters from the Safety First Association, in England, are of much use, in that the wording is in English and frequently labour do not see the point of the posters, and, in some cases, even misconstrue their meaning.

48. It is a rule that if any person is hurt on duty, no matter how slight the injury may be, the person receives first-aid from the departmental first-aid box, and is then sent to the works hospital for treatment and decision by the medical officer as to whether the injured person is to be allowed to resume duty or not.

49. We think that every precaution possible is taken on the works and regulations for safety are very rigidly enforced. Disciplinary action is taken against persons who deliberately neglect to observe the regulations laid down.

50. We have no definite information on the point, but we do not think that accidents occur more frequently at night than during the day.

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IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. Daily labour: 6.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.; 12.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. A large proportion of our labour is shift labour and this labour works on eight-hour shifts. Overtime is only worked for special work or breakdown.

56. Daily labour work six days per week and are laid off on Sundays. Shift labour are laid off one day in every 14 days.

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59. We do not see that a reduction in maxima is possible in our class of work.

60. We see no reason for change of the intervals for rest and meal times.

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(iv) *Number of holidays given.*—As far as possible, the usual number of holidays are given, but as the plant is on continuous production, it is not possible for all men to be allowed off, and process and shift men have to attend duty.

61. *Day of Rest.*—Daily labour: Sundays; Shift labour: One day in 14 days.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—Exemption provisions are only used in case of breakdown or urgent jobs.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We attach herewith a schedule showing the maximum and minimum rates paid for each class of labour in the works.

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100. As explained previously, contractors are only employed for handling of materials, and this Clause does not apply to any other form of labour in the industry as far as our works is concerned. We have no reason to believe that the earnings of contractor's labour are not on a par with wages earned by similar labour employed directly by us, and this is confirmed by the fact that the contractor's labour shows no disposition to leave the contractor and take on cooly work under us.

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105. We do not think the establishment of the minimum wage would assist owing to the different conditions obtaining here and in other iron works in India; also a minimum, if established, would have to be very low.

106 (i) Fines are inflicted for repeatedly bad attendance and also for damage to tools, etc., due to deliberate carelessness.

(ii) No other deductions.

(iii) Paid into the Provident Fund and used for charitable donations.

(iv) We do not consider the prevention of fines would assist as it is our experience that a careful and proper infliction of small fines has a beneficial disciplinary effect.

107. Wages are paid monthly on a daily rate. Payments are made to departmental labour from the 10th to the 14th of the month following that for which wages have been earned.

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XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of workers.

112. As already explained, we have only been in operation a short time, and have had to train up our own staff and labour, and any increase in efficiency which has occurred is directly the result of training labour in our particular class of work.

113. Our work involves a good deal of heavy work, and at times exceptionally arduous work, and the Indian workman compared individually to the European workman is not so strong physically, nor has he the stamina to continue work of this nature for so long a period.

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116. We consider that education must come first, as this will give labour an appreciation and pride in efficiency. Any progress, therefore, must necessarily be slow.

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XVII.—Administration.

138. Although the extracts of the Factory Act are prominently posted in the works in the vernacular, we do not think that labour as a whole are acquainted with the provisions, and in our opinion the Act is necessary in order to protect the worker from possible exploitation by an unscrupulous employer.

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Daily Rates of Pay of Labour at Hirapur Works.

Trade.	From			To		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Armature winder	2	0	0	2	2	0
Blacksmith	1	0	0	2	8	0
Bell operator	1	0	0	1	2	0
Boiler tindal	1	0	0	2	8	0
Boiler khalasi	0	10	0	0	12	0
Carpenter	0	13	6	2	0	0
Cleaner	0	6	0	1	0	0
Coil maker	1	0	0	1	0	0
Core maker	0	12	0	1	0	0
Core mistry	2	4	0	2	4	0
Cooly	0	6	0	0	10	0
Crane driver, electrical	0	12	0	1	6	0
Crane driver, steam	1	0	0	1	8	0
Chinese carpenter	3	8	0	3	8	0
Chargehand, fireman	2	0	0	2	0	0
Dice moulder	0	14	0	0	14	0
Dooly man	1	0	0	1	0	0
Driver, coal handling plant	1	12	0	1	12	0
Driver, loco.	1	8	0	1	8	0
Driver, Turbine	1	4	0	1	8	0
Driver, gas exhausters	1	5	0	1	5	0
Driver, coke ram	1	4	0	1	8	0
Driver, hoist engine	1	6	0	1	10	0
Driller	1	0	0	1	7	6
Electrician	1	12	0	1	14	0
Fireman, loco.	0	12	0	0	14	0
Fitter, Electrical	1	0	0	2	10	0
Fitter, mechanical	0	10	0	2	8	0
Gunner	1	0	0	1	4	0
Gas regulator	1	5	0	1	10	0
Helpers, cast house	0	14	0	1	6	0
Moulder	1	6	0	3	0	0
Hot iron breaker	0	14	0	1	4	0
Khalasi	0	10	0	1	4	0
Mason mistry	1	11	0	2	14	0
Sulphate of ammonia maker	1	0	0	1	12	0
Keeper, general	2	4	0	3	8	0
Painter	0	9	9	1	5	6
Pump tindal	1	6	0	1	6	0
Rivetter	0	10	0	1	4	0
Riggers	1	3	0	1	3	0
Stove tender	1	4	0	1	8	0
Switch board attendant	1	4	0	2	5	0
Tinsmith	1	4	0	1	10	0
Turners	0	12	0	2	4	0
Welder	3	8	0	4	0	0
Wireman	1	0	0	1	0	0

THE SUPERINTENDENT, METAL AND STEEL FACTORY, ISHAPORE.

Metal and Steel factory, Ishapore, deals with the production of steel for guns and shells, of metal for Q.F. and small arm, ammunition, fuzes, etc., of steel bars and rods; of shell forgings; and of Q.F. cartridge cases.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) The extent of migration is not great with two exceptions—Oryas who are mostly coolies or work as more or less unskilled attendants on machines usually flow to and from the factory and their own country during the grain and cropping seasons of the year. The other exception is the labour employed on the skilled open hearth furnaces and on the brass melting platform which does not flow to and fro seasonably as the Orya labour does, but is inclined to take long leave from time to time of periods ranging up to two years.

(ii) For Oryas as above. For the other exception mentioned above—distance. Neither of the hot metal trades are recruitable within 300 miles of Calcutta. Local men have not the stamina or physique for the work and never remain at the job.

(iii) No appreciable change in recent years.

2. (i) Oryas as above. Hot and heavy metal workers from the districts—Patna, Benares, etc., usually return to their villages at much longer intervals but then for much longer periods.

(ii) The extent of the permanent labour force in this factory may be taken as a minimum of about 1,600 men and maximum of 2,800. This would rise in war time to about 8,000.

3. (i) The existing method is to recruit for all labour, except that for the hot and heavy trades, at the gate of the factory. The recruitment is not carried out through Sirdars as in the surrounding jute mills but a foreman who wants men must actually be present at the gate and make his choice at a quarter to eight in the morning. In the case of the hot and heavy trades, and of skilled men, reliable men or mistries in particular, section employees are advised that so many men will be wanted and they in turn advise their friends who present themselves and are entertained on a Suitability voucher (in use for all labour).

(ii) Possible improvement might be brought about by

(iii) Public employment agencies acting as receivers of particular kinds of labour to whom enquiries could be sent for men, of a particular type of skill, willing and able to work in the district from which the enquiry emanates. Such an employment agency if controlled by Government, might be highly beneficial, but the control would have to be strict and definite or a great many fee snatching and irresponsible agencies would arise to ship unhappy and unsuitable labour in unsuitable directions.

7. (i) The extent and character of unemployment is almost entirely governed by the demands of the Army Department.

(ii) (*a*) As in preceding paragraph.

(*b*) Voluntary retirement among manual workers is uncommon in the case of men of long service except owing to advanced age or ill-health.

(*c*) A good deal of unemployment is due to men seeking employment for which they are not really fitted in the first case and in this district recurrent seasonal diseases such as malaria, small-pox, etc.

(iii) No obvious practical methods are apparent. An increase in the standard of education and a tendency to be less improvident in the matter of propagation, etc., flowing from an improved education would cause a gradual remedy.

(iv) Unemployment insurance would present far greater difficulties in this country than it does in England owing to the stringency with which all medical certificates and pleas of urgent affairs will have to be examined, and I doubt whether India is ripe for such systems as obtain in highly industrially developed countries in the West. The only suggestion I can offer would be the compulsory deduction from all pay up to or above a given " district rate " to be held not by the employer but accounted for in a central fund controlled by the State. This in fact would be an extension of the provident fund rather than an insurance.

(v) India is not ripe for the extended application of international conventions relating to unemployment for the reasons which appear above, and also for the reason very intelligible in certain parts of India for whole families to work together in a particular industry.

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8. (iii) The extent of absenteeism in this factory in any month apart from sickness and seasonal character of some of the work, e.g., intermittent steel campaign, that is to say genuine unaccountable absenteeism, is of the order of 4·5 per cent.

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9. A copy of the Apprentices Act, 1850, is not in existence in this factory, but incidentally it may be remarked that for the hot and heavy trades and for all trades except electrical engineering and the lighter forms of turning and fitting, no great aptitude or desire to learn is shewn by the body of the people in the Calcutta area, and in trades such as smithy and in heavy and hot processes generally, it is practically impossible to obtain men who have both an aptitude for the trade and any

capacity to improve and enlarge this aptitude by technical study. Those who have the capacity for technical study are, mainly by temperament or cast, unwilling to learn the work from the practical standpoint owing to its arduous and severe nature, and, therefore apprenticeship in these trades, common in Europe, is almost impossible to organize here if by apprenticeship something more is meant than a willingness descending from father to son to work manually in such trades.

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13. Relations between staff and rank and file.

(iii) A Welfare Committee was formed in this works about three years ago. It renders valuable assistance from time to time in regulating social questions and disputes between individuals and bodies of workmen.

14. (i) Timekeeping is done by the gate office of the factory and checked by officers in the employment of the Controller of Army Factory Accounts. The men pick up and drop tickets, and their actual presence is afterwards checked against these by members of the audit staff as just described. Attendance registers are maintained by the Factory Accounts Branch and checked by the Controller's audit staff. Piece work is general throughout the factory for practically every operation performed in the factory including practically all maintenance operations and most of the store operations except the loading and unloading of new or unusual materials, e.g., machinery.

(ii) Wages are actually paid by the clerks of the cashiers section, the foreman and assistant foreman of the group being present supported by the Gazetted Officer in charge of the groups to which belongs the particular foreman standing by the pay-window.

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III.—Housing.

16. Housing is provided by the department for this factory in the workmen's lines between the Ishapore Gate and Ishapore railway station for 53 families and 572 single individuals. The total population housed in that area, man, woman and child, is approximately 4,000.* Houses to the number of about 215 will be erected on the land north of the factory and south of the Majherpara village. At present 84 are in existence. This village will be for clerks, superior artisans, gatekeepers, shift engineers and others. The quarters will all be married quarters, and the village will eventually house about 1,000 people, man, woman and child. Further quarters to the number of 516 as a peace requirement are contemplated on 360 bighas of land south of the Ishapore Khal and east of the E.B. railway as funds permit.

(iii) The two factories in Ishapore at present jointly employ about 5,000 men, most of whom are privately housed within a radious of approximately four miles.

17. The ordinary land acquisition facilities have been availed of as appears under 16.

18. (i) In the case of the houses going up on the north land previously mentioned, these were constructed in conjunction with the Commanding Royal Engineer and the clerks and workmen themselves and are, as far as Government scale permits, in accordance with the workers' demands except that they have recently petitioned for electric lights and fans.

(ii) They are of a good type and in accordance with custom and demand.

(iii) Water is provided. Filtered Hoogly water in the Ishapore lines. Deep well water is laid on in the houses in the north land. Good road lighting exists. Conservancy now by hand service in the Ishapore lines, will shortly be by water service there, and water service is laid down for the north land.

19. Workers and clerks avail themselves of Government quarters in so far as they are available, for these are definitely better and very much cheaper than can be hired locally.

20. Without going into details, rent is set to be approximately to one-tenth or under of the occupants' pay.

21. Sub-letting is not consciously allowed. Anybody not a Government employee who occupied a quarter, would have to be evicted under financial regulations.

22. It is hard to estimate moral effect, but in view of what has been said above about better and cheaper condition, it appears certain to the writer that the moral effect is beneficial to the factory and estate. The only improvement possible appears to be erection of further quarters as funds become available.

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* Of which 1,500 belong to this factory.

IV.—Health.

23. (i) The mortality during the last three years against an average employment roll of 2,685 for the same period has been 12 men or 0·45 per cent., 33 in families of men housed in the lines or 8 per cent. approximately. These deaths are chiefly children.

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24. (i) A European medical officer is in charge of all health matters and is assisted by an assistant surgeon and a sub-assistant surgeon at both factory gates, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of the 6-bed Indian Central Casualty Ward. Medicines and surgical instruments are as provided by Government scale and have been largely supplemented by private contributions by the Europeans in the station. A proposal is on foot for the provision of a woman sub-assistant surgeon in the lines. At present there is a midwife stationed here (supported by fine fund).

25. (i) Very fully utilized.

(ii) To a large extent which would be greatly increased if a woman sub-assistant surgeon and a small maternity ward were arranged in the lines.

26. (i) Latrines in the factory and in the estate are water-borne. Each house in the north land will have its own water-borne sewage and for the lines at Ishapor sanitation is hand service and will shortly be water-borne.

(ii) *Drinking Water.*—Deep wells or Calcutta supply in factories. Deep well in the north land, filtered river water in the Ishapore lines which together with all the other supplies will shortly be replaced by central deep wells to be situated in the rifle factory.

(iii) Bathing and washing facilities in the factories are good and being further improved, and with regard to the lines, the proximity of the Hooghly and several large tanks render this good also. The largest tank is supplied with Hoogly water by pumping.

27. The supervision is in the hands of the medical officer who is assisted, and matters in the lines and elsewhere brought to his notice, by the orderly officer of this factory and a conservancy board. A mosquito brigade organized by the late superintendent has enormously reduced mosquitoes in the immediate neighbourhood.

28. (i) All the shops where machine operations occur are fanned. The steel and brass melting platforms are well-louvered and ventilated for the prevention of fumes. For cooling purposes, fans would be useless, but might cause oxidation of the metal.

29. (i) No industrial diseases in this factory.

(ii) Cholera is more or less endemic and statistics available in Calcutta may be taken as a guide. Malaria is the cause of a great deal of absenteeism at the change of season about November. Hookworm, etc., as per Calcutta statistics.

30. (i) and (ii). Very rigid supervision would be required in order to prevent fraud in any type of sickness insurance scheme in this district. In Europe when people are sick, it is usually possible for the works' doctor or the insurance company's doctor to visit them owing to their nearness to the works and the ease of transport. With regard to the factory in Ishapore, even a great many of those who occupy and appreciate houses in the lines, immediately disappear to their own country if they are ill, and a great many who are not ill announce illness after having been given or having taken leave to visit their native place. Owing to difficulties of identification, etc., I do not think that sick reports from outlying districts, however carefully attested by the best-intentioned and the most responsible doctors, would effectively meet the situation as it is met in Europe.

(iii) There appears to be no great objection in this district to the acceptance of western medicine and medical treatment.

31. (i) There is no maternity benefit scheme in existence here.

(iii) It would be perfectly possible to frame legislation to deal with maternity benefits for births registered in our lines, but, in the interests of India generally and specially of the Indian working population itself, the greatest benefit that could occur would be a vast reduction in the number of births.

V.—Welfare.

32. (i) An Indian sports club for tennis, etc., with an excellent club house has been provided for the workers of both factories, mainly through the instrumentality of the rifle factory.

(ii) Various sports associations in the district, partly composed of factory employees and partly of other Indians, are assisted financially and advised by officers of the two factories in Ishapore taking office on their committees.

33. There is no welfare officer as such. The welfare committee of this factory already deals with disputes, etc., as described in a previous paragraph, and the orderly officer if this factory together with the estate foreman is responsible for various suggestions and improvements, mainly with regard to tidiness and cleanliness that occur from time to time.

36. This factory runs a school for infants in the lines. Excellent provision has been made by the rifle factory for continuation schools and higher classes, ages 14 to 22, for the workers of both factories. All these facilities are used to the full extent available.

37. It would always be desirable to provide for old age and premature retirement, and my views on this have been given under the heading of "insurance," and elsewhere.

38. The rifle factory have organized and run an excellent co-operative stores and loan society which is taken considerable advantage of by employees of this factory whose only disability is that they may not sit on its committees or boards.

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VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

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51. (iii) There was a considerable rise in small accidents of the type produced by sticking the top of one's finger into a press when the compensation first came to be generally realized, but this appears to be dying down.

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IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. (i) The working hours of this factory are: 7.45 a.m. to 11.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., five days a week; 7.45 a.m. to 1.45 p.m. on Saturdays.

(ii) The actual hours in peace time are as above. In war time, the three shift system would be in force.

(iii) The spreadover is one hour longer than the normal hours except on Saturdays, as the men are not allowed to leave the factory at the midday break but eat their food in the factory provided by food contractors and canteens.

56. The normal working week consists of five full days of 7¾ hours, and one short day on Saturday of six hours.

60. (iii) A certain number of the office workers and a few of the workmen come by train. Were all stationed in this immediate neighbourhood, from a factory point of view at any rate, it would be highly desirable if the day could begin and end about 1½ hours earlier.

(iv) The holidays are those prescribed on the official calendar, and are more numerous than those usually taken by local commercial firms.

62. *Exempting provisions and the use made of them.*—Provisions for continuous processes do not seem to have been properly understood by the framer of Acts in India, and, in consequence, in peace time, at any rate, an excessive staff is required to carry on the work of a process like an open hearth furnace.

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XII.—Wages.

96. *Prevailing rates of wages (time and piece) and average earnings.*—The prevailing rates of wages are attached.*

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101. *Method of fixing wages.*—The rates in the attached schedule of standard wages* have grown up in the process of 30 or 40 years, and may be taken in normal times to be somewhat higher, where the job is comparable, than those paid in the surrounding mills and factories unless one of the surrounding mills or factories becomes busy, in which case, for urgency of delivery or in order to secure the market, their wages are immediately raised above ours, and skilled men attracted away.

102. *Basis of payment for overtime.*—Ordinary time rate for day work and time and a half rate for night work for each hour worked in excess of the daily normal working hours.

105. Minimum wages could only be established by districts in India, the cost of living from district to district and the state of industry in the district being so variable.

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* Not printed. The classification of rates for daily rated men is shown in the appendix.

106. (i) Fining is only resorted to in this factory for definite breaches of discipline or instructions. Fining for bad work does not exist.

(ii) Other deductions are made by consent for the payment of bills to the rifle factory co-operative society, for provident funds where a workman voluntarily joins one, and similar reasons.

(iii) Fines are utilized for the benefit of those who are subjected to them, e.g., men who have unbroken service for a period of upwards of 5 years, may, on death or old age, receive a gratuity from the fine fund of varying amount according to length of service. The fine fund also is used by partly financing for the lines and infant schools, and for providing such amenities as the funds will permit for workmen. (See 24 (i).)

(iv) No serious contravention of what would be the rulings of the Truck Act in England takes place in this factory. Legislation would be desirable to prevent anything of the sort, were it certain that such legislation would be carefully and rigidly enforced.

107. (i) The unit period for payment of wages, where not piece work, in this factory is per day, and men are rated at so much per day (see Schedule of Standard Wages).

(ii) Wages are paid monthly about 8 to 10 days after the close of the month for which they are drawn.

(iii) If they were paid any slower than this, I should consider legislation desirable. In view of the number and cost of the Controller of Army Factory Accounts staff, it appears to me doubtful whether the matter could be speeded up to any great extent except by prohibitively increasing the numbers employed and therewith the cost of their labour.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are paid to the rightful owner up to a period of 3 years after the first failure of the claim, provided identity is established.

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111. *Desirability of Fair Wages Clause in Public Contracts.*—Probably very desirable, but in the present state of organization in India, probably exceedingly hard to legislate for and enforce.

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Schedule of Standard Wages.—Metal and Steel Factory, Ishapore.

1st July, 1926.

APPENDIX.

(a) General.

No departure from the rates laid down will on any account be made, unless the same has been fully discussed by the three principal executive officers and approved by the superintendent. Such amendments or alterations will be published in factory orders.

Promotion to a higher grade, in the case of skilled men, will only be sanctioned after a test trial; unskilled and semi-skilled on recommendation.

No promotion or increment will be permitted, on any grounds whatsoever, to any person whose absence from all causes exceeds 10 days during the year, unless such absence has been duly covered by a medical certificate. This is exclusive of long leave or permissible privilege leave.

As a general rule not more than 25 per cent. of the men under any one foreman will be considered for increment in any one year.

The classification of rates is as follows :—

Skilled. Division I.			Semi-skilled. Division II.			Unskilled. Division III.		
Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.
A 2 0	0 2	3 0	A 0 14	0 1	1 4	A 0 14	0 1	1 2
B 1 8	0 2	2 0	B 0 12	0 1	1 0	B 0 12	0 1	1 0
C 1 0	0 2	1 8	C 0 6	0 1	0 10	C 0 9	0 1	0 14
D 0 12	0 2	1 0	—	—	—	D 0 6	0 1	0 8
E 0 6	0 1	0 12	—	—	—	—	—	—

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(b) Procedure of Entertainment.

1. Foremen, or Assistant Foremen deputed by them, must entertain in person.

2. Workmen will be entertained only between opening time and 8·40 a.m.

3. An Entertainment Form (No. 105) will be used for each applicant admitted to the factory. Subsequent procedure will be as laid down on the form, which is self-explanatory.

This procedure must be pushed through as rapidly as possible as it is essential for the ticket to be given to the man the same day. Should it not be possible to issue the brass and tin tickets to the men on the day of their entertainment, they will be supplied with a temporary cardboard ticket on which their names and section will be written. These tickets will be used for mustering purposes and will, on receipt of the brass and tin tickets, be returned to the gate section.

4. The man's record of service (M. & S. Fy. F. No. 106) will be completed by the labour bureau after he returns from medical examination.

5. The policy to be adopted in selecting applicants for entertainment is that, in cases where other qualifications are equal, preference is to be given to men who have been employed before, provided they are recommended for re-employment. Such men will be required to produce their discharge certificates. A certificate of good character given prior to the date of this instruction may be taken to include recommendation.

6. Applicants reported by the assistant surgeon as permanently unfit will be discharged forthwith by the labour bureau. Those temporarily unfit will be instructed to apply again when recovered.

7. The forms will be filed by the labour bureau in order of index Nos.

8. All entertainments will be entered in the register of entertainments (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 107) by the labour bureau immediately after the man has passed medical inspection. As soon as all the entries for the day are complete, the labour bureau will pass the register by hand to the divisional officers concerned for signature, then to the D.A.C.A.F.A. to note and allot new numbers, and finally to the gate section to note and issue new tickets. It is essential that this procedure be completed on the day on which the men are entertained, and all concerned are requested to perform their part with a minimum of delay. If the divisional officer is not present the register must be signed provisionally, to prevent delay, by the senior representative of the department concerned and confirmed by the officer on his return.

9. Men will not be entertained during the last 3 days of the month unless urgently required.

(c) Discharges, Procedure for.

1. Once a man has been entertained, it is desirable to retain his services in the factory as long as he can give useful and profitable service, and to find by trial the job for which he is best fitted. For this reason the following procedure will be carried out in all cases.

2. Except in cases of serious breaches of discipline it is desirable that discharges be made only at the end of a day and that they should take effect from the last working day of the month. Normally at least a week's notice of discharge should be given.

3. Men will not be sent on leave for want of work until this has been approved by the divisional officer. Such men will be automatically discharged at the end of the calendar month following grant of leave unless previously re-employed. If subsequently re-employed within two months of the grant of leave the discharge will be cancelled and leave to cover period of absence will be granted. The labour bureau is responsible for putting all such cases forward for sanction in factory orders. Leave for want of work should be given only in cases where there is some prospect of re-employment in a short time.

4. Men who are absent for 7 consecutive days without notice will be discharged on the seventh day and such men may not subsequently be reinstated without break of service unless their divisional officers are satisfied that they were unable to notify the cause of their absence. On the seventh day of a man's absence the gate section will notify the labour bureau which will apply to the section concerned for his discharge recommendation unless notice of reasons for absence has been received.

5. When it is desired to recommend a man for discharge or for leave for want of work the section concerned will complete minute I of the form (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 112) and forward it to the labour bureau. Except in exceptional cases this must reach the labour bureau not later than 11 a.m. on the day the man is due to leave the factory.

6. In cases where the man is recommended for re-employment the labour bureau will endeavour to find employment for him and if there are vacancies will complete minute II of the form accordingly. To enable the necessary enquiries to be made it is essential that the form be sent to the labour bureau as many days ahead as possible and sections are requested to co-operate to this end. If the man is accepted for transfer the discharge form will be destroyed. If he is rejected the section rejecting him will complete minute III.

7. If no suitable vacancy can be found, the labour bureau will make an entry in the register of discharges (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 113) or register of leave for want of work and will submit it by hand with the record of service (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 106) and the discharge form (No. 112) to the divisional officer for sanction. This will be done once a day. When all the entries are complete the labour bureau will then pass the register by hand to the D.A.C.A.F.A. and gate section to note. In the absence of the divisional officer procedure will be as detailed in paragraph 9 of standard instruction No. 20.

8. After sanction has been obtained the labour bureau will return the form to the section as authority for discharge or leave. In no case is the man to be considered as discharged or on leave until this authority has been received. The forms will be returned to the labour bureau for filing.

9. When finally discharging men, sections will provide them with the old pass out form (O.F. 1932) on which must be stated the man's section, number, the word " discharged " and reason for discharge.

The gate pass (O.F. 1932) will be made out in triplicate. One copy to L.B., one to gate for passing the man out and one retained in the book. On receipt of the pass L.B. will enter the man's name and reason for discharge in history sheet or record of service and submit to the divisional officer for note.

10. The discharge certificate (Form No. O.F. 1660) will be handed to the man by the labour bureau when he is finally paid up, unless previous application has been made for it, to enable the applicant to obtain work elsewhere.

11. Discharged men recommended for re-employment will be registered by the labour bureau in the list of applicants, and, other things being equal, will be given priority over other applicants.

12. If a discharged man is not recommended for re-employment it will be understood that he is not a desirable workman and steps will be taken by the labour bureau to ensure that he is not re-employed in the factory.

13. At the end of each month the names of men who are due for discharge under paragraph 3 above will be entered in the register of discharges and submitted for sanction.

14. Heads of sections are permitted to discharge men whose services are not more than 1 year. If the service is over 1 year but less than 2 years the group officer's sanction is required.

If the service is over 2 years superintendent's sanction must be obtained, and a concise statement submitted stating reason for suggested discharge.

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THE SUPERINTENDENT, RIFLE FACTORY, ISHAPORE.

The Rifle Factory, Ishapore, deals with the production of rifles and their components, and of sword bayonets, and repair of machine guns and manufacture of machine gun components required for the purpose.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) *Extent of Migration.*—From local villages, 45 per cent.; from other districts of Bengal, 14 per cent.; from other districts of Behar, 7 per cent.; from other districts of U.P., 24 per cent.; from other districts of Punjab, 3 per cent.; from other districts of Orissa, 6 per cent.; from other remaining provinces, 1 per cent.

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of Migration.*—Heavy cooly work, particularly from Punjab; Khalasi cooly work, particularly from District Dacca.

2. *Contact with Villages*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return.*—Ninety per cent. of labour from Orissa and Behar are agriculturalists and go home once a year during the harvest time.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force.*—About 40 per cent. live in local villages.

3. (i) Since the introduction of labour bureau in the factory in 1920, recruitment has been highly satisfactory. Maintenance of a register of employment and grading according to trade tests prescribed for each class of work and open to all, have put a stop to promotion of the undeserving, have given chance for promotion of the deserving and abuses in recruitment have ceased.

(iii) (*a*) Some sort of public labour bureau would no doubt be of great use.

(*b*) Introduction of a labour bureau in each mill or factory with a man of good education and personality at its head, responsible to the supreme head of the mill or factory, may solve the problem of recruitment as well as that of efficiency and welfare.

4. *Extent and Effects of Disturbance of Family Life.*—Causes an increase of the percentage of absence and consequent decrease in earning and efficiency (of local labourers only) by 5 per cent.

8. Since 1920, efforts have been made to reduce turnover of labour with the results that turnover has been reduced to 550 in 1927 on an establishment of 3,095, and 729 in 1928 on an establishment of 3,624, from 3,900 in 1919 when the factory strength was 4,000.

(i) *Average Duration of Employment.*—Five years and two months.

(ii) *Extent of Casual Employment.*—Practically nil.

(iii) *Absenteeism*—(a) *Extent, character and causes.*—Average percentage absence from all causes, 14 per cent.; on account of long leave to go home generally once a year, 5 per cent.; on account of sickness, 5 per cent.; causal absence for family troubles, etc., 2 per cent.; absent without leave, 2 per cent.

(b) *Seasonal or otherwise.*—One month a year during harvest time generally in case of men recruited from Behar and Orissa, who are mostly agriculturists.

(c) *Time and wages lost.*—Average per month, 14 per cent.

II.—Staff Organization.

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13. (iii) The workmen's welfare committee consists of 25 members, all of whom are representatives of different classes of employees. The extent of their work is mainly limited to settlement of disputes, questions of holidays, recreation and such other welfare activities. The committee has gradually been growing to be of great value to the employees as well as to the management.

(iv) There is a factory Whitley council, consisting of two representatives from the official and two from the staff side. This only deals with the affairs of the European staff.

14. *Time-keeping, Piece-work, Contract and Attendance Registers.*—Men on productive sections, mostly on gang or individual piece-work. Men on non-productive sections, mostly on day-work.

(i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—Attendance kept by labour bureau and checked by the accounts branch. Piece-work cards kept by the section staff and checked by the accounts branch.

(ii) *How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.*—Cashier of the factory in the presence of a gazetted officer.

III.—Housing.

16. By Army Department: At present occupied, 700 quarters for accommodation of 20 per cent. of the establishment. Recently built and now ready for occupation: 84 better type quarters for clerks and supervisor artificers.

17. Land already acquired by Government on the other side of the railway station for providing more quarters for workmen.

18. (i) The scheme already accepted by the Army Department provided for accommodation for more than 50 per cent. of the total establishment.

(ii) The design of the new type quarters has been prepared from a sanitary point of view and they are being fitted with water-borne sewage. A scheme is in hand to provide the same for the old quarters.

(iii) Provision has been made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.

19. All quarters are occupied—the existing quarters being less than half the actual requirements.

20. *Rent Rates in various classes.*—Half the rate at which charged in the locality.

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22. There is a marked increase in the percentage attendance and efficiency of those living in the workmen's quarters in comparison with those living in adjacent

villages. It has been seen in several cases that when a skilled worker suffering from sickness and other family encumbrances causing bad attendance and consequent inability to earn profit, and otherwise good, has been provided with family quarters in the factory lines, it immediately improves his attendance and health.

IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Conditions of Workers.*—(i) *Figures of mortality.*—Ten per thousand per annum. The real figure is perhaps more—amongst employees discharged every month for long absence and failure to reply when written to, there may be some cases of death not reported to us.

(iv) *Dietary.*—Chiefly rice.

(v) *Physique.*—Bad, except in cases of heavy coolies from Punjab.

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24. *Extent of Medical Facilities provided.*—(ii) By Army Department: (*a*) One first aid dispensary at the factory gate; (*b*) one central casualty ward with six beds; (*c*) one central dispensary with a medical officer of the Military Department in charge, one assistant surgeon and two sub-assistant surgeons.

(iv) *Provision for women doctors trained midwives or dais.*—At present a midwife. Attempts are being made to get sanction for the provision of a woman sub-assistant surgeon.

25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are utilized*—(i) *Generally.*—Very fully.

(ii) *By women.*—To a great extent.

26. *Sanitary Arrangements*—(i) *Latrines.*—Installation of a water-borne sewage scheme of latrines is in hand.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Tube wells in the new quarters and filtered water in the factory and existing factory quarters.

(iii) *Bathing and washing.*—Arrangement satisfactory and still being improved.

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30. (ii) No sickness insurance exists at present, but in deserving cases grants are made from the fine fund. A scheme for introducing a provident fund for the workmen is under consideration of Government.

(iii) Very little difficulty here. The men are quite ready to accept western medicine. The medical staff appears sufficient.

V. Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

32. *Extent of Welfare Work*—(i) *By employers.*—The statement (A) shows all the welfare activities undertaken by the labour bureau.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—By the workmen's welfare committee.

33. The employment manager is in charge of the labour bureau and his staff under the direct control of the superintendent (for duties of employment manager *see* Enclosure B).

34. (i) Approval of the Army Department has been obtained for a well-designed canteen inside the factory for feeding 1,000 workers at a time in the tiffin period at a cost of Rs. 45,000. Building will be completed in a year's time.

(ii) A playground has been provided. A club building with tennis and badminton grounds and a library have been established at a cost of Rs. 18,000 by the Army Department.

(iii) A theatrical stage at a cost of Rs. 2,700 from the factory. Projectors and other accessories for a cinema show at a cost of approximately Rs. 2,000.

35. The employees appear to appreciate these.

36. (i) There is a night school for learning English and arithmetic and an evening class for learning a mechanical trade to qualify for better jobs in the factory.

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(iv) The tendency to utilize all the educational facilities had been increasing, the number of students has also increased.

37. *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*—Gratuities are sanctioned from the fine fund of the factory in accordance with Section 481 of C.S.R. There is a proposal for the introduction of a provident fund for all workers.

38. The Rifle Factory Co-operative Society was started in 1921.

VI.—Education.

40. (i) The Rifle Factory Primary School—

Financial aspect—Bengal Government grant ..	Rs. 2,300 per annum.
Army Department grant ..	Rs. 2,800 per annum.
	Rs. 5,100 per annum.

(ii) Boy Artisan School for boy artisans in which a special curriculum is followed and the factory night school, where attendance of all boys is compulsory.

41. A statement showing the scheme of vocational training undertaken by the factory is attached (Enclosure D).

42. *Effect of Education on Standard of Living and Industrial Efficiency of Workers.*—The standard of living and efficiency are ever on the increase.

VII.—Safety.

44. Average number of accidents including all slight accidents—fifty occurring a year—factory strength being 3,600. Most of these accidents are merely cuts or bruises, but they have to be reported in accordance with the Factory Act.

45. *Causes.*—Usually carelessness.

46. As soon as an accident occurs a board of enquiry is held to find out the cause and to suggest remedial steps and action is taken on that recommendation.

48. The factory first-aid dispensary takes preliminary action and when necessary sends to the medical officer for further action.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

53. (i) In ordinary cases a workman of the Ordnance Department gets full pay for one month and half pay for three months in accordance with Section 291 of the C.S.R., whereas according to Compensation Act no pay is allowed for first ten days and half pay from the eleventh day. In the Ordnance Department the C.S.R. or the Compensation Act, whichever is more advantageous to the workmen is applied.

IX.—Hours.

55. *Hours Worked per Week and per Day*—(i) *Normal*, i.e., *as determined by custom or agreement.*—43¾ hours per week; 7¾ hours per day.

(ii) *Actual*, i.e., *including Overtime.*—57¾ hours per week; 9¾ hours per day.

(iii) *Spreadover*, i.e., *relation between Hours Worked and hours during which worker is on call.*—7.45 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.; total 8¾ hours, including one hour for interval, and up to 6.30 p.m. when on overtime, *i.e.*, 10¾ hours for 9¾ hours' work.

56. Six days per week; holiday on Sunday.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average daily rate, Re. 1-1 anna 4 pies per diem. Average earnings, including profits on piece-work, per month, Rs. 33 per month.

97. Day and piece-work rates increased in 1920—approximately 50 per cent.

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98. *Amounts sent to Villages.*—Through Labour Bureau, Rs. 51,000 per annum, i.e., 4 per cent. of total payment. Direct—not known.

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101. *Methods of Fixing Wages*—(ii) *Other means.*—The schedule of standard wages prepared after comparison of all classes of labour rates in 1920 has been followed. Men on employment have to pass prescribed trade tests and are rated according to test.

102. *Basis of Payment for Overtime and Sunday Work.*—At the ordinary rate.

106. *Deductions*—(i) *Extent of Fining.*—¼ day's pay for each day's absence without leave, up to 3 days' pay for misconduct or bad work—average Rs. 800 per month out of the total factory strength 3,600.

(ii) *Other Deductions.*—House-rent and co-operative society's recoveries.

(iii) *Utilization of Fines.*—Only for the benefit of the employees and their children.

(iv) *Desirability of Legislation.*—Not necessary as far as factories under the Army Department are concerned.

107. *Periods of Wage Payment*—(i) *Periods for which Wages paid.*—For each calendar month.

(ii) *Periods elapsing before payment.*—Varying from ten to fourteen days.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation.*—Not necessary as far as factories under the Army Department are concerned.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—Credited to Government, but paid to the employee if claimed subsequently and satisfactory explanation given.

108. (ii) A census was taken in 1920 and the total debt of all the employees amounted to six lakhs of rupees. The Co-operative Society started in 1921 has much freed the workmen from the money-lending Kabulis, who charge interest at the rate of 2 annas per rupee per month. Previously these Kabulis were found waiting at the factory gates, and specially on pay days, in order to extort money from the employees. This has now completely ceased.

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110. (i) Long leave taken one month per annum generally. Percentage absence, including casual absence or leave taken, 14 per cent.

(ii) Leave is granted when applied for.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Efficiency increased since 1920 by 27 per cent.

113. Expressed in work efficiency, Indian labour, skilled or unskilled, is definitely inferior to European western labour.

Expressed in cost efficiency, Indian skilled labour is in general slightly more efficient than European western labour, while unskilled labour similarly expressed is definitely more efficient.

115. (ii) As a result of increased rest period from half an hour to one hour, although working hours have been reduced from 46 hours to 44¾ hours, outturn has increased considerably.

116. *Possible methods of securing increased efficiency.*—A canteen arrangement inside the factory in accordance with requirements of the workers is essentially necessary.

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ENCLOSURE A.

LABOUR BUREAU.

Employment Manager.

(In charge of the Labour Bureau and directly under the Superintendent.)

Employment Section.	*Housing Section.*	*Record Section.*	*Welfare Section.*	*Statistics.*	*Education.*
Responsible for :—					
Employment.	Village administration.	Record of service.	Efficiency and progress.		Primary school.
Trade tests.	Conservancy.	Record of attendance.	Welfare Committee.		Boy Scouts.
Classification (in accordance with schedule of standard wages.	Recreation.	Leave.	Canteen arrangements.		First aid.
		Petitions.	Co-operative Society.		Apprentice training.
Promotion.			Co-operative Stores.		Evening classes.
Transfer.			Family remittances.		Technical School.
Discharge.			Workmen's difficulties.		
			Health.		

ENCLOSURE B.

Factory Standing Order, Part II.

(Duties of Labour Employment Manager.)

1. He is in charge of the Labour Bureau and responsible for its efficiency.

2. He is personally responsible that men on entertainment are rated in accordance with the Schedule of Standard Wages.

3. He is personally responsible for accuracy of all increment forms in accordance with the Schedule of Standard Wages and special orders.

4. He initials all entries affecting pay in Records of Services.

5. He is personally responsible that strict impartiality is observed in transfers and discharges of men on reduction of establishment.

6. He is personally responsible that men are promptly paid up on discharge and when proceeding on long leave.

7. He sanctions all leave (without pay) of temporary and extra establishments.

8. He investigates promptly all petitions and brings to the immediate notice of the superintendent all requiring executive action.

9. He is personally responsible that the Factory Act and Rules are complied with, so far as employment of labour is concerned.

10. He is President of the Management Committee of the Factory Schools.

11. He studies welfare measures and economic conditions.

12. He is responsible for the employment and technical training of apprentices.

13. He watches fluctuation in the load of sections on both productive and non-productive labour and takes action for keeping the load exactly in accordance with outturn.

14. He investigates into the causes of excessive waste in sections and takes necessary action if due to inefficient labour.

15. He studies labour causes and suggests measures for increasing efficiency of labour.

16. He is responsible for taking action under Workmen's Compensation Act.

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ENCLOSURE D.

Rifle Factory, Ishapore.

(*Vocational Training—Mechanical Engineering.*)

—	Workshop Training.	Technical Training.	Maximum age at entry.	Minimum educational standard on entry.	Fees charged.	Subsistence allowance given.
I. Student Apprentice.	General training in Mechanical Engineering. 5 years course.	In factory class rooms and laboratories, to Engineering Degree standard.	19 years unless specially qualified educationally.	Intermediate Science examination.	Examination fee of Rs. 3 only.	Rs. 20 for those who are residents of places within 30 miles of Ishapore. Rs. 30 for others. Annual increment Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 according to proficiency attained.
II. Trade Apprentice.	Special training in one Engineering trade combined with reduced amount of general training. 5 years course.	In factory class rooms and laboratories; to standard below that for Student Apprentices.	18 years unless specially qualified educationally.	Matriculation with additional Mathematics	Examination fee of Rs. 3 only.	
III. Boy Artisan	Special training in one trade only.	In the Primary School, special classes are held in English, Drawing, Mathematics, Elementary Physics and Chemistry.	17 years minimum age 15 years.	6th class of High English Schools.	*Nil.*	1st year—6 as. p.d. 2nd year—8 as. p.d. 3rd year—10 as. p.d. 4th year—12 as. p.d. 5th year—14 as. p.d.
IV. Technical School.	(*a*) A thorough knowledge of metal and woodworking tools. (*b*) Elementary metal and woodworking. 3 years course.	In the Primary School in English reading, writing, speaking and arithmetic.	15 years minimum age 12 years	5th class of High English Schools.	Admission fee Re. 1 Monthly fee Re. 1.	*Nil.*
V. Primary School.	*Nil.*	Elementary knowledge of English, Arithmetic and Drawing.	12 years minimum age 8 years.	Knowledge of Alphabets.	Admission fee Re. 1 only.	*Nil.*

Mr. G. R. DAIN, AGENT, THE CALCUTTA TRAMWAYS CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Our labour is actually recruited in Calcutta, but considerably less than half are inhabitants of Bengal and to the best of our knowledge only about 25 per cent. are persons who really belong to Calcutta and its immediate vicinity.

A detailed statement of the provinces to which our workers belong is attached as Appendix A. The statement does not include head office clerical staff and the like, which would bring our numbers up to rather over 6,000, but taking our three main heads of employment, viz., traffic working (drivers and conductors), engineering (maintenance), and miscellaneous, the following table is an approximate summary of the situation :—

	Numbers employed.	Bengal.	Calcutta and immediate vicinity.
		Per cent.	Per cent.
Traffic working	3,000	35	25
Engineering	2,000	50	35
Miscellaneous	1,000	5	Negligible
Total	6,000	35	25

The above figures must be regarded as approximate since I have rounded them off so as to prevent the detail, given in Appendix A, clouding the main results.

The men coming from Bengal come from the agricultural districts in the eastern portions of the Province, and those from outside Bengal from Behar and the United Provinces, again from agricultural areas.

(ii) Presumably it is the inability of the land to maintain comfortably the numbers living on it which causes the Beharis and the men from Eastern Bengal to migrate to Calcutta to seek work. It is the construction of railways which has made this migration to large cities possible, and I do know of areas where the advent of means of transport has had the effect of depopulating the area instead of increasing its population. I feel that in such areas living must have been hard, and that the provision of means of transport for those who could obtain work elsewhere and remit money to their homes, quickly led to a considerable proportion of the male population leaving such areas. In many parts of this country the land has been overloaded as much as everything else.

(iii) In recent years there appears to have been a considerable rise in the number of men coming to Calcutta from Orissa. They are thrifty people and send a very large proportion of their earnings to their homes. There has also been a large influx of Sikhs. I am inclined to think they are mechanically minded people. Although we have not many ourselves, I have also come in contact with a good many Sikhs who have an aptitude for electrical work.

2. (i) Men employed in traffic working of good behaviour and regular in attendance are granted 14 days' leave on full pay per annum. A very large proportion go to their homes. Many prefer to take 28 days on half pay which we allow. Again quite a considerable proportion prefer to wait two years and take 28 days on full pay or 56 days on half pay which we also allow. The latter are mainly Beharis who have farther to travel to their homes. Further details are given in connection with sub-head 94.

(ii) Broadly speaking it may be taken that the whole of the 6,000 posts comprising our establishment are permanent. Casual labour is employed for special work, but only to a small extent. The staff employed on traffic working can stay in the service until they have to be superannuated. The same applies to the engineering work save that it may occasionally be necessary to employ a few extra coolies at certain seasons. Further details occur in connection with sub-head 8.

3. (i) In the main our recruitment concerns drivers and conductors. Our staff employed in our works and sub-stations are very stable and vacancies are largely provided for by apprentices and men trained by ourselves. So far as drivers and conductors are concerned, when recruits are required a notification is made at our depots situated at various points in the city. The number of men applying for work is infinitely greater than the vacancies offering. It is not unusual to have several hundreds applying for some three or four dozen vacancies. Preference is given to men introduced by servants of the company of some service and good behaviour. There is no question of the applicants being in possession of qualifications as in the main they are to all intents and purposes illiterate although we try

to obtain conductors who can read a little. They are medically examined, and then spend from six weeks to two months in our training school, an institution which will bear inspection. During training they are given clothing and free transport to the school.

(ii) I cannot at the present time see any means of improvement, although I recognize that this is not a reasonable attitude to take up. Dealing as we do with so many illiterate men who have not previously been employed (other than in agriculture at their own homes) I cannot see an alternative to our present method of trying to obtain the connections and relatives of good men. I do not like it because the appointments should really be open to all and selection made on the basis of qualifications, but I cannot see any alternative until we have some form of primary education. Even when primary education becomes more or less widespread, years must intervene before the certificates carry any value in the matter of integrity.

(iii) While educational qualifications do not exist among the labouring classes, and credentials are not produceable among any but the better craftsmen (who are rarely out of work) I cannot see the slightest use in establishing employment agencies.

4. It is true that the majority of the labourers coming from villages upcountry to Calcutta, do not bring their families with them. This must of necessity lead to disturbance of family life, but from such experience as I have had of Indian social conditions in agricultural areas, I do not think that this has quite the same effect as the removal of a considerable proportion of the male population might have under European conditions. I have formed the opinion that in the small villages one sees almost continuously from the train, the standard of morality is high, possibly as the result of the publicity in which all live, and possibly also to a greater extent as the outcome of the fact that the sex impulses among these people are likely to be guided by physiological factors far nearer to nature (abundance of food, dietary generally, etc.), than by the external influences. Certainly our own observations show that the upcountry men behave better than those who actually belong to Calcutta. For these reasons I am inclined to think that the disturbance of family life in the villages is having no very serious effect, and further, that the men who migrate to us do not suffer morally to any considerable extent by their absence from their families. The majority of our upcountry men come from the ordinary small hutted villages. Their postal addresses indicate that this is so.

8. (i) Of the engineering staff of two thousand, *three-quarters* who are craftsmen of one sort or another have served as shown in the following table :—

	Per cent.
Over 15 years' service	15
Over 10 years' service	20
Over 5 years' service	30
Five years' service and less..	35

Of the remaining *quarter* of the engineering staff who are coolies, khalasies, etc. :—

About 25 per cent. have more than 5 years' service.
Between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. have about 2 years' service.
The remainder come and go on short terms.

Turning to the traffic working staff of about 3,000 men, the following are the figures :—

	Per cent.
Over 15 years' service	3
Over 10 years' service	4
Over 5 years' service	17
Five years' service and under	76

Of the remaining 1,000 hands employed in miscellaneous departments, about *one-third* have service as follows :—

	Per cent.
Over 20 years' service	12
Over 10 years' service	40
Over 5 years' service	30
Under 5 years' service	18

Of the remaining *two-thirds*, 60 per cent. (being mainly coolies and khalasies employed on the permanent way) leave within a year. Only 8 per cent. serve over 10 years, only 17 per cent. over 5 years, and 15 per cent. over a year.

(ii) As already stated under detailed head 2 (ii), there is very little casual employment in the true sense. In the busy season the permanent way department sometimes take on as many as 150 coolies which represents about 2 per cent. of our total workers.

9. Apprentices are only employed in our workshop which engages some 1,000 hands. The best generally remain with us. I have so far been unable to trace the Act of 1859 referred to, but we have our own rules governing a course of five years which, if completed, will turn out a good craftsman capable of obtaining employment almost at any time. The real difficulty occurs as the result of the man who has learnt something desiring to obtain more than his subsistence wage as an apprentice, and setting up for himself with inadequate skill and a still more inadequate plant which he is never able to maintain properly. Chowringhee itself provides striking examples of this. The number of small men who have set up tyre vulcanizing plants in Calcutta of a poor order is remarkable. A technical person can see that the tools and machinery are incapable of dealing with the work offering in any but an unsatisfactory and slip-shod manner. A somewhat similar state of affairs came to pass in England in the early days of the bicycle, and again in the early days of the motor. It is a natural state of affairs, but not, I think, a very desirable one.

II.—Staff Organization.

11. The managing and senior technical staff have normally been selected from electrical or transport undertakings at home. The same remark applies to some of the most senior foremen. We have two Indian heads of departments, namely, the cash and investigation departments.

12. (i) In the earlier days of the undertaking the subordinate supervising staff were partly recruited from home. This obviously had to be the case as persons with the requisite technical knowledge were not available in India. A considerable proportion of the subordinate supervising posts are now however, filled by Anglo-Indians and Indians who have obtained them on promotion. It is still, however, necessary to obtain men for these posts from home from time to time, partly for the reason that it is far the easiest method of keeping pace with modern practice.

(ii) I will not deal with our workshop and engineering hands. Their training follows the lines obtaining in all similar works in India. I will only deal with our drivers, conductors and traffic working staff generally. The training of the drivers and conductors is carried out at our training school at Tollygunge. From among the drivers and conductors our inspectors are selected by promotion after courses of instruction, and again there is further promotion to district inspector and through intermediate grades to traffic assistant, the highest outdoor subordinate supervising post. At the moment we have one Indian traffic assistant, the remaining six being Europeans or Anglo-Indians who have been trained out here having started in a special class of inspectors. Illiteracy is the real bar to promotion in the lower grades and lack of knowledge of English a difficulty in the higher grades. Our real trouble out here is the production of the foreman class who in England constitutes the framework of every undertaking. Just as the N.C.O.'s are the backbone of a regiment so any organization must depend entirely for its proper functioning on the foreman class, the more senior supervising class being solely concerned with the duty of seeing that all parts of the machine are working properly and in unison with each other. So far we have not succeeded in producing the foreman class in India to any extent. The root cause of the failure to evolve Indian foreman is the lack of primary education. During the years a craftsman is attaining skill at his work, the lack of education renders him unable to improve his general knowledge of his subject. His illiteracy will leave him a workman always. Generally speaking it is necessary that foremen should speak and write English because they are concerned with written orders, reports, etc., but it appears to me that it is the lack of the start which some primary education would give, which has militated against good craftsmen going higher. Sirdars cannot, so far as we are concerned, be regarded as foremen. They are simply the producers of various classes of workmen, and as a rule, have no technical skill. They can see that the worker is present and works, but beyond this they do not supervise the working. It has been said that India does not produce men capable of exercising the necessary control over others. I do not think this is true because of the very existence of the Sirdar class. The trouble is that this class cannot be recruited, as it should be, by selection on merit from below. Sirdars are normally merely convenient intermediaries between the workmen and European or Anglo-Indian foremen.

13. (i) Taking it all round I consider the relations good. There is really extraordinarily little insubordination which seems to me to point to reasonable relations. It is of course very difficult for there to be very close relations between the European subordinate supervising staff and the workmen, but there is between the former and the inspectors and consequently through them with the men. I find that the European subordinate supervising staff know the capacities and characters of their men pretty well and for this to be so there must exist avenues of contact.

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IV.—Health.

23. Many of the attendances are for minor injuries and ailments and as everything is free the facilities provided are likely to be used to the iull. I do not consider the figures unreasonable, in fact I think they are good. All things considered and taking into account that the work of both drivers and conductors in particular is hard, especially in the hot weather, and further that I know the conditions under which many of the men live are bad, I feel that the general health is reasonably good.

24. (i) The company employs two qualified medical men, one European and one Indian. Both are men under whom I would place myself for treatment. There are two fully equipped dispensaries on the system and all medicines are free. Certain emergency remedies are kept at depots together with first aid equipment. We also subscribe to certain hospitals. We vaccinate and give cholera injections free.

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25. (i) Out of our total labour force of 6,000 men the average attendances at our dispensaries are 94·3 per day or 1·6 per cent. of the staff.

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V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education.)

32. (i) The welfare work which I undertook on joining the company fell under two heads, namely: (*a*) the relief of debt by the formation of a co-operative credit bank, and (*b*) organized games and amusements.

Taking head (*a*) our little bank has helped the staff to a considerable extent. The religious and social customs of the country demand from Indians from time to time expenditure out of all proportion to their incomes. I refer particularly to marriage, shrad and like ceremonies. There are also frequent demands on account of house repair particularly during the rains. Members of the Anglo-Indian community are always in debt, with brilliant exceptions. This effort has done much to bring myself and the heads of departments (assisted by competent Indian members of the managing committee) into closer contact with the workers and their difficulties.

Taking head (*b*) I found that the men among themselves were unable to run games clubs even although assisted financially. The matter was therefore taken in hand by a committee appointed by the company, and with the aid of grants from the fine fund we have been able to run inter-depot football, and compete successfully with outside teams. We have also been able to provide games such as volley ball, etc. at certain depots, and in the off-season run Indian concerts and entertainments. Physical drill is being introduced as part of the curriculum at our training school. We are unable to carry out more intimate welfare work among our staff because living as they do so entirely outside the company's jurisdiction when they are off duty, there are no means of taking any part in the improvement of their domestic conditions.

The only educational work done by the company is the training of the men in first aid.

33. We employ a whole-time sports and amusements official who works under the games committee, and who was in fact an athlete of some repute in Calcutta.

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IX.—Hours.

55. (i) Details are given in Appendix C.*

In our workshops, employing over 1,000 men, we work to a 48-hour week and 8½-hour day, with 5½ hours on Saturdays. Sunday is a rest day.

Our traffic working staff, involving some 3,000 men, are based on a 48-hour week and 8-hour day, with one rest day with pay for every six worked days. Our time tables are worked out so that every tour of duty is eight hours from "roll call to pay in." Although a man is entitled to be paid for a rest day after every six days worked, a very large number (particularly the up-country men) present themselves for work on the seventh day, and if work is available they obtain, in effect, eight days' pay for seven days' work. The up-country men have come here to work, and save to remit home, and for leave.

There is a group of men comprising some 200 who appear to work extraordinary hours. In reality, these men have a comparatively slack time. They are breakdown gangs and the like who simply live in their quarters at certain points on the system waiting for calls.

(ii) Among the engineering staff mainly employed in our workshop, the overtime required rarely involves more than 20 per cent. of the staff for more than two hours. In effect, the hours worked are 3 per cent. greater than normal.

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* Not printed.

Although our traffic working staff are based on an 8-hour day, yet the actual hours worked come to between 9 and 10 hours. This is mainly the result of delays on the road throwing out time tables, but also to a very large extent to absentees making it necessary for men to work extra trips.

XII.—Wages.

96. Full details are given in Appendix D.* I will attempt to give a summary.

Among our 2,000 engineering staff the wages range from Rs. 14 for the lowest paid coolie to Rs. 73 for expert machine hands. The earnings correspond very closely, the amounts actually drawn being on the average Re. 1 greater and Rs. 3 greater than the wage rates respectively. Overtime is only worked occasionally, and among the engineering staff the attendance is regular on the average, so that taking a period of a year, the occasions on which the earnings are less than the wages are rare.

Among our 3,000 traffic working employees I will only deal with the drivers and conductors, because among the inspectors and subordinate supervising staff there is almost exact correspondence between the wages and earnings.

The figures for the conductors and drivers are as follows :—

	Wages.		Earnings.	
	Minimum.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Maximum.
Conductors	24	35	25	50
Drivers	24	35	25	50

In effect the wages scales are slightly better than they appear, owing to the fact that the amounts given are treated as being the pay applying to a 26-day month.

The scales of pay above the post of driver and conductor, that is to say, for inspectors and other subordinate supervising staff range from Rs. 45 to Rs. 125, with traffic assistants on an average of Rs. 250 to the more senior with free quarters.

97. Details are also given in Appendix D* and the following is a summary. Among our 2,000 engineering workers the following increases are in operation to-day over the figures for the year 1919–20 :—

Pay in 1919–20.	Increase per cent. involved by current rate of pay.
Up to 10	60
,, 15	47
,, 20	40
,, 25	38
,, 30	33
,, 35	26
,, 40	25
,, 50	22
Over 50	20

As regards the drivers and conductors who form the great majority of our traffic working staff, the increases have involved the scale of 1920, which was from Rs. 16 to Rs. 20 by biennial increments of Re. 1, being increased to the following scale :—

1st year of service	Rs. 24
2nd ,, ,, ...	,, 25
3rd to 5th year of service	,, 26
6th to 7th ,, ,, ...	,, 27
8th to 10th ,, ,, ...	,, 28
11th to 15th ,, ,, ...	,, 30
16th upwards	,, 35

The increases among the other traffic staff correspond closely to the increases among the engineering staff given on the previous page.

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* Not printed.

99. The men working outside are provided with uniform free on a scale which is sufficient. The uniform includes an overcoat and waterproof. Washing is also free.

101. (i) Our wages have in the main been fixed by an agreement come to in 1921. In that year there was serious labour trouble, and a committee appointed by the Government of Bengal suggested scales which were accepted by the company and have been in operation ever since, with minor improvements made from time to time as occasion required, chiefly in the middle grades.

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104. We have not for some years experienced any labour shortage. The reverse is the case.

105. *Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.*—With the extraordinary difference in working conditions which exist all over India I cannot see any possibility of the statutory fixation of minimum wages, which would be fair to anybody.

106. (i) The great majority of our men are on a pay of about Rs. 30 per month, and the fines range from 4 annas for minor delinquencies to Rs. 5 for serious offences. A fine of Rs. 5 would in most cases be deducted in two instalments. I have on occasions inflicted fines up to about Rs. 20 for very serious offences where the alternative would have been discharge, but in such cases the fine would be deducted at the rate of Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per month, so that it is in effect a reduction of pay for a period. The fines are ·47 per cent. of the wages paid.

(ii) In a limited number of posts, men are required to provide a fidelity deposit and we allow them to build this up by instalments deducted from their pay. Workers may also buy clothing over and above the allowed scale and have the cost debited to them. This also applies to replacing lost articles, but the monthly deductions are always on an easy scale.

(iii) Fines are used mainly for our games, amusements, concerts and the like. Grants are also made to relieve specially deserving cases, and on occasions for the payment of the fares of men discharged or leaving the service and proceeding to their homes. In fact, the fund is a means of dealing with any deserving case for which we cannot otherwise provide. We are most careful that the incidence of the help given is among the grades which contribute most largely to it.

(iv) If this head refers to the possibility of abolishing fines or bringing them under close control, I am against it. Apart from political agitators and the like, and the usual crowds of criminals which collect in large cities, I consider the Indians, especially the country folk, law-abiding people. The real difficulty with them is their appalling proneness to petty delinquencies, individually of little account but collectively sufficient to break the heart of the stoutest persons engaged in the working of an undertaking employing any considerable labour force. The Calcutta roads are not made dangerous by the acts of drivers capable of forming cause for criminal prosecution, but by an accumulation of petty infringements which in the aggregate constitute a real danger. In my own concern it is again petty divergencies from known rules and instructions which involve the company in loss, either by way of rendering a less efficient service to the public, or greater expenditure to make up for them.

If we are deprived of the right to fine I can foresee a far greater labour " turnover " as the result of the necessity to discharge, and a corresponding loss of contact between employer and employed.

107. (i) All wages (with the exception of about 15 persons who are employed at a daily rate and liable to discharge at a day's notice) are paid monthly.

(ii) *Periods lapsing before payment.*—Ten to fifteen days. At the very worst, eighteen days.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation* (a) *to regulate periods,* (b) *to prevent delay in payment.*—So far as we are concerned it is immaterial whether we pay on the first of the month or the fifteenth. I would sooner pay on the first than later, but there are conditions against us in regard to which I would prefer to give oral evidence, and consider the Commission would do well to obtain visual evidence.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—We make a serious effort to find the men or their relatives entitled to them, and otherwise carry them in suspense indefinitely.

108. I should imagine the conditions we work under are much the same as those which appertain all over India, namely, that the workers are always a month behind to the *bania.* It is a special arrangement with which we cannot enter into competition.

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* Not printed.

yond rewards for good work, particularly in the matter of avoiding acci- have no profit-sharing arrangements. I do not consider that the country them.

ppendix E* is attached detailing the leave given to all classifications of ing our traffic working staff which amounts to rather over half our total ... they are granted 14 days' leave on full-pay or 28 days on half-pay after 288 days in the preceding 12 months. This leave may be accumulated over ... years to give 28 days full-pay or 56 days half-pay, a facility which is taken ad- ... ge of by the men living farther away.

The more settled employees, namely, the engineering staff, who have their homes ... near Calcutta are granted leave up to one month per annum without pay.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112 They have kept pace with improved machinery and methods but are ... bly a little hard on the machinery in the matter of maintenance and liable to ... slip-shod in the improvement of methods.

113 This is the hardest question in the whole series. I can only make a com- ... arison with the British workman. I have no other experience.

On the more skilled side I am comparing in my mind the machine hand and fitter ... about £5 to £6 a week with his equivalent out here. The British workman is ... ker by 20 per cent. He is more self-reliant by 40 per cent. By this I mean he ... quires less supervision and help by his foreman to this extent. The work he turns ... m the end is better from the financial point of view by some 33⅓ per cent.

In regard to the purely labouring classes. As one grows older in the country ... becomes amazed at the amount of work the ordinary Indian worker can do on ... food one knows he lives on and the conditions under which he exists. There ... extraordinary strength in most of the miserable specimens one sees doing ... manual labour, but the limit of physical performance (say weight lifted at a single ... ment) is less by some 30 per cent. than the pre-war British working man, and his ... l of effort is certainly less by the same amount. I would put him down at about ... alf or less the worth of the corresponding European labourer of the more virile ... nufactures.

114. (ii) My own view is that the better Indian craftsmen are able to keep pace ... developments in machine tool making.

(iii) So far as we are concerned our plant is British or constructed out here on ... British lines.

(v) and (vi) The Indian worker is a bad timekeeper, a fact which for myself, ... put down largely to overloading a poor physique.

(vii) I would refer to detailed head 11 (ii) where I have put down our inability to ... ate a really good foreman class to lack of education.

115 (i) *Effect on production of changes in working hours.*—If one divides the 24 ... s into 8 hours' rest, 8 hours' work and 8 hours' relaxation, it would appear that ... last named period can be encroached upon considerably without much effect on ... ciency.

(iv) *Housing.*—Undoubtedly there would be advantages in housing our staff. The first result would be better attendance and consequent reduction of the number of spare men which must be maintained. There would be many difficulties attached to the running of large blocks of quarters and I do not consider Bombay have made much of a success of their chawls. I am in a difficult position in regard to this question because on the one hand the provision of quarters would reduce my immediate troubles although I feel convinced that ultimately the provision of free (or nominally free) quarters is a bad principle. It reduces the sense of responsibility of the worker under any franchise he may become entitled to and tends to retain him a worker always.

(v) *Alterations in methods of remuneration.*—I am against piecework, at any rate on any considerable scale.

(vi) *Movements in Wage levels.*—The effect so far has been negligible.

(vii) *Legislative Enactments.*—The effect so far has been so small as to be hardly perceptible.

(viii) *Dietary.*—A thing which always amazes me is that the Indian worker can ... on what he does. Presumably it must be the lack of necessity to make up body ... t, and to some extent the source of mental energy, which accounts for the small ... ntity of nourishing food he can work upon without apparent change in his ... acy.

* Not printed.

(ix) *Alcohol and Drugs.*—An effect is existent and perceptible among certain classes of workers but not so far a difficulty in any sense among our people.

(x) *Industrial Fatigue.*—I should consider that among our people industrial fatigue does not exist to an extent which affects their efficiency. Their outlook is so different from European peoples.

116. For myself I steadfastly believe that the solution of the problem of improving the labour situation in large industrial centres is cheap and efficient means of transport to far outlying suburbs and villages. It is the only solution of the ghastly conditions of overcrowding which exist in many parts of Calcutta. We must get our workers away to where they can live their own lives their own way, more nearly to that they live in their own villages. I admit even in their villages the standard is not particularly high, but it must be positively wonderful compared with the conditions of living in parts of Calcutta.

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APPENDIX A. (Abridged).

General Census of Workers.

Department.	Bengal.	Bihar and Orissa.	United Provinces.	Others.	Total.
Engineering, including stores ..	1,209	446	306	93	2,054
Traffic	1,079	1,227	420	61	2,837
Omnibus garages	82	31	47	11	171
Permanent way department ..	14	475	50	23	562
Overhead and cable department	19	109	13	7	148
Head office department including traffic and cash.	17	23	4	7	51
Grand Total					5,823

Grades of Labour.	Hours of work of the various grades of labour. (a) Hours worked per week per day. Normal.	(a) Actual including overtime.	(a) Spread over i.e. the relation between hours worked and hours during which the worker is on call.	(b) Days worked per week.	(c) Intervals. Existing practice.	(d) Days of rest. Existing practice.	
Engineering :— Mistries including Turners, Riveters, Fitters, etc. Coolies and Khalasis, Durwans, Peons, etc.	Nonapuker and Howrah Works :— 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on week days and 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. on Saturdays or 48 hours a week. *Out Depots:— 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on week days and 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays or 54 hours a week.	Orily about 20 per cent. are allowed to work a maximum of 2 hours' overtime daily.	Nonapuker and Howrah Works :— 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 9 hours. *Out Depots :— 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 9 hours.	Nonapuker and Howrah Works : 6 days. *Out Depots :— 7 days.	Nonapuker and Howrah Works : 1 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. *Out Depots :— 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. for meal.	Nonapukur and Howrah Works : Sundays, Saturdays after 1.30 p.m. and 28 holidays during the year. Out Depots :— Saturdays and Sundays after 3 p.m. and on holidays after 2 p.m. (with pay.)	Working on Sundays and these holidays is optional for which an extra day's pay is granted.
Traffic :— Conductors (Trams and Bus) .. .. Drivers (Tram) .. .. .. Inspectors, Starters, Timekeepers, Head Starters and District Inspectors, 'Bus Drivers, Cash Durwans, Peons, Pointsmen, Flagmen, etc.	8 hours a day or 48 hours a week. 8 hours a day or 56 hours a week.	9 to 10 hours a day or 54 to 60 hours a week. No overtime.	Nil. Only actual period work.	6 days. 7 days.	Nil.	One day for every six working days. Nil.	Working on the seventh day optional for which an extra day's pay is granted.

* Out Depots at Belgatchia, Rajabazar, Park Circus, Kalighat, Tollygunge and Kidderpore.

Grades of Labour.	Hours of work of the various grades of labour.						
	(*a*) Hours worked per week per day.			(*b*) Days worked per week.	(*c*) Intervals. Existing practice.	(*d*) Days of rest. Existing practice.	
	Normal.	Actual including overtime.	Spread over i.e. the relation between hours worked and hours during which the worker is on call.				
Garages :—							
Mistries including Fitters, etc., and Coolies and Khalasis.	8 hours a day or 48 hours a week in two shifts, viz. : I. 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 12 noon to 4 p.m. II. 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. to 12 midnight.	No overtime.	48 hours against 60 hours, viz. : 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 12 midnight.	6 days.	I. 10 a.m. to 12 noon or II. 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. for meal.	One day off in a week after 6 days working (with pay).	
Durwans and Sweepers	8 hours a day or 56 hours a week.	Do.	Nil.	7 days.	Nil.	Nil.	
Permanent Way Department :—							
Mistries, Coolies, Lorry and Steam Roller Drivers, Durwans, etc.	9 hours a day or 54 hours a week	Ordinarily no overtime.	Nil. Only actual period of work.	6 days.	Nil.	Sundays and 7 holidays during the year (with pay).	Working on Sundays and these holidays is optional and for 7 hourss work on such days an extra day's pay is granted.
Overhead and Cable Department :—							
Mistries (Linemen, etc.), Khalasis and Tower Wagon Drivers.	8 hours a day or 48 hours a week.	12 to 14 hours a day or 72 to 84 hours aweek	Nil. Only actual period of work.	6 days.	Nil.	Sundays and all Bank holidays (with pay).	Working on Sundays and these holidays earns an extra day's pay.
Durwans	Do.	10 hours a day or 60 hours a week.	Do.	6 days.	Nil.	Nil.	Do.
Coolies	8 hours a day or 56 hours a week.	12 hours a day or 84 hours aweek	Do.	7 days.	Nil.	Nil.	
Sweeper	Do.	Nil.	Do.	7 days.	Nil.	Nil.	
Head Office including Traffic and Cash Offices :— Durwans, Duftries and Peons.	8 hours a day on week days and 4 hours on Saturdays or 44 hours a week.	Nil.	Nil.	6 days.	Nil.	Sundays, Saturdays after 2 p.m. and all Bank holidays.	

THE PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA.

GENERAL.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) About 95 per cent. of the workers hail from villages situate at a distance from Calcutta, ranging from 40 to 300 miles. In some cases the distance is even greater than that.

(ii) One of the chief causes of this large migration is, as elsewhere, due to the gradual deterioration of the village and the comforts which city life offers.

(iii) In recent years the proportion of the migration has increased overwhelmingly and is definitely on the increase.

2. Though migration proceeds apace, contact with the villages has not been lost. On the contrary, it appears that with the growing inflow of migration the contact with villages has rather increased than when one or two adventurous spirits chanced to come into the industry and made home of his place of work.

(i) With greater numbers of villagers joining the industry, the contact with villages have undoubtedly increased and greater numbers of workers now visit their village homes. The instinct which draws one to one's native place with the dear hearts and the familiar faces is no doubt strong, but it may well be doubted how far that instinct is stimulated by the growing cost of living in a city. It has been seen that if a worker can scrape a living in the city he will seldom, if ever, care to visit his native village. And though workers would seldom miss an opportunity to visit their homes, it is rare that they get that opportunity due to the nature of their work and even when they have an opportunity, the period is so short that many have to abandon the idea considering the expenses involved. Not till the worker is finally disabled, either through age or accident, that he can enjoy his village life to any extent.

(ii) No definite number can be given of the numerous pressworkers. Approximately, it is said, that in Calcutta alone there are more than 40,000 workers in the various presses. Outside of Calcutta, the number of presses can be counted on the fingers and the number of workers employed in them would not, perhaps, come up to more than 3,000.

3. There seems to be no recognized method for recruiting press-workers. If a recruiting agency is established which would keep the employers and the prospective workers in touch with each other, an effective step will be taken towards the improvement of the existing state of things which is advantageous neither to the employer nor to the employed. Some such thing as a press-workers' bureau may be established where both the prospective worker and the employer shall apply—the one will enter in the bureau-register his name, and the particular work he is fitted for, and the other will enter his name, or the name of the firm, and the particular kind of worker he is in request.

4. From the large percentage of migration it is easily seen to what extent family life has been disturbed. A worker who leaves his home and comes to the city and joins a press, has, as already hinted, very little chance of visiting his family during the period he is in employ. To bring down his whole family, which sometimes consists of more than six or seven persons, and live in the city is simply out of the question, considering the pittance which he gets. Consequently, a press-worker in nine cases out of ten does not know what family life is till he is old and done with his press.

The effect of this has been degrading on the average press-worker, who, deprived of the amenities of family life, naturally seeks his palliatives elsewhere. And a noticeable feature in this connection is, at least so far as can be ascertained, that the higher the pay or earnings of a worker is, the less likely is he to lead a degrading life and, conversely, the half-starved, ill-paid worker is more generally the moral and material wreck.

7. Unemployment as a problem has not arisen in the press industry. Few workers sit idle for any considerable length of time. But no accurate information on this point is available, due to the yet unorganized nature of the industry. So far as voluntary retirement is concerned, it may perhaps be said that few in the press industry have the good luck to enjoy that luxury, and if anyone is so fortunate, it is for a very brief period. A press-worker seldom retires unless he dies, or is dismissed or disabled, the reason being that he does not get any pension or bonus, nor is he so paid as to enable him to put by something for the future. When a press-worker retires, he must have somebody else to depend upon or he must be prepared for death by starvation.

Retrenchment in the Government presses often causes temporary unemployment, but they are soon absorbed either by the low-paying private presses or by other industries.

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IV.—Health.

23. There is no method for registering the birth-rate and infant mortality, or the figures of mortality among the press-workers particularly. But so far as can be judged from the appearance of the workers of the press it can be safely predicted that figures of mortality are not low. The average press-worker lives on a most poor diet and his physique is typical. When a man has gone about two or three presses he can invariably say the press-worker from his appearance.

26. The Factories Act provide that there " shall be sufficient and suitable latrine accommodation and, if the local government so requires, with separate urinal accommodation for the persons employed ". Similarly the Act provides for the maintenance of sufficient and suitable supply of water fit for drinking, for the use of the workers. In the Government presses the provisions of the Act are no doubt fulfilled, but in the private presses the same amount of consideration is not given to these things as required by the Act. And it is a painful reality that there are private presses where there is no provision for drinking water for the use of the workers and only inadequate provision for latrines. Lack of adequate supervision by the Inspector of Factories must be accounted for as the reason for the existence of such conditions in a number of presses.

29. The most common disease to which the press-workers are victims is what is known as lead-poisoning. This is an endemic disease in the industry which makes a worker an imbecile for the rest of his life. There is provision for compensating a worker when he is found to be a victim of lead-poisoning. But it is very difficult for a poor worker with his inadequate means to get this compensation at the hand of the unwilling employer who would leave no stone unturned to put obstacles in the way of the worker's getting his recompense. Only one case is told where a worker of the Bengal Government Press after fighting for about three years got his compensation. Tuberculosis is also a most common disease among press-workers.

30. There is no system for providing for the worker in case of his illness. A kind of sickness insurance is greatly in demand. In the press industry, workers do not, as a rule, refuse to accept western medicine, but the difficulty is that, except perhaps in the case of one or two Government presses, there is no arrangement for giving medical aid to the workers, even in case of accidents. This paucity of medical aid may be to a great extent remedied if it is provided that every press must provide for a doctor for every 50 employees employed in the press. Of course this would mean a burden on the industry, and it may be said that the capacity of the industry to pay must be taken into consideration. But the point is, that the capacity must be considered, not with reference to a particular establishment, but with reference to the capacity of the industry in general to pay. And if any particular establishment is unable to pay, it had better be forced out of business rather than bring about sweated labour and industrial unrest.

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V.—Welfare.

34 and 35. Such things as employers making provision for physical culture, recreation and amusements, refreshment, etc., of the workers in their presses are simply unheard of. The Press Employees' Association, conscious of the necessity for such facilities to the workers, tries in its way to help them, but its activities have been hitherto confined to providing books to the members of the association and arranging occasional social parties, evidently due to the paucity of funds. But even in these, its success has been very meagre owing to the same reason, viz., shortness of funds. At one time the Press Employees' Association attempted to start a sort of Sunday school to educate the workers, but it was not successful. First, there was the general and the greatest handicap of money. Secondly, the conditions under which the press-workers work also proved a great obstacle in the way.

The system of overtime work proved the greatest handicap. A worker who works for the full overtime period over and above his regular work in the week is physically unable to do anything but take complete rest on Sunday. Even on Sundays, sometimes the workers work overtime. So the attempt of the association was not successful.

36. The employers make no provision for the educational facilities of the workers in their presses. Private employers, except the very big ones, may not be able to do it, but the Government can, if they wish, provide for schools to educate the different kinds of workers, including their children. And in this they may ask for the co-operation of the private firms who may be requested to give a quota proportionate to their income towards the upkeep of such schools.

37. Provisions for old age and premature retirement are a much-needed and much-desired reform in the press industry. Workers in the press, specially those who work in the Lino Department, or have to do with the leads, become prematurely disabled and are forced to retire. In the Government presses a system of pension is in existence, but owing to the rules and sub-rules guarding its ways it is seldom that the workers get its benefit. Then the system excludes the greater number of employees. If a worker is found to have contracted lead-poisoning, he is entitled to compensation and retires from the business. But so many obstacles are put in the way of the worker getting this benefit, that very rarely is it that a worker would have the heart to fight for his compensation. In the private presses there is neither any system of pension nor any arrangement in case of premature retirement of the worker due to accident. The Press Employees' Association has got a benefit fund which purport to help the workers when they retire or are forced to retire.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

51. Workmen's Compensation Act is not widely in use. So far as the private presses are concerned there are to be found workers who probably do not know of the existence of the Act. In Government establishments, the employees generally know of it but the difficulties which have to be met, the fight that has to be waged in order to get the requisite compensation, make the employees fight shy of the Act, and if the injury be not very great, they would invariably keep silent. Unless the employers be more humane and conscientous, and the employees more alert and educated, it is difficult to see how this can be remedied.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

120. The Press Employees' Association was first established by a few ardent enthusiasts in 1906. It is one of the oldest unions in India. It lived its moribund life for a few years when in 1919 it was re-organized and resuscitated by late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who became its President. Since then it has had a chequered career. The great strike in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, in the year 1920, which continued for two and a half months brought the association prominently before the public. It was the efforts of the association guided by its illustrious President which, it must be said, was mainly instrumental in bringing the strike to a successful end. The circular dated the 15th July, 1920, of Sir A. C. Chatterjee, the then member-in-charge of the Board of Industries and Munitions Department, put an end to many of the evil practices prevailing in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, and granted substantial concessions to the workers. The Government of Bengal also followed the circular in certain respects, and the employees in the Government of Bengal Press also reaped the benefits of this circular order.

The Association was carrying on bravely against odds, thanks to the untiring energy and devotion of its Secretary, Sj. Nalinkumar Bose. After Nalin Babu had resigned for unavoidable personal reasons Prof. Sanjib Chowdhury became Secretary in December, 1926. Sanjib Babu aided by the organizing secretary, Sj. Indu Bhusan Sircar worked hard to put vigour into the association and bring together the scattered forces. It was on the suggestion of the present President Sj. Mrinal Kanti Bose that the first All-India Press Employees' Conference was held and the enthusiam which marked the proceedings of the conference and the fact that delegates came from Bombay,Nagpore,Lucknow, Patna, Delhi and Dacca proved that the association could yet develop into one of the most powerful unions in this land of essentially weak unions. Shortly after the conference, Prof. Sanjib Chowdhury had to leave Calcutta as he was appointed vice-principal of P. K. College, Contai, and Sj. Kishori Lal Ghosh was elected secretary, at an extraordinary general meeting held on 31st July, 1926. Since then Sj. Ghosh had been an untiring worker in the cause of the association, and during his incumbency the annual All-India Conference of the Press Employees had been regularly held. The present position of the association, it may be said without fear of exaggeration, is mainly, if not wholly, due to the untiring zeal and selfless devotion of Sj. Ghosh. Sj. Ghosh was arrested in March last in connection with the Meerut conspiracy case, and at a meeting of the Executive committee held a few weeks after the arrest of Sj. Ghosh, the undersigned was elected as acting secretary during the absence of Sj. Ghosh.

The association is practically run by the press employees themselves. According to the rules of the association, the association may have only four members in its executive who may not belong to the category of press-workers, and these four are the president, the secretary, the organizing secretary, and one out of the nine vice-presidents. The workers look upon the association as a body which looks after their wants and grievances and demands and their satisfaction. In all their difficulties they look to the association for help and guidance.

But the attitude of the employers is not so happy. They look upon the association as a body of "agitators" who have no business to meddle with their "domestic concern." They try all they can to prevent the workers from joining the association. The employers are, more often than not, found to intimidate the workers with dismissal if they join the association. Even the authorities in the Government presses, though they do not openly say anything, try all they can to discourage the workers from joining the association. And this fact is to a great extent responsible for the slow progress in the development and organization of the association.

121. The Trade Unions Act, 1926, is as yet new. But as days roll on it is being more and more utilized. As far as is known, some four or five influential unions have registered themselves under the Act. The Press Employees' Association has also applied for it, time for judging its effects, etc., has not yet come.

XVII.—Administration.

133. Both in the Central and the Provincial Legislatures the representatives of the people appear to be keen and interested in labour questions. At least the Press Employees' Association has been always fortunate to get the support and often the guidance of individual members of the legislatures whenever it has had occasion to approach them which, by the way, it has perhaps done more than any other union in India. Unfortunately, however, the attitude of the official benches has not been inspiring who invariably side with the Government simply as a matter of course. But in spite of the interest taken by the legislatures which have up till now, passed nearly all the resolutions placed on behalf of the workers, effect has not been given to those resolutions in the greater number of cases and even when the benefit has come, it has not been prompt and spontaneous but has proceeded unwillingly at a snail's pace.

138. The great majority of press-workers do not know what factory legislation is. Some of them have no doubt heard that there is such a thing as factory inspection, but they appear to be completely ignorant of its ways and activities. The association attempts to inform the workers about it as often and as systematically as it can, and the efforts of the association has been successful to a great extent, so that now nearly all members of the association have a general idea and knowledge about it. One reason for this ignorance, it appears to be, is the attitude and conduct of the factory inspectors, who generally do their business with the employers and seldom would condescend to enquire among the employees themselves.

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II.—Staff Organization.

13. The relation between the staff and the rank and file is not as it should be. The conduct of the supervising staff, as has frequently been brought to light in council speeches and debates, is haughty, inconsiderate and careless. And, as might be expected, the staff are very unpopular with the rank and file. Mutual good relations which engenders co-operation and a healthy corporate life is conspicuous by its absence, to quote the very words of an employee in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.

There is a works committee in the Government of India Press at Hastings Street, Calcutta, but the rules prescribed by the Government of India for its guidance are not always followed by the management who generally run it according to their whims and caprices. The result has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the employed. But, in spite of repeated requests and even when the Piece Enquiry Committee of 1925, recommended, the authorities of the Government of Bengal Press have not yet seen their way to settling up a works committee.

In the Government of India Press there is also a compassionate fund maintained by fines levied from the employees for late attendance and other kinds of defaults. Its object is to help the employees in time of distress The workers in the Government of Bengal Press also demand for a similar fund to be set up out of the very large amount of money yearly collected out of fines, but up to now theirs has been a cry in the wilderness

14. There are time-keepers and checkers to check the work as well as the time taken by the worker to accomplish the work. These checkers have no definite standard by which they can judge as to whether a given piece of work can be done in a specified time by a man of average efficiency. Nor is there any hard and fast standard laying down the minimum or maximum time required by a man of minimum efficiency to do a given piece of work.

In the absence of any fixed standard, checking is done more or less on an arbitrary basis and it creates discontent in the minds of the workers who labour under a sense of wrong.

The wages of the workers are paid direct from the accounts department to the worker directly.

15. "Outside printing," or giving contracts to outside presses obtains in the Government of India Press.

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One effect of this contracting system which has reduced the former 35 sections into the existing 7 sections in the Government of India Press, has been reduction of staff, which has indirectly helped to bring about sweated condition in the industry. Employees thrown out of employment as a result of such reductions naturally swell the private presses which gradually absorb them and pay them unduly low wages.

Now, what has been said with regard to the staff organization of the Government of India Press, applies with slight modifications to the other Government presses. The contracting system perhaps does not exist in the other presses, at least to any great extent. Workers for the presses of the Private Secretary and the Police Commissioner are generally recruited from the Bengal Government Press.

IX.—Hours of Work, Wages, Leave, Interval, etc.

Coming to the question of hours of work, wages, leave, interval, etc., obtaining in the different presses, the numbering of the schedule is abandoned for convenience sake. These matters will be taken up in connection with the different presses, each of which will be dealt with separately.

Government of India Press.

Roughly there are about 800 industrial employees at present employed in the Government of India Press, Calcutta. They are divided into two main groups :— (1) Salaried hands, and (2) Piece hands, the majority of whom are on the permanent establishment, and the remainder on the temporary establishment, with the chance of being made permanent when opportunities arise.

The salaried hands are on fixed or progressive pay, and the piece hands are paid at piece rates, i.e., according to the scale prescribed by Government for different classes of work, and when employed on hours, they are paid at their respective class rates, ranging from 1 anna to 7 annas 10 pies per hour. There are very few men in the higher classes. The average earnings of the employees do not exceed Rs. 40 per head per mensem.

The average number of members of a press employee's family is approximately six, including children, wife, self and other dependants.

Superior permanent servants on the salaried establishment are entitled to leave, etc., according to the Civil Service Regulations, but often the privilege is withheld from them almost whimsically.

Leave to piece hands (superior service)—one month's average pay leave (at class rate) and 15 day's casual leave on medical certificate is allowed to each permanent piece-hand in a year, but the average pay leave cannot be accumulated. Temporary men, both salaried and piece-hands, who have been employed after 6th September, 1928, are not allowed casual or average pay leave other than 16 days' full pay leave in a year, according to the discretion of the manager. Certain temporary men employed prior to that date are entitled to 15 days' casual leave in a year. Form-carriers and labourers are allowed 15 days' casual leave in a year and compensation leave in lieu of holiday attendance, which are not in all cases allowed by the authorities.

Hours of attendance.—Nine hours—from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with half an hour's interval, from 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Certain employees, such as three senior readers, case foreman, ten section holders, binding foreman, have to work on 10 hours basis from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with two intervals from 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

The wages earned by the employees are inadequate and cannot be said to be "a living wage" in view of the phenomenal rise in the prices of the different food-stuffs, as well as the exorbitant house-rent prevailing in Calcutta.

Pensions.—According to the Civil Service Regulations the pensions of permanent piece-hands are calculated on their average earnings during the last six years of service. Twenty-five years' continuous service entitles a man to pension according to the pension rules.

Though Lino operators are placed on a graded pay yet a reduction of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 is made every month from the pay of the operators for shortage of their out-turn. Formerly there was no fixed out-turn.

The pay of the Mono casters is Rs. 30 to Rs. 35, and that of the labourers Rs. 16 to Rs. 19, which is quite inadequate considering the nature of their work, which is very hard.

Classification.—In his speech in reply to the Honorable Mr. G. S. Khaparde on the debate in the Imperial Council on the 14th September, 1920, in connection with the latter's resolution for a committee to investigate and report on the cause of the troubles in the Government Presses in Simla, Delhi and Calcutta, the Honorable Sir Thomas Holland in pointing out the advantages of the piece system said :—

" One advantage of the piece-rate system is that we obtain, automatically, an annual classification of the workers for the purpose of establishing their hour rates, the rates at which they are paid when correcting proof or when, for any chance, under the new system they are accidentally kept idle during factory hours. This system of checking a man's piece-work every year puts him in his proper place automatically, and not by favouritism."

Since after 1922 there has been no classification, which is in direct violation of the principle referred to by Sir Thomas Holland, and in 1928 there has been promotion by two classes instead of by six to which the workers are entitled under the principle enunciated by Sir Thomas Holland and on which action used to have been taken (though in a way which did not always completely bar out possibilities of favouritism) before 1922.

One of the greatest arguments urged in defence of the piece-system is that under it earning is regulated by efficiency. But in actual practice for the last six years classification was not revised and thus the men were deprived of the opportunities for reaping the benefits of their increased efficiency.

This failure on the part of the authorities to give the benefit of a principle which forms the main, if not the only, redeeming feature of the piece-system, has been a source of great dissatisfaction to the industrial workers, especially in view of the fact that the clerical staff gets automatic increments almost every year under the Grade or Time-Scale system.

Interval for Meal, Tiffin and Prayer.—In the recent orders dated 21st June, 1928, it has been said :—" In view of the various concessions which are now being granted to piece workers the Government of India have decided that with effect from 1st July, 1928, the present system under which piece workers were employed in their presses before the 1st November, 1922, are paid at class rates for the refreshment interval when they happen to be working on time should be abolished. They have also decided that payment for prayer interval allowed to the Mahomedan piece workers in their presses in similar circumstances should also cease from that day. The prayer interval would be allowed but no payment should be made."

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In the course of continuous employment during hours which do not enable the men to have their meals in time, it is very unfair to the men if the time allowed them for their meals or tiffin be a source of loss to them.

This, apart from the other glaring discriminations made in favour of the clerical staff, makes an invidious distinction between the piece workers and the clerical staff as no deductions are made in the case of the latter though the hours of work of the clerical staff are such as to leave them time to take their meals at home and leave them free to have tiffin without deduction. The stoppage of payment for the prayer interval granted to Mahomedan workers has the effect of penalizing the workers for performing their religious duties.

Leave with Full Pay.—The piece workers used to be paid at their respective class-rates for 16 days (including the King Emperor's Birthday) each year, to cover absences on account of holidays, sickness or leave, provided they had been in " regular employment." Before the order of 21st June came into operation " regular employment " was interpreted as attendance on 90 per cent. of the working days. In the order dated the 21st June " regular employment " has been interpreted as " not less than 90 per cent. of the required working hours." According to this calculation on the basis of working hours a piece worker to entitle him to the benefit of this rule will have to attend 70 days. Now, the total working days in the year are 270 days. According to the rule, as interpreted before the order of 21st June, the minimum attendance required of workers was 243 days, while the recent interpretation requires his attendance on all the working days in the year before he can be allowed to have sixteen days' leave with his class-rates the following year.

Rates.—The rates as fixed in the Hand-Book have not been revised since 1875 when the cost of living was at least *three hundred per cent. cheaper* than at the present time. The Board of Industries and Munitions recognized the inadequacy of the rates when they ordered a general increment of 40 per cent. in July, 1920, on the then existing earnings, though that did not benefit the men to the full extent, inasmuch as the hours of work were at the same time reduced. The rates, unless increased, would not enable the workers placed on the lowest classes to maintain body and soul together and that the revision of rates should be undertaken in the light of the present cost of living.

The promotion by class benefits the workers as far and to the extent as they are engaged in hour work, but as every worker gets work which is so divided as to be paid

both on hour and piece rates, it is but just that there should be some substantial consideration about the rates fixed for piece work. A very slight concession has been made by the recent order of 21st June, 1928, of the Government of India, only in the case of the compositors as regards fresh work in increasing the rate from As. 3–8⅘ pies per 1,000 ems to As. 3–9 pies, while the case of the others, as for example, the Lino correctors, mono correctors, impositors, distributors, etc., has not been considered at all.

In this connection it is to be pointed out that the piece rates have not been considered at all in the light of the changed cost of living though the workers were assured by the Honorable Sir B. N. Mitter, Member-in-charge of the Department of Industries and Labour when he visited the press and was graciously pleased to receive a memorial from the employees dated the 18th December, 1926, in reply to the submissions of the representative of the employees Babu Prohlad Chandra Roy supported by the manager, Mr. C. T. Letton, that before the war the workers were getting two-fifths of the London rate and that after the war the difference has been still more glaring in that the workers get only one-fifth of the London rate.

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Provident Fund.—The resolution No. A.31 of the Government of India, dated the 15th July, 1920, provides that the employees in the Government of India Press should have a provident fund similar to that in the state railways. Unfortunately, however, nothing has yet been done to carry out that provision though we are close upon 1930.

Government of Bengal Press.

In the Government of Bengal Press the conditions are nearly similar to that of the Government of India Press with a few minor differences. Here the working hours are ordinarily from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., but in case of necessity the workers have to work beyond 5.30 p.m. but they do not get any extra for the over-hours, whereas in the Government of India Press the day commences at 7 a.m. and ends at 6 p.m. with one hour interval in the interim. But before 1920 the working hours in the Bengal Government Press were seven only, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Medical leave was not granted to the piece-workers before 1928 but since 1928 they are allowed one month's medical leave in a year on half-pay but in the Government of India Press an employee is entitled to medical leave on half-pay for so many months as the number of years he has been in service.

Binders, linotype operators, distributors, and the hand-compositors in the Bengal Government Press are having their earnings diminished day by day. They are harassed and oppressed with unnecessary fines, and their transfer and promotion depend on the sweet will of the higher officers and naturally enough favouritism counts more than qualification and seniority. But the supervising staff, the clerical staff, and the monotype operators are having their earnings increasing day by day (*vide* starred question No. 75, Bengal Legislative Council, dated 14th December, 1927, and the speech of Mr. K. C. Roy Choudhury dated 10th February, 1928, and that of Mr. Radha Govinda Roy dated 18th August, 1928, in the Bengal Legislative Council). The linotype operators in the Bengal Government Press also are very hard hit by the system of deduction at the rate of Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 per month which has been introduced since January last. In the Government of India Press, linotype operators are salaried while in the Government of Bengal Press they are on piece. In this connection it will be noted that resolutions recommending the abolition of the piece-system in the linotype department of the Bengal Government Press were passed in the Bengal Legislative Council twice in 1927 and twice again in 1928, but the authorities have not yet seen their way to take any action on the resolutions which were carried in the council on each occasion by overwhelming majorities.

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(The Memorandum goes on to deal with a number of minor Government Presses).

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Bengal Government Litho Press, Reproduction Section of the Bengal Drawing Office).

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Without entering into the other grievances under which the press employees of all departments suffer it will not be out of place here to lay stress on the gradations and increments of salaries allowed to the employees of the reproduction section of the Bengal drawing office. The initial pay and the system to increment allowed to these employees are much lower than those allowed of their brother employees in the other Government presses. Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury, M.L.C., submitted some questions to the secretary of the Bengal Legislative Council during the last August session to elicit information from the Government regarding the grievances of the Bengal drawing office. But it is curious that no reply was vouchsafed to any of his questions.

The employees of the reproduction section of the Bengal drawing office want that retrospective effect be given to the Resolution No. A.31, dated 15th July, 1920,

of the Government of India without delay so that they may at least enjoy, with their fellow workers in the other Government presses, the small privileges which were granted by the Government.

Private Presses.

But if this is the condition of the presses which are owned and managed by the Government, the private presses have to tell a tale which is simply horrible. In a press at Barisal, it is told, the pay of the compositors commences at the unbelievably low figure of Rs. 3 only. But let us not take a mufassil press as model. Let us take one of the premier private presses in Calcutta, namely, Lal Chand and Sons. There is no system of bonus or similar things to help the employees. Ordinarily the day commences at 8 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. But this ordinary rule is usually the extra-ordinary thing. The employees are worked overtime from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. usually, and sometimes even up to 2 a.m. in the night. The ordinary working hours per day are eight, but overtime day is counted as a nine hours' day. Fines and deductions are levied in the most arbitrary fashion and the employees are summarily dismissed without notice on the slightest pretext. If an employee is absent on a day previous to a holiday the employee is deprived of his pay even for the holiday no matter whether he took leave from the office or not. Again, if an employee is absent on Friday, he is not allowed to join work on the Saturday following. Suspension is a most common punishment meted out to these employees. Besides, a sum of one anna on every ten rupees of the earning of an employee is deducted on the pretext of charity and amusement but the employees say that they do not benefit by this levy in the smallest way. On the pay day the employees have to remain in office from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the night. The main gate is closed and a back door is kept open. The payment for the previous month is made on the 20th of the next month.

There is an advance wages fund opened by the proprietors of this press which professes to help the employees in need by giving them loan of their wages in advance. The interest demanded from the employees is one anna per rupee per month, and that too, to be paid in advance; and the amount that can be taken loan of from this fund must not exceed more than half of the wages of the employee. And on the pay-day this amount of loan is deducted from the wages of the employees. A relative of the proprietors has also got a loan giving fund the rate of whose interest is two annas per rupee per month in advance. The wages of the employees range from Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 per month. In the private presses, as a rule, there is no piece system and in Lalchand, too, piece system does not obtain.

But it would be doing an injustice to Messrs. Lal Chand and Sons to think that they are the worst employers in the press industry. That is far from our intention. Messrs. Lal Chand and Sons by no means plough a lonely furrow. The Calcutta Fine Art Cottage, The Indian Press, Messrs. S. C. Banerji and Company, and a host of Lal Chands may be mentioned at random. But perhaps worse than them all is the printing establishment of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers, who now receive the Government contracts. The condition of the workers in this press is, to say the least, staggering. A binder says that they have received only five months' pay during the last year. To tell the story of all the iniquities and tyrannous oppressions, ranging from physical force, that run rampant in this press which is the recipient of government benevolence would make a memorandum by itself. The condition of the workers in the printing establishment of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers is perhaps the most rotten that has come to our knowledge. Seeing that a number of their employees have joined the Press Employees' Association, the authorities of this press are said to have shifted the timing of the period of work of those employees in such a way that they may not be able to join in any union activities.

This action of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers reminds us of the authorities of another press—the Calcutta University Press—which, by the way, is a semi-government establishment and professes to deal with the workers according to the Government handbook, but the profession is, the workers say, fulfilled more in the breach than in the performance. Formerly, some 50 to 60 workers of the Calcutta University Press were active members of the association. But the authorities of this press have been so successful in their methods of crushing the spirit of the workers that now only three of them remain on the register of the association. Abusive and ridiculous languages, intimidation, threat of dismissal, etc., were the daily and casual treatment accorded to the members of the association. But the most effective of all the weapons seems to have been the stopping of promotion of the workers who joined the association.

Conclusion.

Minimum Wages—Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.—Let us conclude this statement—incomplete as it is—with a few words on minimum wages and the advisability and possibility of statutory establishment. At the outset it must be said that fixing of a minimum wage is not only advisable and possible but an urgent and immediate necessity in the press industry.

It will be observed from the foregoing pages where the different kinds of presses have been dealt with separately with regard to hours of work, wages, etc., that though in the Government presses there are some rules which are followed in determining wages, deductions, etc., in the private presses they do not even pretend to follow any method whatsoever in regulating and fixing the wages of the workers, and deductions and dismissals are most arbitrary. Now this is exploitation pure and simple, exploitation of the inferior bargaining power of the workers. In recent years this exploitation has increased and tends to increase more and more.

This growing exploitation of the workers is due to the existence of sweated labour in the industry. This sweating is caused by many factors of which the following two are important in this particular case of the press industry :—(1) Increasing import of efficient machines; and (2) the periodic reductions of the employees in the Government establishments. These periodic reductions throw out of employment a large number of workers who either unable or unfit to enter into other industries are gradually absorbed in private concerns which finding that it is possible to get workers at low wages are naturally careless in their use of labour.

Then the workers are not efficiently organized, not only in the press industry but perhaps it is true of almost all industries in India. And with the workers ill-organized it is but natural that exploitation is rampant in the industry. It has been found in the case of individual establishments that if the union of the workers is well organized and strong, the workers are able to get the highest rates which the industry is capable of.

A minimum wage means a greater equality in the bargaining power of the workers, and would thus prevent exploitation and ensure the payment of wages closely corresponding to the productive capacity of the workers. Again, the fixing of a minimum wage will also indirectly tend to develop organization among the workers. In New Zealand, for example, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894, and its amending Acts, have provided a stimulus to the growth of organizations. Lastly, industrial peace is best promoted by a regulation of the minimum wage. In Australia and New Zealand we find that one of the chief objects of minimum wage regulations is the prevention of industrial disputes. On the side of the employers it may be said that those fair-minded employers who are willing to pay a fair wage will be advantaged by a minimum wage, as they will not have to meet the competition of employers who exploit their workers.

It is clearly seen from what has been said of the different presses before that there is no standardization of wages—even in the various Government presses, the rates of wages of workers performing the same kind of work under similar conditions often vary to a great extent. This, it must be admitted, is most unsatisfactory. From this point of view also it is necessary to have a minimum wage below which no employer would be allowed to fall.

The possible objection to a minimum wage may be that it will cause unemployment in the present state of the industry as the productive capacity of the workers have been impaired by continued exploitation. Of course, to raise wages considerably would endanger the employment of the workers. But a policy of gradual improvement, particularly when trade is prosperous, would obviate that danger. The increase in the wages will be likely to result in an increase in the efficiency of the workers, and also in that of the workers of the future through improvement in the health and welfare of the children. It will thus have a beneficial effect on production, which will be, within limits, cumulative.

On the employers' side it may also be contended that a minimum wage will affect many of them adversely who may in consequence be forced to retire from the industry. To this the answer would be : " If a man be unable to maintain his enterprise without cutting down the wages essential for his workers it would be better that he should abandon the enterprise." For what is it that a minimum wage seeks, or ought to seek, to establish ? The basic principle in determining a minimum wage ought to be that of " living wage." And this is the basis which has been adopted in practice in the various countries where minimum wages have been fixed. In New Zealand, for instance, though there is no specified basis and though in making awards the Arbitration Court takes into account the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry and all other relevant circumstances, in no case will it reduce wages below a fair standard of living wage.

The Australian Commonwealth Arbitration Court also in practice has adopted the living wage basis. The court makes its award " in accordance with the requirements, in a civilized community, of a man with wife and three children." In South Australia, the Provinces of Canada, and the various States of the United States, and many other countries where minimum wage laws have been passed, the living wage principle is in practice followed. And, as Mr. Justice Higgins, President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court says, it is necessary to keep this living wage a thing sacrosanct, beyond the reach of bargaining.

Representation on the Legislatures.—A word on the question of representation on the legislatures. It has been observed that the Press Employees' Association has been unusually fortunate to get the support and occasionally the guidance of individual members of the legislatures, both central as well as provincial (*vide* page 228, paragraph 133). It is all true and the association is right grateful for it. But it certainly does not obviate the necessity of having their elected representatives on the legislature. Labour's right to be in the legislature as a distinct interest has been recognized by the admission of nominated members to represent labour. But apart from the question that the representation given to labour has not been commensurate with either the numerical strength of the working classes or to the importance of the interest represented, there is the question of principle. Nomination as a principle is untenable. With the lapse of time it is being growingly realized that the system of nomination to represent the interest of labour in the legislature is incompatible with the spirit for which it is to be represented for the purpose of doing good to it. It certainly cannot be gainsaid that elected representatives even in the present condition of labour organizations will command greater confidence of the working classes than what is enjoyed by the nominated representatives. We certainly are not for special constituencies. But so long as the classes continue and they continue to be represented separately in the legislature, labour certainly cannot forego its right. As at present constituted, labour has got only two representatives nominated by Government to represent its interest in the Bengal Legislative Council, whereas the employees of labour are represented in it by fifteen members elected from special employers' constituencies representing the interest of only a few hundreds of merchants and tradesmen. It is, therefore, necessary that labour should also be similarly represented by the creation of special labour electorates, and the workers in the press should be one such special constituency having the right to send two elected representatives—one for the Government Presses and the other to represent the Private Presses—in the Provincial Legislature. The press workers' constituency should also be entitled to send one representative to the Central Legislature to represent specially the interest of the workers in the Government of India Presses situate at Calcutta, Simla, Delhi and Aligarh.

To summarise, the condition of the workers in the press will be considerably improved and their organization greatly stimulated by :—(1) Abolition of the piece system where it exists ; (2) establishment of a minimum wage with the unreserved right of the workers to strike for greater wages when necessity arises ; (3) efficient supervision of the private presses by the inspector of factories ; (4) the spread of economic and industrial education amongst the workers ; (5) suitable provision in the Factories Act to afford adequate protection to union men against unjust oppression, intimidation, threats of dismissal, dismissal, filthy and abusive language, etc., or otherwise punishing them (e.g., by stopping promotion, etc.) for joining the association ; (6) suitable provision by the employers to afford adequate facilities to the workers in case of illness and accidents while engaged in work ; (7) abolition of the fine system and regular payment of the dues of the workers not later than the 7th of the next month ; and (8) representation in the Legislature in the light of suggestions made above.

The following extracts from subsidiary memoranda submitted by members of the Press Employees' Association were referred to in oral examination.

PROHLAD CHANDRA ROY, SECTION-HOLDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, CALCUTTA.

Introduction.—I have a fair knowledge regarding the conditions of the service and pecuniary circumstances of the employees of the Government of India Press, Calcutta, as I have been serving in this press for more than 25 years. I was appointed as a compositor on the 9th May, 1904. In 1918, I was promoted to the post of a section-holder, but owing to the retrenchment of the staff, I was reverted to the post of a compositor on the 15th September, 1922. After my reversion I acted as a section-holder over all the sections in the composing branch, and as well as in the lino and mono branches when required. In 1926, when the post of a section-holder had fallen vacant, I was given my substantive appointment as a section-holder. I represented the piece-workers of this press to the Honourable Sir B. N. Mittra, Member-in-charge, Department of Industries and Labour in December, 1926, when he visited this press. And I have also been elected this time to represent the industrial workers of the Government of India Press in the enquiry to be made by the Royal Commission on Labour. I am one of the vice-presidents of the Press Employees' Association, Calcutta, which is registered under the Trade Union Act.

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Disadvantages of the Piece-workers—Compositors.—They are recruited from the educated Indian gentlemen and most of them are Hindus. Printing is an art and the compositors are the backbone of the printing industries, and if they do not work,

all the other branches of the printing should have to remain idle. It is needful that they should be educated, otherwise they will not be able to understand the printing jobs, to read the original manuscript and to carry out the correction marks. Good workmanship is essentially needed in composing, which takes a long time to learn, and I must say that the civilized world will accept that the compositors are the first class workers in the industrial section, but they are paid as 3rd class labourers and their average earnings in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, are only Rs. 56-8 annas per month. (In 1927-28 Rs. 54 and in 1928-29 Rs. 59). In the labour markets in Calcutta, the motor car, bus and lorry drivers, fitters, moulders, riveters and carpenters, etc., are getting Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 or more per day, some of whose jobs can be learnt within a month or two and in some cases a fortnight only. I hope that it will be supported by Mr. C. T. Letton, Manager, Government of India Press, Calcutta, that even some of the coolies working on piece rate in several private firms earn Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per day. Prior to war, the compositors in the Government of India Presses were getting two-fifths of the London rate, and after the war they are getting one-fifth of that rate, and this was brought to the notice of the Honourable Sir B. N. Mittra, Member-in-charge, Department of Industries and Labour, by a memorial in December, 1926. The matter was also pointed out to the Honourable Member when he had visited the Press, and had received the representations from several branches. At the time, Mr. C. T. Letton, manager of the press, also supported it, but in the last revision in July, 1928, no general increment on piece-rates was granted.

Further, I beg to point out that in Resolution No. A-31, dated 15th July, 1920 (*vide* para. 25 on p. 277 of Appendix of the Hand Book), the Government of India shows that the average earnings of the compositors in the Government of India Presses now ranges from Rs. 35 to Rs. 90 per mensem according to class. According to this statement, the average earning of the compositors was Rs. 62-8 annas per head and although the piece-rate has been increased by 40 per cent. the average earnings of the compositors is now Rs. 56-8 annas per head only. From the above it will be observed that their average earnings are on the decrease.

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Standard of Living.—None of the employees with the exception of a very few is getting his proper living wages, and in support of this, I may cite my own case as an example.—I am living in Calcutta with my family in a rented house.

My present pay is Rs. 135 per month. My family consists of six members : self, wife, three children, and widow of my deceased younger brother.

Actual needs of my family per month are as follows :—	Rs.
1. Food charges of six members including tiffin, etc., at Rs. 16 per head ..	96
2. Monthly rent of two rooms and a portion	26
3. School fees, etc., for three children	16
4. Milk	10
5. Clothing (including winter clothes, bedding and footwear, at Rs. 40 per head per year, i.e., Rs. 240 for the whole family, on an average per month.	20
6. Water carrier	4
7. Washerman	3
8. Barber	1
9. Lighting expenses	4
Total	180

N.B.—There are extraordinary expenses, such as wedding expenses of daughter, house repairing expenses in native village, gharyhire and sradh expenses, etc.

The above account shows that nothing is spent on luxury, save and except bare necessities. I have therefore to borrow Rs. 45 every month to meet the expenses and I have no other means to clear my debt than to dispose of the landed and other property inherited from my fore-fathers. Besides, medical expenses are to be met and not included in the above list. Such is the position of middle class men of my earnings in Bengal.

Pecuniary Circumstances of the Press Employees.—Generally the press employees do not receive their living wages properly, and so they are compelled to borrow money at a very high rate of interest. They do not get sufficient diet, proper clothing and medical aid. They are unable to provide their children with milk, clothing and proper education so they are frequently attacked with illness and they cannot provide them with medical treatment and proper diet.

Provident Fund.—It was announced that employees appointed after 15th July, 1920, will not be entitled to the benefit of pension after retirement, but will be required to join a fund called the Provident Fund, equivalent to State Railways Provident Fund (*vide*, Appendix 12, para 21, p. 276 of the Handbook). But, unfortunately for the employees concerned, though more than nine years have elapsed, no provident fund has yet been introduced. For this extreme dilatoriness of the authorities concerned the poor employees are suffering pecuniary loss for no fault of their own.

Housing.—Owing to their poor earnings they are compelled to live in unhealthy places and in dark and damp rooms, without sufficient water supply, fresh air, and light, as the house rent in Calcutta is very high and for want of those they are susceptible to every kind of disease. I earnestly request the Honourable Members of the Commission to kindly visit some of the presses here through which they will acquaint themselves as to the condition of the health of the press employees.

Lead Poison.—There is every possible chance of those press employees, who have to work with lead, e.g., compositors, distributors, lino-operators and mono-casters, etc., are liable to be attacked with lead poison. But never any employee of the Government of India Press was declared to be attacked with the same. It is not because that none of them has been attacked by lead poison, but because there is no arrangement that they may be well examined now and then. I can assert emphatically, if those employees are examined by experienced doctor, then at least 10 per cent. of them will be found to be attacked with the above poison. Though our gracious Government has set up a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, but has done little for the benefit of the employees who have every possible chance to be attacked with lead poison. In my opinion, an institution, with the object of examining these employees at least once a year by experienced doctors and to take necessary steps, should be established.

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Conclusion.—From the above mentioned grievances, complaints and disadvantages, it is proved that there is no end of misery of the press employees. Our Benign Government is ideal employer. If such is the condition of the Government employees it is needless to mention about the private employees, for it can easily be imagined that their conditions are still more worse. Indian labourers are oppressed by poverty and cannot get sufficient food, and also cannot enjoy the sun, free air and light, etc., which are the free gifts of the Almighty. They have to live in worst possible rooms, also they have to labour for long hours, and in this way their health is day by day going to be ruined. If our kind Government fail to take immediate steps, then gradually the labouring capacity of the labourers will vanish. If this sort of utter disregard for the welfare of labouring class continues, a time will come, of course at no distant date, when the capitalist, to their dismay, will find themselves driven to a position where they will have no other alternative than to work for their own existence, and their dear invested capital, in the absence of healthy operatives.

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APPENDIX A.

Comparative Statement showing the prices of food grains, etc.

Nane of article.	Original price per maund.	Present price per maund.	Original price per pair.	Present price per pair.	
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
Rice	3 5 0	9 5 0	—	—	*Vide* Page 609 of Statistical Abstract of British India from1917-18 to 1926-27.
Wheat	3 8 0	8 0 0	—	—	
Potatoes ..	1 4 0	8 0 0	—	—	
Mustard oil ..	10 0 0	28 0 0	—	—	
Ghee	38 0 0	95 0 0	—	—	
Cocoanut oil ..	12 0 0	28 0 0	—	—	
Meat	10 0 0	40 0 0	—	—	
Fish	10 0 0	35 0 0	—	—	
Kerosine oil per tin	1 12 0	3 9 0	—	—	
Coal	0 6 0	0 12 0	—	—	
Milk	5 0 0	16 0 0	—	—	
Dal	2 12 0	10 0 0	—	—	
Tamarind ..	1 4 0	5 0 0	—	—	
Red pepper ..	5 0 0	20 0 0	—	—	
Black ,, ..	20 0 0	64 0 0	—	—	
Sugar	5 0 0	12 8 0	—	—	
Turmeric ..	5 0 0	14 0 0	—	—	
Mustard seed ..	5 0 0	11 0 0	—	—	
Coriander seed..	5 0 0	44 0 0	—	—	
Molasses ..	4 0 0	12 0 0	—	—	
Sweetmeat ..	15 0 0	50 0 0	—	—	
Cloth ..	—	—	1 8 0	3 0 0	
Shoes	—	—	2 4 0	6 0 0	
Shirts	—	—	1 12 0	5 0 0	
Umbrella ..	—	—	2 0 0	5 0 0	

House rent has risen on an average by 100 per cent.

N.B.—Please see Table No. 296 Index Numbers of retail prices of food grains of India on page 628 of Statistical Abstract for British India from 1917–18 to 1926–27.

APPENDIX B.

Disadvantages of the Lino-operators in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.

(Pay Rs. 80–4—100–5–125 on 8-hour basis.)

1. The linotype operators are to work under the greatest possible hardships with mechanical, mental and physical labour, practically combating with fire, and breathing all the time in a poisonous atmosphere, but having no sufficient remuneration to compensate with.

2. They expected a better scale of pay when in 1928 a general revision of establishment was made, but it is a great misfortune that the thing turned and the already existing pay was lowered.

3. Again, to add misery to their sorrow a system of deduction of salary at the rate of Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 a month, introduced since January last, which has placed them in a very awful situation.

4. For different kinds of machines, variety of work, old age, ill-health and consequent loss of vigour, and their varying age and physique, naturally the operators fail to do the uniform out-turn of work.

5. The Government salaried servants are not subjected to deduction of salary anywhere.

6. In this press no department or section is a victim of the above.

7. They have no future prospects, which other sections enjoy. Their prospects end up to Rs. 125 if they are fortunate enough to overcome the deduction of Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 from the salary.

8. In consideration of the hours of duty the poor wages which they draw are too inadequate, and further, that in spite of their difficult and dreadful task they are given neither any privileges nor any concession.

Remedies for the Disadvantages of the Lino Operators.

Increased scale of pay—Rs. 125–10–175.

Order under which deductions are at present being made every month from the operators' salaries be withdrawn and that the amounts already deducted on this account be restored to them.

APPENDIX C.

Disadvantages of the Monotype Operators in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.

In working a monotype machine one should have a fair education, and while at the machine he has to attend to three things simultaneously, just like a telegraph operator, namely (i) to look after the various parts of the machine, (ii) to calculate mentally as regards spacing, etc., and (iii) to strike the keys with the fingers.

The Government of India have been pleased to sanction for the telegraph operators two scales of pay, viz., (i) Rs. 80–170 and (ii) Rs. 80–250 for the local and general servicemen respectively, along with future prospects of promotions to higher grade appointments in both cases, whereas since 1928, when the revised scale was introduced, the monotype operators in the Government of India Press were graded from Rs. 80 to Rs. 125 without any similar future prospects which even men in other sections of the Press enjoy.

While sanctioning the aforesaid revised scale of pay for the monotype operators, the Government of India rather introduced a complicated system under which the operators have been subjected to deductions of pay ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month from out of their salaries. As most of them at present draw between Rs. 80 and Rs. 90, this deduction naturally tells heavily upon their poor income since it comes up to something like one-sixth of their emoluments. This practice is rather unique, as it is not in vogue in any other office.

As a protest against the above unjustifiable practice, memorials and representations were submitted to the authorities concerned but they were all in vain. At last, owing to the continued apathy and tight-sitting attitude on the part of the authorities, a starred question was raised in the Central Legislature as to whether Government had received the said memorials and why "deductions were made from the operators' salaries." To this Government replied that "deductions are made as the men are given bonus for the output in excess of requirement." In this connection it may be stated that no such deduction is ever made from the salary of the telegraph operator who, apart from enjoying a better time-scale, also receives bonus in the shape of pie-money for scoring.

Over and above this, the operators are under another great disadvantage. In every office seniority of service is always taken into consideration. By putting in a long service and thereby getting regular annual increments one can reach the maximum of one's grade. But, as ill-luck would have it, the senior monotype operators with long service at their credit have actually had to remain satisfied with fixed salaries since 1921. In fact, not a single operator got any increment on his pay during the long period of eight years (from 1921 to 1927), and as a result of this, none has yet come to Rs. 100 even. It may be added here than men in other sections of the Press have been all throughout enjoying seniority and usual increments.

With regard to working hours it may be mentioned that the operators have to undergo solid hard labour of eight hours and a half (excluding tiffin period), and for this they are given a pay which is less than that earned by operators of other presses.

From the above fact it can be fully imagined that the case of the monotype operators in the Government of India Press is not being well considered in respect of their pay and other things relevant thereto.

The following remedies are suggested for favourable consideration :—

1. That the present grade of the operators, viz. (Rs. 80–4–100–5–125) be raised to Rs. 125–10–175 so as to afford a living wage for them.

2. That the order under which deductions are at present being made every month from the operators' salaries be withdrawn, and that the amounts already deducted on this account be restored to them.

The humble memorial of the compositors, distributors and binders, employed in the E.I. Railway press, Calcutta and Howrah, and also members of the Press Employees' Association.

GENERAL GRIEVANCES.

1. That your memorialists are strongly in favour of total abolition of piece and hour systems, because :—(*a*) Under this system your memorialists are not entitled to any wages during holidays, Sundays and periods of enforced absence owing to illness, etc., because piece-work system, as opposed to salaried system, is based on the principle "no work, no pay"; (*b*) this system does not prevail in any other state railway presses, e.g., G.I.P. Railway Press, Hyderabad Nizam's State Railway Press and N.W. and Burma State Railways Presses; (*c*) Though the system is based on the principle of "wages according to out-turn and capacity" it has in practice been so designed as to yield minimum earning for maximum labour.

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Compositors.—That in the same office three systems, piece, engaged-hour and salary prevail. While your memorialists work under piece system, the employees of other departments, viz., section-holders, readers, foremen, etc., with whose work your memorialists are closely connected, and on whose work, the work of your memorialists sometimes depends, are salaried men. As such they are apt to be slow, while your memorialists, working on piece system, are naturally fast workers. So there is every chance of friction between different classes of employees and sometimes it breaks out to the detriment of the employees and the office. It is needless for your memorialists to dilate on the point to show to your honour the expediency of one system prevailing in an office.

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That no increment is granted to those who are compelled to absent themselves even on medical grounds for more than 60 days in a year.

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MR. INDU BHUSAN SIRCAR, ORGANIZING SECRETARY OF THE PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION.

Before I deal with the subject matter of the statement, I deem it necessary to convince the Hon'ble Members of the Commission, that I have gathered a considerable experience so far as the matters regarding the presses in Bengal are concerned.

I joined, for the first time, the press of Messrs. Lall Chand and Sons, as a printer, in 1911. Subsequently, I resigned that post and joined the press of W. Newman, where also I tendered my resignation in the year 1912 and got into the Bengal Government Press. But to my surprise, I found that the employees there were treated

like cats and dogs. Being a man of a different mentality, I could not submit to the insulting treatment of the employers and I tendered my resignation there. Chance did not leave me long. I accepted a job which then had fallen vacant in the Government of India Press. After that, having fallen into the trap of the amusing Reduction Scheme (this is a nice process of getting rid of the undesirable persons) of the authorities in 1923, I was removed therefrom and I had to try my luck in some other quarter. A renowned newspaper under the title "Forward" made its first appearance at that time before the public, being edited by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. I was taken in as a printer of that paper, but unfortunately the atmosphere there was also irritable to me and I resigned, with the intention of trying for the betterment of the lot of these poor press employees.

I enrolled myself as a member of the Press Employees' Association in 1919, and in course of time I became a member of the Working Committee of the said association. In 1924 the executive body favoured me with the post of organising secretary of the association. This office, which was entrusted to me, gave me the opportunity to get acquainted with the affairs concerning the presses in Bengal, and especially with the employees.

This is how I gathered knowledge regarding press affairs.

Now in the course of my statement I shall deal one after another with the presses which have, more or less, any importance.

Newspaper Press.—The first thing to mention in this connection is that work is done generally in the night time. One can well appreciate how fatiguing and troublesome it is to work all through the night. The employees have to work eight hours during the daytime or at night. But when the hard labour which the employees of the presses have to undergo at night is taken into consideration, I must say that their wages are much lower than those of their brethren who work during the daytime. I must also mention that the wages of the employees in general are very poor and hardly sufficient for their bare maintenance. So these people take advantage of the overtime duty in order to secure a few pennies more at the cost of anything. They generally work 15 to 16 hours a day. But the employers do not realize the untold miseries of their employees. The pay scale of the employees mentioned below will speak for itself about the low wages of these people.

Compositors, Rs. 20 to Rs. 50; lino operators, Rs. 25 to Rs. 100; machinemen, Rs. 30 to Rs. 60.

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Semi-Government Press. University Press and Corporation.—The authorities of these presses take strong objection when an employee wants to be enrolled as a member of this association. When they come to know of such enrolment the chance of the man concerned for any promotion becomes practically nil.

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Bengal Government Press.—In no department of the Government of India are Indians allowed to have appointments, not even in the C.I.D., and the confidential section of the press has shut the door against them; only the Anglo-Indians and native Christians have access therein. This is nothing but a deliberate insult to the Indians. Moreover, the rate of payment has been increased in this section, while in the other sections the rate remain fixed. This is calculated by the employees of the other sections as an injustice to them.

BIRENDRA KUMAR SEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA.

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The Press Employees' Grievance and Government.—Although the non-official resolutions adopted by the Council are almost all recommendatory and not mandatory, yet I am a great believer of the usefulness of the Legislative Council, which can do a great deal of work of a beneficial nature to the people. We have now two members in the local council, nominated by Government, to champion the cause of labour and speak on behalf of ourselves and other wage-earners. But in my opinion the press employees must have at least one member in the Council elected from among themselves, to raise their grievances and to have them redressed by legislation. That is, our benign Government should create a special constituency of press employees to elect its own member in the Council. I very much regret to say that the resolutions of the Council are not sometimes given effect to by the executive authorities. This may be instanced in the case in which the resolution

of the Council regarding the " Salaried System of Linotype Operators," moved by Mr. K. C. Roy Choudhuri, Labour Member, and adopted by the Council in 1928, in the February session (*vide* Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings of 9th February, 1928, page 84) have not yet been given effect to.

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INDIAN SEAMEN'S UNION.

PART I.—COVERING LETTER, dated the 3rd February, 1930.

In submitting herewith the memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union regarding the grievances of the Indian seamen and for their redress, I beg to state that my union desires to draw the attention of the Honourable Members of the Commission to the fact that this memorandum relates to the Seafarers' Section of the Union. The grievances of the members of the other two sections, namely, Waterside Workers' Section and Inland Waterways' Section, are summarized below. As regards the Seafarers' Section it may be mentioned that save and except what is stated in the memorandum I wish to add the following.

Indian Seamen's Union.—This union at present consists of three sections, the main section being the Seafarers' Section, the present strength of whose members is 15,981. This number would have been much larger but for the fact that some prominent members of the union were victimized owing to their union activities and even up till now the seamen are threatened by the brokers, Ghat butlers, Ghat serangs and their under-hands, in the name of their employers, not to become members of the union if they want employment on board a ship. It is a patent fact that some seamen, owing to the parts played by them for advancing the cause of the union, have been deliberately kept unemployed for the last 8 or 10 years. And this, no doubt, to a certain extent has proved a deterrent to those seamen who though anxious to become members of the union have not the courage to do so. It also happens that now and them mushroom unions spring up, being engineered and financed by ingenuous persons interested in maintaining the pernicious system of recruitment through licensed brokers. As an instance, one such broker by the name Sisir Kumar Ghosh, by his continued fleecing and extortion of the seamen created such an embittered situation that the seamen refused *in toto* to be recruited through him or any of his paid agents. Baffled in his attempts to supply crews to Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co., Gladstone, Wyllie & Co., Hoare, Miller & Co., Ltd., Lionel Edwards, Ltd., and others, he wanted to break the union by creating a rival one, but without any success. Goaded by this failure he, it is reported, has rushed to the court and instituted a suit against the union and its general secretary, claiming damages to the amount of Rs. 30,000. As the matter is *sub judice* my union refrains to make any comment on it.

In connection with the welfare work relating to Indian seamen, my union desires that the amount which is realized by the fines and forfeiture of their wages should be entirely devoted and spent in such welfare works.

As regards the solution of the problem of unemployment amongst seamen, my union suggests that either new recruitment be stopped for a limited period or old hands be pensioned off till the question of demand and supply be equitably adjusted.

Waterside Workers' Section.—The members of this section, whose number is about 2,000 originally belonged to the Ex. Port Trust Mariners' and Workers' Union. That body was formed on 23rd October, 1927, and was involved in a 22 days' strike within a couple of months of its formation. The strike, however, was withdrawn on the assurance by the employers to consider their legitimate grievances. These men are working in the Calcutta Port Commissioners' heave-up boats, hawser boats, anchor vessels, steam launches, Kidderpore docks, dry docks, King George dock, jolly boats, tug boats, rescue vessels, ferries, etc. Their grievances in respect of wages, working hours, leave, holidays, housing accommodation, compensation, etc., are not receiving any consideration at the hands of the authorities in spite of the assurance given to them on the 11th January, 1928, and on which the strike referred to above was withdrawn except in the case of a minor section of workers.

Their minimum demands are the following :—(i) Grant of a general increase in the wages by 25 per cent. ; introduction of (ii) eight hours' work a day ; (iii) overtime pay for extra work at the rate of time and a half for weekdays with double for Sundays and holidays ; (iv) one month's privilege for workers of all ratings without any prejudice to fundamental and medical leave ; (v) rules allowing workers the option of work in the two " Id " festival days ; (vi) Good and adequate uniform with

waterproof for all men excepting the workshop workers ; (vii) provident fund for all men ; (viii) arrangements for payment of compensation to workers for injuries received by accident in course of their employment as provided in the Workmen's Compensation Act ; (ix) amendment of the Calcutta Port Trust Act for taking a representative of the labour employed by the Commissioners of the Calcutta Port Trust ; (x) formal recognition of the union by the Port Trust.

The financial position of the Port Trust stands on a very sound basis. Their balance sheets bear testimony to this fact. But it is regrettable that no overtime pay is given to the ill-paid Indian khalasis, manjis, tindals and serangs, etc., working in the Port Commissioners' various boats. They are exploited in all possible ways. The Trust pays Rs. 20 for khalasis of tug boats, launches, hopper barges and dredgers ; Rs. 16-8 annas to Rs. 21-8 annas for lock-gate machinery khalasis, coal trimmers and firemen ; Rs. 22 to Rs. 23 for jolly boat khalasis, Kidderpore dock khalasis, dry docks' khalasis and hawser boat khalasis ; and Rs. 32 for heave-up boat khalasis, who work 30 to 40 feet deep in water for the moving and unmoving the ships. Considering the enormous profits the Port Commissioners have been reaping every year the wages paid to their employees are considerably low. Besides, these men are subjected to more than 12 hours' work and it is time that their hours of work were regulated on the principle of 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week.

Inland Waterways Section.—About 50,000 seamen are working in the inland waterways of Bengal, Behar, Orissa and Assam. Messrs. India General Navigation Co., Ltd., Rivers Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., East Bengal River Steam Service, Ltd., Corporation of Calcutta, Hoare, Miller & Co., Turner, Morrison & Co., B.N. Railway, are amongst the chief employers of these seamen. These employers do not recruit the crew direct. The masters (serangs) and drivers (engineers) as a condition of their service have to find crews for the vessels. Abuses exist in this method of recruitment and there is no security of service of the crew under this obnoxious system. These employers sometimes give 10 per cent. dividend to their shareholders, and the wages of their employees are not at all commensurate with the profits of the companies. The crew sometimes get Rs. 8 or Rs. 10 per month as wages and they have no direct connection with the companies. The serangs and mistries who recruit the crew often treat them as chattels. The present standing grievances of the workers of this section are briefly put below :—

(i) Direct recruitment of the crew through the employment bureau with representatives of labour on it ; (ii) 50 per cent. general increment of the wages of the crew, excluding the serangs and drivers, who are, in fact, engineers and officers, and thus virtually linked with the employers as labour contractors ; (iii) 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week with overtime pay for extra work ; (iv) medical facilities to be given in cases of sickness and accidents, including medical examination on board the vessel before being employed ; (v) housing accommodation at different centres with recreation facilities ; (vi) amendment of Workmen's Compensation Act so as to include native prams under 100 tons for conferring compensation benefits for accidents to crews engaged in small vessels ; (vii) necessary training and adequate manning of vessels so that there may not be overstrain ; (viii) recognition of the union by the employers ; (ix) provision of rations to the crews as obtained in coastal and foreign-going vessels ; (x) sufficient accommodation and sanitary arrangements on board the steamers.

In conclusion, I beg to submit that the members of my union expect that the Honourable Members of the Commission will take into their serious consideration the grievances mentioned in the memorandum as well as in this letter, and will devise ways and means for their redress at an early date.

PART II.

MEMORANDUM OF THE INDIAN SEAMEN'S UNION.

I.—Recruitment.

(1) and (2). From the dim past the greater volume of trade of Upper and Eastern India used to be carried on along the Ganges and the Brahmmaputra. It appears that Satgaon, on the Hooghly, was en emporium of trade, and Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese pilgrim, mentioned Tamluk as a seaport of Bengal. The Arabs, while plying in the Indian Ocean for trading purposes did not fail to touch the sea-coast towns of Bengal. Soon after the arrival of Vasco de Gama in the Court of Samorin his countrymen established their sway in the Bay of Bengal inasmuch as they had a king of their own in the Island of Sandvip. The people of these sea-coast towns like Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Sylhet on the Surma river and Dacca on the Buriganga, like the people of Devonshire, naturally took to seafaring life, and these

places have been all along the recruiting ground for supplying crews to the ships. Some of these people for enjoying the amenities of life gravitated to Calcutta which, within a short time of its foundation by Job Charnock, turned into a city of palaces and ultimately Calcutta, now the premier seaport in India, like the aforesaid places, also became a source of supply of seamen. The Portuguese Settlements of Dacca and Calcutta also supply a regular contingent of Goanese seamen for recruitment from the port of Calcutta.

The seamen who hail from Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong form the bulk of the engine crew, while the deck crew consists mainly of people coming from Noakhali and Chittagong, and the saloon department is generally swamped by men from Calcutta.

According to the latest information obtained from the Government Shipping Office at Calcutta, it is found that 233,742 seamen have been registered during the period covering from 1887 to November, 1929, and that about 140,000 seamen are now available for work, and about 50,000 plus 3,000 in the coastal steamers are engaged at a time from the port of Calcutta. The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible that a considerable number of seamen always remain unemployed. The rank and file of the seamen while so unemployed invariably go to their respective villages, and after a short stay there again come to the city in the expectation of getting jobs on board the ships. Though there is continuous unemployment on a large scale yet these men who go without employment sometimes for years together do not give up their distinctive character as seamen. The only nexus that connects these seamen to their native villages is nothing but a heart's desire to see those who are dear and near to them.

3. The system of recruitment of Indian seamen at Calcutta is highly prejudicial to their interests. The laws on the subject are contained in Section 18 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act of 1859 corresponding to Section 24 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act of 1923. The said section empowers the local Government to grant a licence to fit persons to engage or supply seamen for merchant ships in British India. This obnoxious system from the very beginning of its inception has become a veritable breeding-ground of all sorts of abuses and corruptions, and the evils of " crimping " are found running rampant under the very nose of the shipping master. The licensed shipping brokers and their under-hands, the Ghat Serangs and the Ghat Butlers, without any scruple, began to fleece the poor seamen in all conceivable ways. The seamen thus relentlessly pursued and bled white by these " land sharks " made piteous appeals to the Government of India to come to their rescue. The Government, while admitting that the system of licensed shipping brokers was theoretically wrong and that grave abuses actually existed, did not ratify the Draft Convention for establishing facilities for finding employment for seamen adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations convened at Genoa on the 15th day of June, 1920. The licensed shipping brokers, finding themselves quite free to act as they pleased, began to fatten on the illegal gratifications squeezed out from the unwilling hands of these poor seamen, and the section of the Act providing punishment for such offence always remained a dead letter. The situation at last became so intolerable that these men through their union carried on a systematic and vigorous agitation for the abolition of this system. The Government of India was at last moved to appoint a small committee to enquire into the present method of recruitment of seamen at the different ports of India in order that it might be definitely ascertained whether abuses existed and whether those abuses are susceptible of remedy. The committee took evidence in Bombay and Calcutta, and their report was published in the *Gazette of India* on 27th May, 1922, where the Government thus admitted :—" The committee have presented a unanimous report in which they find that the present system under which the shipping companies engage seamen through licensed brokers appointed under Section 18 of Act I of 1859, or private brokers (in Calcutta sometimes known as Ghat Serangs) have resulted in grave abuses. After taking legal opinion the Government of India have decided to treat as confidential the first three paragraphs of the report, which describe the existing system and the abuse to which it is liable." Thus denied the privilege of seeing those paragraphs the seamen now wish to avail themselves of the present opportunity of requesting the honourable members of the Commission to look into the same and form their own opinions in the matter. The said committee made certain recommendations, the most important of which was the formation of a " recruitment bureau " along with advisory committees with representatives of shipowners and seamen on the same. No effect is given to these recommendations as yet, save and except the announcement by local Government made in December, 1924, of the appointment of Captain H. F. Darvell as shipping master as well as officer-in-charge, Seamen's Recruitment Bureau. In August of the same year the same Government informed the union that the said bureau would be started in the next October or early in November. But, in fact, the bureau did not come into

existence at all, nor a single seaman was ever heard to have been recruited through the so-called bureau or the officer-in-charge, and consequently the designation is nothing but a " misnomer." The abuses attendant upon the present method of recruitment of seamen are so many and so grave that the Indian Seamen's Union in its various meetings did not fail to impress upon the attention of the authorities the necessity of abolishing this pernicious system of recruiting seamen through licensed shipping brokers and Ghat Serangs. The shipping master has practically no hand in the matter of recruitment, and his assistant similarly does not look after the recruitment of the seamen. The powers and functions of both these officers are limited in their character and scope. They do not and cannot check the grave abuses which exist, nor do they improve the conditions of recruitment. They cannot even stop direct recruitment by some of the shipping companies made through their Ghat Serangs. The problem of unemployment amongst seamen has not yet been effectively handled, and the appalling figures of ever-increasing unemployment, owing to want of regulation of the seamen's engagements by their registered turns according to different ratings, are a standing source of anxiety to the union. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that a State Employment Bureau for Seamen should be established without further delay. The deplorable victimization of seamen by " crimps " and similar social parasites is too well known to require comment. The business of finding employment for seamen shall not be carried on as a commercial enterprise for pecuniary gain, but that free public employment offices should be provided either jointly by representative associations of shipowners and seamen under the control of a central authority, or, in the absence of such joint action, by the State itself. But it is preferable that a State Employment Bureau should consist of a Government officer with a sufficient staff and two representatives of the Indian Seamen's Union and two representatives of the shipping companies. The doors of employment and recruitment of seamen should be flung wide open and it will be a narrow and parochial idea to restrict by legislation the recruitment of seamen to the local limits of the port of engagement. The work of the seamen is by its very nature largely international, and they form to a large extent an international community, and there is, therefore, no reason for confining them to a particular locality for finding avenues of employment. The special discipline to which a seaman is subjected, his life of wandering confinement, his direct and perilous struggle with the elements—all these tend to show that he needs special legal protection for safeguarding his interest and privileges without any distinction of caste, creed and colour. The union for the redress of the seamen's grievances in the matter of recruitment times out of number from different presses and platforms and through the All-India Trade Union Congress passed resolutions and pressed upon the attention of the Government of India the necessity of amending the Indian Merchant Shipping Act so as to do away with the pernicious system of recruitment of seamen through the licensed brokers and Ghat Serangs as per recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee and for the establishment of a State Employment Bureau at all the ports of India. The union also pressed the necessity of getting the Seamen's Articles of Agreement always signed in the shipping office and not on board the ships in accordance with the wishes of the shipowners, which is calculated to be detrimental to the best interests of the seamen. The union also urged the Government of India to delete forthwith from the Seamen's Articles of Agreement the column regarding the report as to the quality of seamen's work (as recommended in the Convention passed in the International Labour Conference held at Geneva, 1926) as this column has been greatly misused by shipping authorities to harass and victimize the seamen. In the Articles of Agreement Indian seamen as a rule sign for a period of one year with an option of three months. But if the company wants it can discharge the men without assigning any reason and at any port during this term without payment of the wages for the unexpired period. But the seamen themselves on their part cannot give up their job till the contract period is over. The seamen want that provision should be made in the Articles of Agreement for payment of wages for such unexpired period, and the absence of such and other kindred matters in the Merchant Shipping Act often leads the Indian seamen to think that the said Act is something like a *Galley Slave Act* of the days of the Roman Empire. My union strongly feels that the time has come for the Government of India to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Assembly for enforcing the recommendations of the Recruitment Committee, and for introducing 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week in the matters of hours of work for seamen and to bring the present Merchant Shipping Act in conformity with the principles underlying the various Conventions and Recommendations passed in the International Labour Conference (Maritime Session) regarding (1) minimum age for admission of children to employment at sea, (2) unemployment indemnity in case of loss or foundering of the ship, (3) facilities for finding employment for seamen, (4) compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea, (5) Seamen's Articles of Agreement, and (6) repatriation of seamen.

Boats of smaller weight than 300 tons should also be included in the Act, as this would materially benefit the seamen on these boats.

(7) *Unemployment.*—The great abuses consequent upon the existing method of recruitment of seamen through Government licensed shipping brokers whereby the seamen have to pay in an indirect form 25 per cent. of their total wages merely for the purpose of being recruited by this obnoxious machinery for work on board ship go *pari passu* with the acute distress and sufferings due to unemployment on a large scale so far as India is concerned. The Indian seamen number 2,50,000, while the number employed by the shipping companies at any one time is only 50,000. This means that practically 2,00,000 men are always unempoyed, although they may get chances of employment in rotation. Both for the health of the seamen and for giving equal opportunities to all of them for getting employment it is essentially necessary that the supply of seamen as crews should be regulated by the registered turns of the men, as this system alone will effectively deal with the problem of unemployment among seamen. There are certain ranks of seamen who renew their agreement after every voyage, and in this way they continue their service sometimes for four years without giving any chance to a seaman of the same category to step into his shoes just after a voyage. It is to the interest of seamen in general that at the end of one year's voyage seamen should be discharged and fresh engagements should be effected, and the registered turns should be the determining factor in the matter of selection for such recruitment. The British India Steam Navigation Co. engages seamen direct through their Ghat Serangs, who give preference to such seamen who can best satisfy their greed for money, and thus many deserving seamen are thrown overboard, and thus baffled in their attempts to get employment they are reduced to the verge of starvation with their families. The union finds itself helpless in the matter under the existing law, and even its recommendation of a deserving man for a job on board the ship invariably falls flat upon the ear of the Companies.

III.—Housing.

There is no housing accommodation provided for seamen either by the employers or the Government. The seamen who come to the city from their distant native places or who after discharge want to stay in the city invariably live in boarding houses called *Lathis*, owned and managed by private individuals. The accommodation each man gets in a *lathi* is very small. The seamen generally live in a *lathi* like herrings in a barrel. These seamen, owing to their very low poor wages, cannot afford to hire a house for living with their families in the city. So to be once in the bosom of a family after a strenuous voyage is looked upon by them rather as an agreeable surprise than a matter of necessity. Seamen, while thus living in the city without any check or control, often fall into temptation and allurements of a big city like Calcutta, and thus contract many vices and diseases. Neither private landlords nor the union have so far been able to provide housing facilities for seamen. We take this opportunity of emphasising the necessity of establishing an Indian Sailors' Home in this city at the expense of the Government, providing all the amenities of life for the poor seamen who have done so much during the Great War.

IV.—Health.

The health of the Indian seamen greatly suffers, owing to want of proper housing facilities, and they generally wander into paths leading to moral decreptitude and physical breakdown. There are no arrangements for their treatment if attacked with any venereal or other diseases. Neither the Government nor the employer provides medical facilities for these men. When they come from their native villages they come with very good physique, and after living here some days they deteriorate in health. These seamen would gladly avail themselves of proper medical aid if available. The sanitary arrangements regarding latrines, drinking water, bathing and washing in lodging houses, though made according to the requirements of the municipal law, cannot be fully utilized by seamen owing to overcrowding. The protection of the health of the seamen was one of the subjects for discussion in the last Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference 1929. Propaganda amongst seamen concerning the dangers of venereal diseases, the necessity for infected persons to receive attention, the free provision of prophylactic measures for seamen, and the organization of free and accessible treatment for tropical venereal and other diseases, as is provided for by the Brussels Agreement—these are the things essentially necessary for the welfare of the Indian seamen. The institution and development in all Indian ports of a certain size of meeting and recreation rooms (canteens and rooms for games), libraries, sports' organizations and opportunities for exercises—these things are necessary for the health of the Indian seamen. In Indian ports the European seamen enjoy many amenities of life which are denied to Indian seamen.

The authorities of foreign countries have practically done nothing to protect the interests of Indian seamen in various seaports, especially in matters of health and recreation. Lt.-Col. W. L. Harnett, representing the Government of Bengal at the recent Fourth Imperial Social Hygiene Congress which met in London in July last informed the Conference that at the Port of Calcutta the recreational facilities for seamen were being extended, and that in the autumn a very fine new club would be opened which would include a V.D. treatment centre. Such facilities, we are constrained to say, are meant purely for the European seamen, and the doors of this new club would not be flung open to Indian seamen. The dissemination of appropriate information concerning tropical, venereal, and other diseases and their cure and prevention, and the printing in their vernacular and distribution free of cost of such booklets providing seamen with all the necessary information concerning their welfare in port, and the inclusion in publications intended for seamen of the addresses of hostels, houses, clubs, dispensaries, etc., with indications of their advantages—these want immediate attention and necessary action at the hands of the authorities. The Indian Government by piloting a resolution through the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, did not ratify the Draft Conventions nor accepted the recommendations adopted by the 10th International Labour Conference concerning Sickness Insurance. The said Government have not taken steps in the matter of insurance of Indian seamen against incapacity or sickness, old ages insurance, or retiring pensions, insurance against unemployment through shipwreck or other causes. We wish to point out in this connection that Government should take adequate and effective steps for the protection of Indian seamen in cases of sickness and for their treatment while injured on board the ship. Such sick and injured seamen are invariably landed in the nearest port, and they go without pay for months together till they are landed at their home ports. Nothing can be more regrettable than this. They are thus stranded and marooned in many inhospitable places, there to shift for themselves till a passage is arranged to take them to their ports of engagement or nearest port in India.

V.—Welfare Work.

There is no welfare work amongst seamen and neither the employers nor the Government have taken any steps in the matter. No provision is made for refreshments, shelters and creches or for physical culture, recreation and amusements. No provision is made for spreading education amongst the children of the seamen and the much talked-of Nautical Institute for the training of seamen and their boys has not yet seen the light of day. All hopes centered on it have now been dashed to the ground. It is greatly desired that provisions for old age and premature retirement and the establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of seamen and a Statutory Seamen's Welfare Fund be started at an early date. For the welfare of seamen there should be adoption of legislative measures or regulations embodying among others the following measures, account being taken of national and local conditions :—(1) Regulation of the sale of alcohol including measures for the closing of taverns near the dock areas ; (2) restriction of the sale and use of narcotics ; (3) necessity of instructing seamen in the dangers arising from the use of narcotics ; (4) prohibition of employment of attendants of both sexes in public houses or hotels under a certain age ; (5) institution of official supervision of taverns, lodging houses, and hotels ; (6) supervision of persons visiting ships in order to prevent persons desiring to go on board with the intention of introducing alcoholic drinks or narcotics or for other undesirable purposes from having access thereto ; (7) sufficient lighting for docks and the fencing of dock areas, wherever such a measure is possible, by fixed or moveable barriers ; (8) supervision of boatmen plying between the ships and the shore ; (9) removal from the port areas of loafers and persons of no definite occupation ; (10) the admission without difficulty of seamen of all nationalities and all religious beliefs to public hospitals and dispensaries in ports ; (11) steps to favour the general adoption of the system under which, as soon as a seaman is enrolled, he may allocate, if he so desires, part of his wages for regular remittance to his family ; (12) initiation and contribution by Government to the fund for social insurance institutions ; (13) exemption of seamen possessing identity papers with their photographs attached duly issued by the national authorities, e.g., seamen's discharge books, from the requirements of presenting ordinary passports on disembarking in foreign countries.

There at present exist marked inequalities in the treatment of the seamen of Asiatic countries, as compared with other seamen performing the same work, in particular in such matters as wages, hours, the system of recruitment, unemployment, housing, health, the protection afforded by the laws of the country of the shipowners in respect of insurance, Workmen's Compensation, freedom of association, etc. There should be protection of seamen in cases of sickness and injury and there should be application of compulsory sickness insurance to all ships engaged in maritime navigation, including sea fishing boats, but with the exception of ships of war, and

to every person employed on board, and the period of protection to begin with the commencement of service to the expiration of a specified period from termination of service. The benefits to consist of payment of benefit to a seaman who is incapable of work by reason of sickness, is not entitled to his wages, and is present in the country in which the insurance institution is established, and payment of benefit to dependents of a seaman during the period between the termination of his right to wages and his return to the country in which the insurance institution is to be established. It is for the Government to choose between the two systems of rates of benefits, e.g., flat rate and rate varying with service category or wages of the seaman and there should be special provision on behalf of seamen having family responsibilities—medical treatment, supply of proper and sufficient medicines and appliances where necessary, hospital treatment or expenses thereof, and grant of medical benefit as long as the sick person needs it, and fixing of a period during which benefit may be granted, maternity benefit and funeral benefit—to these subjects the union desires the Commission to pay special attention so that necessary action may be taken in the matter without delay.

VI.—Education.

The Government or the employers so far have not taken any steps for spreading general or technical or vocational education among the seamen or their children. The appalling illiteracy that prevails among Indian seamen is the root cause of their falling into the traps of many diseases, leading spendthrift lives, and often turning out moral wrecks. It is no fault of theirs but the employers or the Government should see that the horizon of life of an Indian seaman be widened and that as his services have been well-proved during the Great War he may lead a happy, prosperous, and peaceful life and that his children may aspire after things higher and nobler than what their father pursued. The system of beaurocratic government of the country is primarily responsible for the many present evils and woes under which the poor seamen have been suffering. Nothing is more pressing than the immediate institution of the Nautical Institute at Calcutta for the training of the Indian seamen and their children.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the preamble to the Treaty of Versailles raised great hopes in the minds of the workers of the world. It laid down many principles for the benefit of the workers such as social equality, labour legislation, regulation of the labour supply, prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage and the protection of the workers against sickness, disease and injury. These principles, all of which are necessary in order that the workers may live under peaceful conditions, are embodied in the preamble to the Peace Treaty, and every state member, who promised to establish the League of Nations, promised also to establish the International Labour Organization in order to create world peace and annual conferences under the auspices of this organization are held for drafting and passing conventions and recommendations relating to the needs, requirements, and grievances of the workers of the world. The seamen are a special class of workers, their work is of an international character—it is they who practically give life to the shipping industry, it is they who raise by the sweat of their brow the dividends of the shipowners' shares, it is they who keep the trade and commerce of a country intact and advance the cause of national and international trade. Everybody knows that the prosperity of a nation depends on its trade and commerce, and these depend largely on the seamen and the seamen alone. But it is a pity that whatever conventions and recommendations are passed in the different maritime sessions and general sessions of the International Labour Conferences relating to the welfare of the Indian seamen save and except the convention regarding trimmers and stokers they are *in toto* rejected in the Legislative Assembly with the help of the Government. What is achieved at Geneva is invariably wasted at Delhi. Whatever is decided in an international forum for the benefit of the poor seamen is dashed to the ground by an unsympathetic beaurocratic Government of the country to which the belong. Can anything be more deplorable than this ? Time has come for the Government of India to change its angle of vision and to ratify the conventions and accept the recommendations that are passed with the consent of its representatives in the various International Labour Conferences.

VII.—Safety.

Reliable statistics of industrial accidents as available in the ports of important countries of Europe are not to be found in this country. As no regular official wage statistics are published in India as a whole so in the absence of any definite official data relating to accidents in loading or unloading of ships or accidents that daily occur on board the ship to seamen while engaged in their daily work, it is difficult to give an accurate figure for the accidents that occur every year to Indian seamen in Indian ports or on board the ships. The Indian ports are not even properly equipped.

An idea of the number of accidents that are likely to happen in the port of Calcutta alone, can be gathered if we take into consideration the fact that here during 1927–27 the net tonnage of shipping entering was 4,177,118 and the income was Rs. 312,300,183.

The administration of the affairs of Indian ports is vested by law in bodies specially constituted for the purpose and the European members constitute the majority and they are conspicuous by the absence of any representative of the labour force, particularly Indian seamen. There are not in the ports adequate preventive and precautionary measures in the matter of prevention of accidents. With the enormous heavy packages always hanging over the dockworkers like Damocles' sword they on many occasions are subjected to fatal accidents and without any first-aid given to such victims and without any proper medical treatment accorded to them they die premature deaths. The Government of India recently, by moving a resolution in the Legislative Assembly, did not accept the convention and recommendations relating to minimum wage fixing machinery and did not take into its consideration the preventions of accidents in loading and unloading of ships—matters which were mooted and discussed in the 11th Session of the International Labour Conference at Geneva.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

The Workmen's Compensation Act is not widely in use. Many of the illiterate seamen do not even know of its existence. Those seamen who know of it owing to difficulties which have to be met, the fight that has to be waged in order to get the requisite compensation, fight shy of the Act and if the injury be not of a very serious character they would invariably keep silent. In order to reap the full benefits of the Act, it is essentially necessary for the employers to be humane and the employees to be on the alert and educated so that the latter may know the implications of the Act and the benefits to be derived therefrom. In this connection the union suggests that the Government of India should issue instructions at an early date to all the shipping masters in India to arrange to obtain compensation to injured seamen by representing their cases to the local agents of the companies in India rather than by referring to the shipowners at home so that the inordinate delays caused thereby and the consequent untold miseries to seamen may be avoided. The union urges upon the attention of the Government of India the desirability of giving benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Act to Indian seamen engaged in ships registered in the United Kingdom and in home-trade ships of a registered tonnage of less than 300 tons even.

XI.—Hours and Special Questions Relating to Seamen and Workers in Inland Navigation.

The Indian Seamen's Union of Calcutta have been persistently demanding an eight-hour day and forty-eight hour week for the seamen of all categories engaged on board ship. We also desire that in the Articles of Agreement there should be some such provision fixing the maximum hours of work per day or per week each seaman has to do, so that the seaman may not be subjected to considerable strain of overwork without any additional remuneration. This reform in the matter of regulation of hours of work on board ship is long overdue. The principle of the eight-hour day and the forty-eight hour week was approved a decade ago in the First International Labour Conference held at Washington. After the sufferings through which the world had passed, it was felt necessary to achieve unity and harmony everywhere. It is necessary that the position of the workers and of the seamen be improved, with the help of collaboration of the employers and the workers. Every benefit given to seamen is in the interest of the shipowners themselves, since the efficiency of the shipping industry of a country will be dependent on the welfare of the crews employed in the industry. The idea underlying the French Eight-Hour-Day Act is the promotion of progressive improvement in the conditions of seamen as a better guarantee for the prosperity of the industry. Labour is not to be considered simply as a commodity—Labour is collaboration—Labour in the last resort is friendship. Mr. Havelock Wilson said: "What about this 48 hour business? Every point so far advanced against the seamen's 48 hours can be met step by step." The seamen's work is always international, he works in all parts of the world, on all the high seas, and a seaman of one nationality works with seamen of other nationalities on the very same seas. In the Peace Treaty there is the expression "climatic conditions" and this is applicable to all seamen irrespective of caste, creed and colour. There should, therefore, be uniformity of working hours. When the question of working hours for industrial workers on land was discussed in the Washington Conference it was pointed out that owing to climatic conditions of India, the Indian workers could not be given an eight-hour day, but that the hours of work under

existing legislation in this country should be permitted. A 60-hour week was therefore fixed. But the Government of India has very recently informed the International Labour Office that Indian seamen who are engine hands work for eight hours, deck hands work nine hours, and catering staff ten hours. It thus appears that climatic conditions should not stand in the way of an eight-hour day and 48-hour week for Indian seamen.

Sir Geoffrey Corbet (Government Delegate, India, in the last maritime session of the International Labour Conference, 1929) has said that Indian seamen are physically weak and that one white seaman is equal to two Indians. But the wages of an English seaman are £9–10*s.* whereas an Indian seaman receives only Rs.23 or £1–15*s.* If, therefore, two Indian seamen can do the work of one white seaman it would appear that even so they receive only £3–10*s.* as compared with £9–10*s.* This is the position so far as Indian seamen are concerned; they are exploited by white shipowners in every possible way.

" No reasonable argument has ever been put forward by the shipowners why the seamen should work longer hours than the shore-workers," writes Mr. J. Henson, of the Marine Section of the Transport and General Workers' Union in the " Daily Herald " of 17th December, 1929, replying to the observations of Lord Inchcape at the annual meeting of the P. & O. Steamship Company. He points out that Lord Inchcape is wrong in suggesting that the seamen are satisfied with the present position. " Shorter hours for sailors will not harm, but will benefit the shipping industry, and in the end it comes to the point that the shipowner must be paid despite himself," so said Mr. Havelock Wilson whom Lord Inchcape repeatedly praised.

Referring to the huge surplus of the P. & O. Company revealed by Lord Inchcape —over £40,000,000 net, Mr. Henson declares that the average wage paid to Indian seamen is 32*s.* a month, just over 1*s.* a day, and that their hours of work are from sunrise to sunset. And he suggests that if the P. & O. had led the way in paying them the same rates as paid to Europeans, the accumulated assets and dividends might not have been so large.

It is the duty of the Government to ratify the Washington Convention relating to seamen's hours and the first act of the Labour Government in Britain was to express its consent to such a beneficial measure for the seamen.

II.—Staff Organization.

The Government of India some time ago started a training school on the I.M.T.S. *Dufferin* for giving facilities for training of seamen or men for sea-service as officers and engineers in the Mercantile Marine Service. But lads from 13 to 16 years of age and with sufficient means are admitted as cadets and that not a single seaman's son is admitted. The reasons for this state of things can better be imagined than described. Seamen look upon the Government to make such adequate provisions that their sons may get training in the *Dufferin* without much hardship and expense on their part, otherwise the very object for which the *Dufferin* stands will be frustrated, much to the regret of the seamen.

Special questions relating to Seamen and Workers in Inland Navigation.

As has been said before the Indian seamen should not be subjected to work for more than eight hours a day. As regards changes to be introduced in the existing Merchant Shipping Act the union suggests that provision should be made therein for abolishing the system of recruitment of the crew through licensed shipping brokers, the establishment of a State Employment Bureau with representatives of the Government, employers and the seamen, the provision in the Articles of Agreement for payment of wages to seamen for the unexpired period in case of sudden dismissal of him by the companies for no fault on the part of the seamen so recruited. Sections 52, 53 and 54 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act lay down the rules for the allotment system and they are never acted upon by the authorities. So instructions should be given to masters and owners of steamers that they should be put into practical operation forthwith. The seamen go on voyage and their families go on borrowing, and the seamen on return find everything mortgaged or pawned and the debts run to a heavy amount which it often becomes very difficult for them to pay. If three-fourths of the wages of the seaman be allotted to his wife or family as the case may be during the period of voyage, then his family would not experience hardship and would not contract debt at an exhorbitant rate of interest. European seamen are given overtime allowance and there is no reason why the Indian seamen should not get the same. The system of unemployment insurance like that prevailing in England should be enforced for the Indian seamen.

XII.—Wages.

Unemployment, of which seafarers are having their share, is once again bringing to the front the question of Indian seamen being engaged in British ships. Before the war it was not uncommon, in a British forecastle, for as many languages to be heard as the number of the crew, but to-day British predominate in British ships. The wages and other conditions of work are not equal, so far as the Indian seamen are concerned. In June, 1929, the President of the Board of Trade in reply to Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P., stated that out of 200,525 seamen employed on vessels registered in the United Kingdom, 52,062 were Asiatic or East African seamen, who were serving on agreements which opened and terminated in Asia. This means that these seamen signing in Asia, are bound to accept any wage which the shipowners may choose to offer them. The following figures (as quoted by Mr. Henson in the "Daily Herald," dated 29th December, 1928) of monthly rates of wages for various classes of seafarers show that the rates for Asiatics are far below those for British :—

	£	s.	d.
Quarter Masters, British	9	10	0
,, Bombay Lascar	4	10	0
,, Calcutta	4	2	6
Sailor, British	9	0	0
,, Bombay Lascar	2	6	6
,, Calcutta	1	17	6
,, Chinamen	3	5	4
Greaser, British	10	0	0
,, Bombay Lascar	2	19	3
,, Calcutta	1	19	0
,, Chinamen	3	19	4
Fireman, British	9	10	0
,, Bombay Lascar	2	2	9
,, Calcutta	1	14	6
,, Chinamen	3	16	2
Assistant Steward, British	8	5	0
,, Bombay Lascar	3	3	0
,, Calcutta	2	11	0
,, Chinamen	3	5	4

It has been contended in the journal of the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain and Ireland that the employment of Indian seamen is a necessity as they are better able than white men to stand a tropical climate. The time has come for the Indian seamen to receive the same wages and conditions as his British and European brother has obtained. If he is better able to stand the working conditions in a ship's stokehold, or on deck, he should receive equal, or higher wages than the European. But Mr. Henson contends that the cheapness is the reason for such recruitment of Indian seamen. He says, "No, the real reason he is carried is because he can be obtained at a low rate, his living accommodation on board ship is less, and in case of death his compensation, if any, is only a small amount. If claims are made and disputes arise—well, the claimants are in India and the owners are in Great Britain."

The above figures and the passage quoted clearly show the deplorable state of affairs regarding wages and working conditions of the Indian seamen. They do not get a living wage to keep their body and soul together. The figures given below show the existing rates :—

Deck Staff.

Ratings.	Passenger Steamer. (per month). Rupees.	Cargo Line. (per month). Rupees.
Deck Serang	60	50 (coastal vessel).
Seacunney	55	45 (coastal vessel).
Tindal	37	
2nd Tindal	30	
Cassab	30	
Winchman	28	
Lascars	18 to 25	
Bhandary	25	
Topas	22	

Engine Room Staff.

Ratings.	Passenger Steamer. (per month). Rupees.	Cargo Line. (per month). Rupees.
Engine Serang	60	
1st Tindal	35	
2nd Tindal	30	
3rd Tindal	28	
Cassab	28	
Donkeyman	28	
Oilman	26	
Fireman	23	
Trimmer	18	
Bhandary	25	
Topas	22	
Saloon Department.		
Butler-in-charge	80	
Butler under steward ..	75	
2nd butler	40 to 50	
Baker mate	30	
Baker	70	
Chief cook	70	
2nd cook	40	40
3rd cook	25	
4th cook	20	
Chief cook and butler ..	75	75
Saloon boy	32	35
	B.I. Rs. 33	
Half saloon boy	15	
Captain's boy	32	35
	B.I. Rs. 30	
Chief Engineer's boy ..	32	35
	B.I. Rs. 30	
Officer's boy	32	35
	B.I. Rs. 30	
Marconi boy	30	
Mess room boy	33	
Mess room mate	16	
Butcher	45 to 50	
Butcher's mate	25	
Scullion	24	
Topas	22	
Pantryman, 1st class ..	40	37
Pantryman, 2nd class ..	35	
Pantry mate	20	

As has been pointed out already, the Indian Government recently passed a resolution in the Legislative Assembly not to give effect to the Convention and Recommendation passed in the Eleventh Session of the International Labour Conference in 1928 regarding Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery. So the woes of the Indian seamen can be better imagined than described.

XIV.—Individual Trade Unions—The Indian Seamen's Union.

Early in the year 1908, Mr. S. Moghal Jan, under the patronage of the late Honourable Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur, lately member of the Executive Council of the Government of Bengal, founded the Indian Seamen's Anjuman. The principle objects of the Anjuman were to render help to the distressed seamen and to promote their well-being in all possible ways. The seamen themselves took a keen interest in the organization and development of this Anjuman. But the promoters of the Anjuman having gone to sea it remained for a time in a dormant state. During the Great War the seamen wanted to revive it. The year 1914 which witnessed the Great War brought in its train harrowing tales of woes to the homes of many Indian seamen. The Indian seamen carrying their lives in their hands, bravely stood to their posts and thus rendered incalculable service to the Empire during its gravest moments. Many of these seamen died and wounded owing to submarines and enemy operations on the sea. During these terrible days of the war, news were scanty and the families of those seamen who were out on the

sea could not know even whether their dear ones serving in the ships were then in the land of the living or passed away. To add insult to the injury the relatives of those seamen who lost their lives in the sea for advancing the cause of the Empire were subjected to indignities in getting the balance of wages and other dues of the lost ones from the shipping office. Great was the indignation felt by the Indian seamen and some meetings of the seamen were held for the purpose of reviving their organization which under the name and style of the Indian Seamen's Benevolent Union was brought to the existence under this new garb on March 8th, 1918. Mr. R. Braunfield, Barrister-at-Law, happened to be its President. Then for some reasons some of the prominent workers seceded and started what was known as the Indian National Seamen's Union which again was coalesced with the Indian Seamen's Benevolent Union which both became henceforth known as the Indian Seamen's Union whose president was Mr. R. Braunfield till his death. Then again trouble arose and a rival Union under the name and style National Seamen's Union of India was started. It was on the 7th August, 1927, that both the Indian Seamen's Union and the National Seamen's Union of India was amalgamated under the present name and style of the Indian Seamen's Union whose present president is Mr. Mahbubul Huq, M.A., B.L., and Mr. Aftab Ally as Secretary. This union is registered (Register No. 12) under the Trade Union Act with its head office at 7, Ekbalpur Lane, Calcutta. This is also affiliated with the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam, and its affiliation with the All-India Trade Union Congress has been recently in a meeting of the seamen withdrawn, owing to the said Congress having gone under the control of persons holding extreme views on labour matters. The representatives of this Union, as the following figures show, attended the International Labour Conferences at Geneva.

1926 Mr. M. Daud, M.A., B.L., Delegate.
1926 Mr. S. Moghal Jan, Adviser.
1928 Mr. Mahbubul Huq, M.A., B.L., Adviser.
1929 Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, M.L.A., Adviser.
1929 Mr. M. Daud, M.A., B.L., Delegate.
1929 Mr. S. Muzammil Ali, Adviser.

Mr. Mabubul Huq, M.A., B.L., also attended the British Commonwealth Labour Conference held in London in 1928, as a delegate from India. Mr. K. Ahmad, Barrister-at-Law, M.L.A., an ex-President of the union, is a member of this Royal Commission on Indian Labour.

The Demands of the Union.—The union has formulated the following demands, which the seamen in their various meetings have been insisting upon for being met by the authorities concerned :—

Programme of Demands.—(i) Fifty per cent. increase in the wages of all seafarers.

(ii) Forty-eight hours to constitute a week's work at sea, with a 42 hours week at port.

(iii) Payment for all overtime at the rate of time and a half for week days with double time for Sundays and holidays, whether in sea or in port.

(iv) Wages to commence from the time of signing on, and end the day of paying off.

(v) Free passage to home ports for all seamen left in foreign ports due to sickness, and full wages to be paid up to and including the day of arrival in the home port.

(vi) Monthly allotment notes to be allowed to all dependents up to 75 per cent. of the total wage, and all members of the crew to have the option of drawing the balance at any port.

(vii) Proper accommodation to be made for the Indian seamen in all ships, and also mess-rooms to be established with free eating utensils, with wash-houses equipped with shower baths to be built separate from mess-room ; stewards to be employed in all ships for the Indian seamen.

(viii) Abolition of the existing scale of provisions and a " full and plenty " scale to be instituted.

(ix) Beds, pillows and blankets, with weekly changes of clean sheet, pillow slips and soap and towels to be supplied free of charge by the ship-owners.

(x) A pension scheme to be instituted for all seamen with 20 years' adult sea service shown in discharge books ; the ship owners collectively to create a National Central Fund to which seamen shall not contribute and from which all pensions shall be paid.

(xi) Full cash compensation to be made to seamen by ship-owners for loss of kit or personal effects due to ship-wreck, fire, accidents, etc.

(xii) Tobacco, cigarettes, working clothes and boots to be supplied to the crew at the cost price aboard ship.

(xiii) Abolition of the present system of recruiting seamen through licensed brol and ghat serangs, substituting seamen's employment bureau along with advi committees as recommended by the seamen's recruitment committee of 1922.

(xiv) Recognition of the Indian seamen's union, i.e., the ship-owners are n employ non-union seamen under any circumstances.

The general grievances of the Indian seamen are mentioned in this memoran and the above demands by no means form an exhaustive list of their pressing ne What the union desires is that the Government of India should take into its se consideration the above demands and devise ways and means for satisfying very simple but vital needs of the Indian seamen without further delay.

MESSRS. BIRD AND CO., CALCUTTA.

Messrs. Bird and Co. have been contractors for the supply of labour for handling of goods and coal since 1864. Their experience in this business, there extends over sixty-five years.

Practically the whole of the work in connection with contracts is done on " khatta," or piece-work system, i.e., by sirdars employed by the firm, who main gangs of from 40 to 100 men each, and who are paid according to the maund tonnage of cargo handled by their gangs. Sirdars are responsible for the disci of their gangs, and as many of the present ones now working are sons of sirdars formerly worked, they are fully experienced in the proper methods of dealing the varieties of commodities handled under the different contracts. The employs monthly paid labour only for the handling of heavy and awkward carg the docks, for the trimming of coal at the coal berths, and for the hand shuntin wagons at the Government salt golahs. Monthly paid labour works in gangs twenty men, each under a sirdar.

The number of manual workers employed, i.e., those engaged in the act handling of goods, varies according to the busy or slack traffic seasons of the y but the maximum may be taken as 12,000, of whom some 10,000 work in Calcu and of these 3,000 are at the Kidderpore and King George's Docks, and 4,000 at t Kidderpore coal berths. With the exception of a percentage of women who w with their husbands and families at the coal berths, the entire labour force is male

I.—Recruitment.

Recruiting is not done by the firm direct but through the sirdars. This meth has always been employed, as by it sirdars engage men from districts and villag where they are well known, frequently relatives and friends, which enables them to exercise considerable influence and control over the gangs they work, while th coolies themselves work best under sirdars known to them.

The firm assists the sirdars when recruiting with advances for railway fares, and to enable them to leave money with the families of men newly recruited.

Monthly paid labour is recruited locally from suitable applicants. No recruiting is done through public employment agencies.

The principal districts from which labour is recruited are Arrah, Allahabad Azamghar, Bara-Banki, Benares, Bilaspur, Darbhanga, Fyzabad, Gazipur, Corakhpur, Gaya, Hazaribagh, Lucki-Serai, Monghyr, Patna, Raipur, etc., etc. Very little labour is recruited in Bengal as the Bengalee appears averse to taking up handling work.

As regards " labour turnover," the majority of the men work under the same sirdars for years, returning regularly to their homes at cultivation or harvest times. Some go as frequently as twice a year.

II.—Staff Organization.

The staff organization is an extensive one, and the supervising members, both superior and subordinate, are men specially trained in their duties.

Agencies which employ a large labour force are in charge of European, th workers themselves being directly under the discipline of the sirdars and the supervision of experienced Indian staff. Small agencies are under Indian supervisi but are regularly inspected by a European assistant. Free quarters are provided staff working up-country, but not for those in Calcutta. The firm's provident fu is open to all salaried servants drawing Rs. 25 monthly and over. Free medi

[illegible] is given. Relations between staff and workers are generally good. Many sirdars are literate, but it is seldom one wishes to relinquish his gang and take up a salaried post of supervisor, leading hand, etc., but coolies having ambition and the necessary knowledge will occasionally turn sirdars and run gangs of their own. This is encouraged.

III.—Housing.

Housing is provided by the firm for all manual workers employed up-country, and for about 80 per cent. of those employed in Calcutta. Up-country the accommodation consists of the usual type of mat wall and tile roof sheds, 60 ft. long, divided into separate rooms, 12 ft. by 9 ft.; in Calcutta the houses are mainly single-storied blocks of brick walls and asbestos or corrugated sheeted roofs, each block consisting of twelve rooms measuring 10 ft. by 10 ft., each room having one door and one window. All housing provided by the firm is rent free, except in the case of a few better type quarters at Kidderpore, for which a monthly rental of Rs. 3-8 per room is charged. The housing provided is always fully occupied, and the sub-letting or occupation by outside tenants is strictly prohibited. Workers who find their own accommodation in the bazaars pay rent of Re. 1 to Re. 1-8 per man per month. Water supply is obtained from wells up-country and from municipal sources in Calcutta. Conservancy arrangements are provided and maintained in some cases by the firm, in others, by the authorities on whose land the houses are situated.

IV.—Health.

Figures of mortality are not known, as men unable to continue work through illness are usually returned to their homes by their sirdars. Monthly paid workers are allowed full pay by the firm during sickness. Free medical attention and medicine is provided at all agencies, while for the large labour force working in the Kidderpore area the firm maintains a small hospital and two dispensaries, one at the coal berths and one at Garden Reach, two medical officers, two compounders and a dresser. Free attention to some fifty patients is given daily at these dispensaries. Accident cases, if serious, are sent to hospital. Maternity cases amongst the women employed at the coal berths are, if request is made, attended to by municipal *dais*.

V.—Welfare.

Little is done under this heading, as the class of labour employed does not spend its recreation in amusements, preferring on holidays to visit the bazaars, or in Calcutta the Zoo, Museum, etc. No provision is made for the education of adult workers, and it is unlikely it would be taken advantage of, if made.

VI.—Education.

Free primary education under the tutelage of a teacher from the M.E. Mission School, to which institution the firm contributes Rs. 25 per month, is provided for the children of workers employed at the coal berths, a small room adjacent to the quarters having been allotted for school purposes. The school register shows an attendance of fifty-eight pupils, but of these only some four or five are girls. Classes are very popular, and arrangements are being made to enlarge the school premises in order to increase the attendance.

VII.—Safety.

Regulations as laid down for the safety of workers employed in railway yards, docks, jetties and inland steamers are observed, and labour working at the docks is under the constant supervision of "gunners," whose duty it is to see that necessary precautions for safety are taken. Minor accidents are treated at the firm's dispensaries. Serious ones are sent to hospital.

VIII.—Workman's Compensation.

Workers are covered by the Workman's Compensation Act, and receive compensation according to the Act, if injured. The firm also allows additional compensation in cases admitting of special consideration.

IX.—Hours.

Working hours are in accordance with those of the port, railway, or other authorities for whom the work is being done, and are usually :—Day, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; night, from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., with mid-day intervals for meals of one hour in Calcutta

and two hours up-country. The actual hours worked, however, are regulated by the amount of work offering, and as a rule are not more than eight. Sundays are working days, but the " khatta " labour usually takes half the day off for marketing. Monthly paid labour, if booked for Sunday working, receives overtime at the rate of As. 1-3 per hour. " Khatta " labour freely observes holidays and local festivals; monthly paid labour is given leave on full pay on all recognized closed holidays.

XII.—Wages.

As the majority of the labourers are piece-workers, paid weekly, earnings are not fixed, the average weekly or monthly earning of any worker depending on the amount and nature of the traffic handled during those periods, and the regularity of the worker's attendance. Earnings also are greater in Calcutta than up-country, as work here is more continuous.

Given a full week's work, a " khatta " sirdar in Calcutta can earn Rs. 10 or more weekly, a coolie from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7, while up-country a sirdar can earn Rs. 7 to Rs. 8, a coolie Rs. 5 to Rs. 6. At the coal berths a certain section of piece-workers work on the " Nagda " system, that is, they are paid in cash for each basket of coal as it is carried on board the vessel, and 14 annas per day can be earned in this way.

Monthly workers employed on the handling of general merchandise are paid at the rate of 9 annas per day, with annas 1-3 per hour overtime, and at these rates their wages average about Rs. 20 monthly. Coal trimming labour is paid at the rate of 9 annas per day and annas 12-6 per night, the average monthly wage being about Rs. 22. Men engaged for hand-shunting wagons receive Rs. 20 per month.

" Khatta " sirdars are paid their accounts weekly, one week elapsing before payment is made for work done. Monthly workers are paid on the 15th of each month for the full previous month.

The above earnings and wages are an increase of approximately 50 per cent. on those prevailing before and during the war period.

It rests entirely with the workers as to what amount of their earnings they send to their villages. Some sirdars mess their men at a fixed sum per month and the balance of earnings is remitted home, in other cases Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 is sent monthly. Fining is only resorted to for gross misdemeanour, but sirdars are responsible for any loss or damage of goods caused through the deliberate carelessness or negligence of their men. Monthly paid labour is allowed one month's leave a year, but men working under sirdars make their leave arrangements with the sirdars, and it may be taken that every worker visits his home at least once a year for one month or more. They do not receive earnings during leave periods, but generally save enough to carry them over until they resume work.

Particulars of indebtedness in villages is not known, but cases of individual indebtedness occur in the industrial area.

XIII.—Efficiency of Workers.

The coolie is unskilled labour and the level of efficiency does not change. In the actual handling of goods the Indian worker is as efficient as the foreign, but being of lesser physique a greater number of Indian workers are required.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

So far as is known none of the workers belong to any labour union or organization, nor are they interested in co-operative credit or loan societies.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There has been no industrial disputes since 1918–19, when certain sections of the workers went on strike for higher rates, which were granted. In each case the strike lasted for a few days only; all disputes are settled directly between the firm and the employees.

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BURMAH-SHELL OIL STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTING CO. OF INDIA, LTD.

We have the honour to enclose the evidence which we wish to place before the Royal Commission on Labour in India, and would ask you to make clear that this evidence is intended to represent the views of the three oil companies operating in

Calcutta, and that Messrs. The Standard Oil Co. of New York and Messrs. Indo-Burma Petroleum Co., Ltd., have seen, and approved of, this evidence and have themselves supplied such information as was necessary for the compilation of a representative reply to the Schedule of Subjects prepared by the Royal Commission.

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Nature of Business.—To receive and store bulk and packed cargoes of petroleum at Calcutta; to manufacture suitable packages in which to distribute a portion of these products, according to market requirements; to distribute and sell these products, packed or in bulk, in Calcutta and the districts most economically supplied therefrom; to maintain and supervise the organisation required locally and upcountry for these purposes and to maintain stocks at minor depots and stations throughout the mofussil to the extent necessary to guarantee continuous supplies to the public at stable prices.

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I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) As compared with the jute industry, from which you will probably be receiving detailed evidence concerning recruitment, we are comparatively small employers of labour, but our experience is that none of our skilled labour, and only a small percentage of unskilled, comes direct from upcountry. This is borne out by the small percentage of applications from labour for leave to return to their homes upcountry in order to sow and harvest their crops.

(ii) There are no particular streams of migration, almost all our labour being permanently resident within four miles of our installation.

2. (i) *Contact with villages—Extent and frequency of return.*—This works out at about 17 per cent. of the labour spread over the year, and is chiefly taken in April/May and November/December, when those of the employees who possess, or have an interest in, property upcountry, proceed to sow and reap their crops. A considerable number of these men stay away for indefinite periods and apply for re-employment when their funds are exhausted.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force.*—Three thousand one hundred and sixty-five approximately in the three companies, almost entirely adult male labour.

3. Of unskilled labour we have nearly always an excess of supply over demand, and any vacancies are filled, either from applicants at the installation gates, or from candidates brought in by the sirdars of the gangs that are short. Semi-skilled labour is also easy to obtain locally, and skilled labour from Calcutta; applicants for posts in the two latter named grades are only engaged after a practical test of efficiency has been conducted by the departmental engineer, who recommends successful candidates to the installation manager for enrolment.

(ii) The present system suits our purpose quite well.

(iii) Public employment agencies would presumably have to be maintained by the State, and as our experience has been that there is an ample supply of labour, we see no need for the provision of such agencies.

7. (i) In the foregoing we have implied that there is a considerable surplus of available labour, but we do not wish to imply that there is a consequent surplus of unemployment, as the word is understood in more developed countries. Most of our unskilled employees are really agriculturalists who can always earn a wage of sorts (sufficient anyhow to keep them in necessities), from the land, and they are on our books in order to earn more pay for several years so as to pay off some of their indebtedness to moneylenders; we make further reference to this in XII (108). When an employee has saved sufficient money to ensure a rest, or when he is out of employment as an industrialist, he returns to the land where he earns a small wage, and frequently lives at the expense of other members of his family.

We admit that there is unemployment to the extent that there is a considerable surplus of labour in irregular employment, but in India this seldom results in destitution.

(ii) *Extent to which unemployment is caused by (a) Retrenchment or dismissals.*—Negligible. Our labour force has been growing slowly for some years in order to cope with the increased output required. Dismissals are extremely low.

(*b*) *Voluntary retirement.*—There is always a small exodus of workers, as explained in (7) (i), but the majority of them drift back for re-employment when pressed for money. Every year we are compelled to pay off a few old employees who have passed the age of usefulness; such men are provided with gratuities.

(*c*) *Other causes.*—Negligible.

(iii) *Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.*—See our writings under (i). We maintain that nearly all our employees are primarily agriculturalists, and the best method of relieving unemployment, to whatever extent this is admitted, is to develop agriculture and thereby provide living wages for a greater number of men.

(iv) We do not consider that the State could control unemployment insurance in this country and we very much doubt whether it could be popularised, especially among the employees. Our opinion is that such a scheme is impracticable and unnecessary.

8. *Labour Turnover.* (i) *Average duration of employment.*—About 8 years.

(ii) *Extent of casual employment.*—Negligible—probably not 1 per cent. of our permanent labour, and only employed to fill excessive gaps caused by absenteeism.

(iii) *Absenteeism.*—(*a*) Taken over the whole year about 5½ per cent. Illness and drunkenness: see below.

(*b*) Immediately after pay-days, holidays, and particularly Indian festivals and during the marriage season, absenteeism is very marked, often being above 10 per cent., apart from those on leave.

(*c*) Time and wages lost. See (*a*)—about 5½ per cent. of the total.

II.—Staff Organization.

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13. (i) You will have before you the evidence of larger employers of labour than ourselves, and this will probably stress the difficulty in maintaining at times the close touch necessary for the establishment of cordial relationship. We do our utmost in this respect by insisting that all employees engaged in the United Kingdom shall at once learn the vernacular of the Province in which they are situated and that so far as possible they shall become personally acquainted with all the labour under them, but dialects are numerous and transfers of department assistants to other installations not unknown, with a result that relations can seldom approach that level attained where the supervising staff and the labour are both recruited from the same country, and therefore have more in common from the start.

Even with promoted subordinates the position is not much simpler, except perhaps in the question of knowledge of dialects, for racial prejudice is strong and we meet with instances of unfair treatment from a supervisor to members of another caste or creed.

Generally speaking we consider that the relationship between our staff and the rank and file is cordial but we realise that this question is one of great importance in which patience, tact, and understanding of Eastern conditions play leading roles.

(iii) We have little experience of works committees. The scheme has been tried at one or two installations where, periodically, representatives from each department have met our installation manager to discuss measures for improving the welfare of the workers. Very few constructive proposals were ever put forward and they were abandoned by mutual consent when the agenda merely became filled with demands for increases in wages, which were ruled out as being beyond the scope of the works committee.

The need for properly organized works committees is patent and the subject has recently been engaging our attention once more, but with the multiplicity of castes and creeds it is not easy to modify schemes which have been successful in installations in Burmah so that they will be equally suitable here. We hope, however, that some scheme will shortly be evolved from the experience gained by our friends in Burmah.

14. *Timekeeping, Piecework, Contract and Attendance Registers.* (i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—Entirely by our own staff. At present we have two systems of timekeeping, one by token and the other by card, but we shall shortly be entirely on the card system. Labour is clocked in and out at the beginning and end of the day's work. The midday interval is not checked by timekeepers.

(ii) *How and by whom are wages actually paid to workers.*—Pay envelopes are made out for each recipient, in the branch office, and these are sent down to the installation where every payment is made by installation cashier in the presence of a covenanted European assistant.

15. *Contractors as Intermediaries.* (i) *Extent and character of work given on contract.*—We are not directly concerned with the number of men employed by our contractors, since we pay them on a percentage basis for the tins and drums handled. The average daily labour supplied by contractors is a little more than half that of our permanent staff, and it is employed chiefly in soldering tins, in stacking full tins, and in loading full tins into wagons or boats.

(iii) *Control exercised over working conditions.*—This varies considerably. Where the contractor's men are working in our tin factory, i.e., on soldering, they are under the same complete control as our own labour. In loading operations, however the contractor's men only come under our direct supervision at various points, i.e., when actually loading tins at the wagon or boat and we are not responsible for the speed of their work.

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IV.—Health.

24. (i) We have three dispensaries at our Installations in Budge-Budge all adequately provided with medicines and first-aid appliances, and with qualified compounders in charge. A fully qualified doctor attends at two of these dispensaries daily for 2 hours.

(ii) There is a Municipal Dispensary in Budge-Budge only a short distance away, with a Government doctor in charge, and also a small hospital attached.

25. Any person reporting sick during working hours has to be treated at our dispensaries first, and many continue to attend after the initial treatment. In most cases of prolonged illness we find that the men prefer to receive homeopathic treatment in their own villages from unqualified Hakims, and it is not possible for us to insist that they shall become in-patients at the local hospital as we would run counter to religions and caste prejudices.

All cases of accident are treated at once at our dispensaries, and any seriously injured are taken to the Budge-Budge hospital to the support of which the Companies subscribe annually.

26. (*a*) (i) We have three sets of septic tanks, each capable of providing for the needs of 1,000 men, and two ordinary type latrines. The latter are attended to twice daily by the Municipal Conservancy carts.

(*ii*) Filtered drinking water is provided at all hours. This water is the same as that provided by the Municipality of Budge-Budge for drinking purposes or else is Calcutta filtered drinking water supplied by the Port Commissioners. Attempts have been made by us to obtain from our tube well sufficiently good water for drinking purposes, but this so far has not been of a good enough standard.

(iii) River water is provided through taps and hydrants at various convenient points, helped out by tube well water.

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30. We have no sickness insurance, and do not consider that any State scheme is feasible in India under present conditions.

V.—Welfare.

33. We are fully alive to the necessity for promoting welfare work and an officer has been borrowed from an associated oil company, and is arriving in January to study the position at our Indian installations. A Labour Department will be formed to put his proposals into force. This officer has many years of experience in Labour Welfare work, and we are confident that with his assistance we shall be able to form a department which will keep us in the closest possible touch with our labour.

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IX.—Hours—Factories.

55. (i) We work 48½ or 49 hours weekly, made up of five days of 8½ hours each and one half day of 6 hours, or 6½ hours, depending upon the Company concerned.

(ii) When conditions are normal, and our Installation is only manufacturing for the requirements of our own supply area (*i.e.*, when there is no labour trouble in other Installations such as Bombay, Madras, etc.), our overtime is confined to a few individuals, mostly men employed on handling cargo on our oil tank-steamers; fitters and skilled hands are sometimes employed on re-organization, or re-alignment work, the speedy completion of which is obviously necessary if labour is not to be kept out of work; special permission is obtained for such men. The incidence of overtime on our total paysheet is negligible.

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60. (i) (*a*) There is no recognised interval for fatigue, but sufficient men are employed in all departments to permit of short rests for fatigued men.

(*b*) There used to be a break of one hour from 12.30 to 1.30, but this was reduced at the petition of the workers to half an hour, 12.30 to 1 p.m., so as to enable the Installation to be closed half an hour earlier for the men to get home sooner. On Saturdays labour works from 8 to 2 without a break for meals in one company, and 8 to 1 p.m. and 1.30 to 3 p.m. in another.

(ii) In view of the hours worked, see above paragraph, the law's provisions appear to be quite suitable.

(iv) Companies vary in this respect, but whatever holidays are given are without pay. One company gives 18 Chamber of Commerce holidays, 10 of which are for Indian religious ceremonies. Another guarantees seven, four of which are chosen by Labour, and are always the four important days of Durga Puja festival; in practice the second company observes nearly all the Chamber holidays.

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XII.—Wages.

96. These are as far as possible standardised between the three oil companies. Average earnings are as follows :—

Unskilled boys	Rs. 15/-	per mensem	..	from Rs.	0- 8-0	to Rs.	0-12-0 per diem
,, adults	,, 19/-	,,	..	,,	0-12-0	,,	1- 2-6 ,,
Skilled adults	,, 28/-	,,	..	,,	0-15-6	,,	1- 7-0 ,,
Mistries/Fitters	,, 32/-	,,	..	,,	0-12-6	,,	according to
Piece workers	,, 36-8-0	,,	..	,,			standard of work done

The above wages conform in the main to those paid for corresponding work in the surrounding industrial area.

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102. *Basis of Payment for Overtime and Sunday Work.*—The standard payment is 50 per cent. above the normal rate, and we have stated above that overtime is the exception rather than the rule. Although it is not possible for us to guarantee it, we always endeavour to arrange, and are generally successful, that at least a full day's pay is earned by such men as are called in to work overtime ; one of the three companies guarantees this. One day's substitute leave is guaranteed, as demanded by law, and this is generally given within three days of the overtime worked.

103. There is no material difference between the wages paid by the three oil companies, which are at least as good as wages paid in local mills round Budge-Budge for work of a corresponding nature.

104. *Effect of Wage changes on labour supply.*—We have not noticed any particular effect locally, but elsewhere in India our experience has been that the greater the increase in a man's wages the less regular is his attendance ; in other words his main idea is to earn only enough to keep himself from month to month, and no provision is made for the future.

105. With such steep differences in the value of money in the various industrial areas, cities and upcountry districts, the application of a minimum wage seems to be impracticable without causing extreme hardship either to employer or employed.

106. (i) Extent of fining is negligible, and such fines as are levied have to be sanctioned by the Installation Manager.

(ii) The only other deductions are those for Provident Fund contributions.

(iii) These are confiscated by the Companies, but are sometimes paid out again to defray small expenditures made on behalf of employees ; occasionally small grants are made out of accumulated fines to assist any particularly unfortunate case of destitution in our staff.

(iv) No legislation is needed so far as an organised industry, such as our own, is concerned, as the issue is trivial.

107. (i) (ii) All workers are paid monthly, whether engaged on a daily or monthly rate of pay, on the 15th of the following month, or on the most convenient day immediately prior to the 15th.

(iv) With one company unclaimed wages are kept in suspense for a period of three years, after which they are appropriated. One company is prepared to pay upon application without any restriction of a time limit.

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109. We have no bonus or profit sharing schemes. There are, however, scheme of payment, varying amongst the companies, for those who do not benefit for par or all of their services in any Provident Fund. There are, for example, a Death Benefit Insurance scheme, a pension scheme and a gratuity scheme in operation all so framed as to protect the interests of labour which does not participate in any provident fund.

110. Ordinarily leave is not given on pay. If any of our daily paid labour requires leave the usual practice is for the sirdar of the applicant's gang to provide a substitute, unlesss it is possible to carry on without a substitute, but no pay is given to the applicant whether a substitute is provided or not. We have from time to time been able to grant three weeks' leave on pay to certain of our senior monthly paid employees, but the instances of such leave are comparatively few.

It is not really possible, when considering the leave taken by daily paid labour to differentiate clearly between " leave " and " absenteeism," and we must refer you to our replies under I (2) (i) and I (8) (iii).

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency.

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116. *Possible methods of securing increased efficiency.*—To educate the labourer to the idea of working in order to put by something for the future ; probably the quickest means to this end would be some form of State controlled schools for

vocational training; boys or young adults taken in to these schools would have to be taught to live in better houses with sanitary facilities, and when through the course would have to be provided with housing similar to the type in which they were trained.

If it were ever possible to comply with the above conditions we would still be faced with the drink and drug problem, which is one of the greatest factors militating against such efficiency as we can hope to get out of the material at present offering. Possibly better housing and a sound technical training might reduce the consumption of drink and drugs, but much of the excesses now indulged in are connected with religious ceremonies.

XIV and XV.—Trade Combinations and Industrial Disputes.

In the large localized industries, such as jute and tea, the employers have formed their own associations for the management of general matters relating to their own industries. No association as such has yet been formed by the oil companies who, however, are in touch with each other in all matters connected with labour and wages.

As regards the labour employed by the oil companies there has, up to now, been no general organization of employees, but certain unions have sprung into existence in the various ports during the past few years through the combination of workers for the purpose of ventilating some real or imaginary grievances. Until recently these unions have lasted only so long as the strikes which they organized, but there are now indications that such unions are becoming more permanent; an example of this is given below concerning the Budge-Budge Oil & Petrol Workers' Union, which has outlived the recent strike, and is now, we understand, applying for registration under the Trade Unions Act.

Up to date these periodical strikes have caused only partial dislocation to the oil industry, but the hardships caused to our workmen have been very real, as they have in most instances returned having gained nothing but have lost their wages, after having been led out on strike by outside leaders who have promised them terms which could not possibly be granted. Time after time political agitators have taken upon themselves the organization of a strike of our workers, and have drawn up demands which have been patently unattainable even if the employers had recognized the authority of the union, and there can be no doubt that the workers themselves have been pawns used by these agitators who have their own gain or political advancement in view.

The activities of these unions have so far been misdirected, and their failure (and that of trade unionism generally in India), has, we think, been due to the fact that the workers themselves have completely failed to produce leaders from their own ranks, men whom the employers would have been glad to meet with the knowledge that they really represented the feelings of their fellow workmen, and who would realize the futility of relying on the promise of outside parties. Had such men been forthcoming there would not have been nearly so many impossible demands put forward, and any real grievances would have been settled with much more ease.

We realize that at the present juncture it is not possible to exclude outside officials from trade unions, but unless genuine Labour leaders can be found we fear that the workers will continue to be exploited by self-interested parties. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in its report to you dated 11th October, has addressed you concerning Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Trade Unions Act, and has given you its views on the present position of trade unionism in India, and we should like to state that we are in complete agreement with their sentiments. We will now proceed to the local history of the recent strike at the works of the oil companies near Calcutta, as we consider that this is the best means of illustrating the observations which we have made already on the subject of "Trade Combinations."

Early in July 1929 a deputation was sent to Budge-Budge from the Tinplate Co.'s labour, which was on strike in Golmuri, to obtain the support of the Budge-Budge labour, and a pamphlet dated 2nd July, 1929 was issued by the Secretary and President of the Tinplate Workers' Union asking for their moral, active and material support. An appeal was issued in "Liberty" of 30th June, 1929, under the heading "Golmuri Strike," calling for the boycott of the products of the Burmah Oil Co., Ltd., and on 2nd July, 1929, a statement, which sets forth a programme of a strike at Tatas and the bringing about of strikes at Budge-Budge, the object being the settlement of the tinplate workers' strike. Meetings were then held on various days, and one of the labour leaders from Golmuri was deputed to Budge-Budge for the purpose of forming a union and presenting grievances. The four officials appointed to run the union were none of them oil workers, two being outside politicians, one a local shopkeeper, and one the owner of a rice mill. No communication was received from this union, but on 21st August the neighbouring jute mills went on strike, and in the evening one section of the oil labour presented a petition as they left work,

setting forth certain grievances and demanding a reply within five hours. It was pointed out that no reply could possibly be given in five hours, which the men admitted, but stated that they would not be allowed to return the next day. On 29th August a communication was received from the union by all the oil companies, purporting to set out the men's demands. The first of these was the settlement of the tinplate strike and the second the recognition of the union which, from enquiries made, was ascertained to be unregistered. The remainder of the demands were for improved terms of service and wages, the increase asked being 50 per cent. On 1st October a notice was posted by the oil companies advising that an increase of wages was being given of approximately five per cent., which was equivalent to that given by the neighbouring jute mills. No further communication was received from the union, and a very gradual return to work commenced, but it was not until 21st November, three months after the commencement of the strike, that the main body of men returned. In the intervening period we had on more than one occasion interviewed the head men of departments, explained to them that we were prepared to consider and discuss any genuine grievances they put forward in an orthodox manner, and obtained their agreement to bring their men back to work, but this they appeared powerless to do. The reasons given were pickets and intimidation, and it is seriously urged that any form of picketing should be made illegal.

The facts given above make it clear that the trouble at Budge-Budge was organised primarily to enforce the settlement of the tinplate strike, and was not a dispute within the industry. It was not covered by Clause 16 of the Trade Disputes Act, and no action could be taken to have this strike adjudged illegal. It is understood that the Union has now applied for registration, but that registration has not yet been effected.

The above is a short history of the strike, and the only trade union which has existed at Budge-Budge in so far as the oil companies are concerned, and covers the majority of questions 117 to 126. The strike lasted for three months, although in the latter stages partial working was possible. The number of working days lost was almost exactly 200,000. The loss to the industry has not yet been calculated, but all stations in the sphere usually supplied by Budge-Budge were kept supplied from other points, the additional and very considerable expense being borne by the oil companies who made no endeavour to increase rates to cover the excess freight incurred. Certain amounts were paid by the union to strikers, but the amounts are unknown to us, and were probably small. The union has not, as far as we are aware, any benefit schemes. The Trades Union Act was not operative as the union was not registered. The union was not recognised by the employers, and it is doubtful whether more than a small proportion of the workers had any desire for the union. The control exerted by workers was presumably nil as no workers were on the executive staff.

In regard to the Trades Disputes Act (125) Clause 16 (i) as worded is of little assistance as the conditions laid down have both to be operative before a strike can be termed illegal. The strike can be designed or calculated to inflict severe general and prolonged hardship on the community, but is not illegal if it is in furtherance of a trade dispute within the industry. This condition involves only the forming of grievances imaginary or real, and it is suggested that the word " or " be substituted for the word " and " at the end of clause 16 (i) (a). Under clause 15 certain services are specially protected as being public utility services, and it is our desire to point out to the Commission the services rendered by the oil companies and to request that the protection granted be extended to them. In the event of a strike, or anything in the nature of a general stoppage, it would be extremely difficult, and probably impossible, to carry out for example our contracts for petrol to the military authorities all over India.

The railways which are classified as " Public Utility Services " rely upon us for liquid fuel for the movement of trains over various sections of the G.I.P. Ry. and the N.W. Ry., and they are dependent upon the oil companies for grease and lubricating oils all over India. Electric power stations are increasing steadily in number, and almost all of them are dependent upon us for liquid fuel for the purpose of generation of power. Even in the last strike, which affected only Calcutta, the position was extremely serious at many stations, and we were only able to keep these " Utility Services " running to the detriment of the general consumer, by appropriating tank wagons allotted for the distribution of kerosene, and which were just as urgently needed for their proper use, to carry liquid fuel for the power stations. To a lesser degree we are similarly placed as regards supplies of fuel for the maintenance of irrigation projects in various parts of the country.

So much for the particular services which have been earmarked by the Trade Disputes Act, and we now ask you to consider the major industries, and the reliance they place upon us.

Cessation in the supply of liquid fuel in Bombay would, in a few days, bring about the closure of a large number of the cotton mills, and would throw into unemployment a vast army of disgruntled workers, fertile material for the causing of further trouble when in the hands of agitators. A similar state of affairs would obtain in Calcutta if we were unable to maintain deliveries of batching oil, which are essential to the jute mills and some 3,00,000 men would be idle.

We now come to the part played by petroleum products in the general life of the community. Even in a comparatively undeveloped country such as India, the importance of motor transport is recognized, and it would be of vital consequence to the public and the State if there was a paralysis in motor transport. Even when the railways are functioning there is a large and growing network of road transport services working in with them. The effect of a stoppage of petrol supplies will be realized without enlargement. Lubricating oils must, of course, be available wherever petrol is used, but they must also be stocked wherever machinery is employed, no matter whether the motive power is obtained from petroleum or any other source.

We now come to the uses of kerosene, which, though not primarily employed for industrial purposes, is of almost equal importance. It serves certain public utility services, the railways for example, who rely upon it for signal lighting and for the generation of gas for lighting purposes on trains. It is purchased under contraced by the military authorities and also by municipalities for the provision of light for the public. It is also used to run light machinery, particularly tea garden factories, small irrigation plants, ginning and milling machinery, etc., etc. The main consumption of kerosene is, however, in the home of the Indian people to whom it is a necessity, and any change in its availability would result in severe hardship in the whole nation's domestic life.

If, as has been implied by the foregoing, petroleum products are of such vital importance to the country, it must be admitted that steps should be taken to ensure that an organization reaching a very high standard of efficiency should be maintained at all times to ensure regularity of distribution, and to safeguard the principal consumers and the public generally, against any breakdown of supplies. It is for these reasons that we urge that the companies which import cargoes of petroleum and which distribute it throughout India, should be afforded the protection of Section 15 of the Trade Disputes Act by being classified as " Public Utility Services."

KANKINARRAH LABOUR UNION.

Established in 1921 with the objects of fostering collective bargaining and safeguarding the interests of over 360,000 jute mill operatives in general, and specially of over 50,000 millhands employed in the 12 jute mills within Bhatpara municipality, about 21 miles from Calcutta. This particular union was visited by Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P. and Mr. Sime, Secretary, Dundee Jute Workers' Union, in 1925 ; Sir Oswald Mosley, M.P. in 1925, International Textile Labour Delegation, headed by Rt. Hon. Thomas Shaw, M.P. in 1926, Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence, M.P. in 1927, Mr. Mardy Jones, M.P., Mr. Arthur Purcel, M.P., Delegate from the British Trade Union Congress in 1927.

India enjoys a practical monopoly of jute, being its sole producer, and the manufacture of jute fabrics in Bengal is the leading industry in India to-day. It has beaten cotton (once the premier industry of India), which is on the decline owing to foreign competition, labour troubles and other economic causes not likely to affect jute for some time yet. Until 1854, only raw jute was exported and little or no effort was made to organize mills in India or to improve the village hand-loom production to meet the new demand of foreign countries for gunny and hessian cloth. In 1855, however, the first power mill in India to spin jute was started at Rishra, near Serampore. Four years later the first weaving mill was started at Baranagore and in 1863–64, the Gourepore jute factory was built. Soon thereafter factories sprang up rapidly in and around Calcutta. In the year 1927, the number of jute mills working in India was 85 with a capital of nearly 16,000 lacs of rupees (about £12·4 million sterling). They had about 50,000 looms and about 1 million spindles working in 1927 and gave employment to 338,000 millhands, including 53,000 women and 31,000 children. The profits in 1928–1929, as per income tax returns, amounted to 7½ crores of rupees (about £6¾ million sterling) or about 50 per cent. of the original capital investment. It works out at an average profit of Rs. 1,500 per loom, unparalleled in the history of any Textile industry in any part of the world. Before the war the annual gross value of jute manufactures exported to foreign countries amounted to about

£14 million sterling. During the great European war military demands for sand bags and tarpaulins brought unbounded prosperity to the jute industry. In 1916–17 the value of jute manufactures rose to the unprecedented total of nearly £28 million sterling, 43 per cent. of which went to the United Kingdom, 56 per cent. to U.S.A. and 11 per cent. to Argentine. In 1925–26 export value of jute fabrics rose to £45 million sterling. An analysis of profit between 1914 and 1928 shows that the investors in jute mill shares just before the war, who did not sell their stocks, received ten times the value of their holdings as profits in addition to colossal reserve funds built out of profits.

I.—Recruitment.

In the 12 jute mills in Kankinarrah with about 8,825 looms (approximately 18 per cent. of the total number of looms), employing about 50,000 (approximately 18 per cent. of the total labour force) operatives within the immediate jurisdiction of the union.

More than 85 per cent. of the operatives in this particular centre are recruited from Bihar (mainly Chapra, Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga districts) and the rest are either settled locally or belong to the villages. The strength of Bengalee native labour, mostly mechanics and mistries, is below 5 per cent. of the total and they live in their own huts or houses away from the mill area. Hardly any method is adopted to recruit hands who voluntarily find their way to the mill area in search of employment excepting those who are invited by the sirdars, or Indian supervisors, from their own villages in up country. In some mills, if the Burra sirdar (weaving supervisor) happens to be a native of Chapra district, most of his men (weavers) under him are natives of Chapra. For some time past owing to abolition of multiple shifts there has been some surplus labour in Kankinarrah and no necessity is felt for any improvement in recruiting. New hands are generally locally employed by the sirdars who often charge " Dustories " or commission as a matter of tradition of the country or practice in the industry and serious complaints are received of hardships suffered by recruits on this account. It will be a good thing if the recruitment is taken away from the hands of the sirdars and employment agencies are established in well-known mill-centres and labour unions, if they exist, are entrusted with the work of these agencies.

The question of unemployment is not very acute in Kankinarrah but it is reported that about 8 per cent. to 9 per cent. of the total labour strength are idle and in search of employment. One of the main reasons of unemployment in Kankinarrah, is the re-introduction of single shift and another reason is frequent dismissal of hands unable to please their supervisors with payment of money (call it dustories or bribe), voluntary retirement does not seem to exceed more than 2 or 3 out of 100 employees. There is no such thing as unemployment insurance in the country or in the jute industry and its introduction will be a boon to Indian labour when, and if, it settles down in different mill centres.

Mention has been made that 85 out of 100 mill-hands in this particular area are more or less of the floating type and they revisit their village homes once a year or once in 18 months and absent themselves for a couple of months or so. The non-migratory hands work usually 15 to 25 years and even more. The loss of wages of floating labour during their stay at home is not keenly felt as they have plenty of home occupation, including husbandry, which keeps them fit and makes them happy. In fact, one of the reasons why they are not discontented in spite of the somewhat inadequate wages they receive and rather unhealthy and dingy bustees in which they live, is their frequent contact with their village homes and their periodical resort to pastoral occupation.

II.—Staff Organization.

In a jute mill there are batching, preparing, spinning, winding, beaming, weaving, finishing and other departments, including power house, and repairing shops in charge of Europeans, recruited mostly from Scotland. Indian supervisors known as sirdars and line sirdars work under them and there is the manager and his administrative staff, besides durwans and watchmen, loading, unloading and warehousing labour. Selection of the managing staff is made by the Mg. agents who practically control the management. Facilities for training and promotion of workmen do not exist in most of the mills. Neither is there any system whatsoever of apprenticeship. The Apprentices Act, 1850, has no application to jute mills. Training is haphazard with the result that efficiency is poor and no one ever thinks of encouraging or cultivating this great factor, by far the most important of all industrial factors, which vitalises an industry. Jute, the raw material of the industry, is cheaply bought because cultivators are too weak to bargain, labour cost is equally cheap because collective bargaining is almost *non est* and also because supply of labour is plentiful. Illiteracy is the main cause of its helplessness, and its supervising staff is all powerful.

The relation between the staff and the rank and file has grown to be uncordial in spite of all that has been done to improve the material conditions such as housing, sanitation, drinking water and medical facilities. Unless something is done to bridge the gulf, the continuance of disputes and lightning strikes is inevitable, leading to interruption of work, engendering and even increasing bitterness (e.g., frequent assault on European officers), causing serious material loss to the workers (the strikes in July and August, 1929, in more than 40 mills threw idle over 150,000 millhands and loss of wages to the extent of 20 lacs of rupees, one of the main causes being uncordial relation between the staff and the rank and file). Kankinarrah Labour Union was the first in the field to advocate the creation of Joint Works Committee in jute mills as the following extract from its annual report dated December, 1928, will show :—

" The Bengal Committee made another significant recommendation, viz., the creation in Industrial concerns of Joint Works Committee (associated with the name of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, late Speaker of the House of Commons) representative of both employers and employees. The proposal was commended by the Government of Bengal and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and also by labour leaders and seems eminently suitable for adoption in jute and cotton mills. The Committee on Industrial unrest stated in paragraph 9 of the report : ' The main purpose of Joint Works Committee as defined in the Whitley Report is to establish and maintain harmonious relations between employers and employees and nothing is more urgently required at the present time.' Experience in England and America has shown that the benefits of Joint Works Committee from the employers' point of view are closer contact and better understanding with his employees and from the workers' point of view better representation of their interest. Hitherto the Indian workmen have discussed in their bustees among themselves their grievances and wants and the management have similarly discussed among themselves the action to be taken about the grievances of the workmen when brought to notice, but generally speaking no machinery existed for regular consultation between the management and the workmen on points affecting the latter. Joint Works Committee may vary in form, but one essential is the direct representation of the workers by election by themselves of their own nominees to the Joint Committee. The management will nominate its own representatives. The Committee's function will be advisory, and the final decision will in all cases rest with the management. The question of carrying proposals by majority of votes is therefore immaterial. There is a Joint Committee of this description functioning satisfactorily at the printing works of the Government of India, Hastings Street, Calcutta, and the superintendent may furnish particulars on application. In view of disasters brought about by recent strikes and lock-outs in Howrah, Bowreah and elsewhere on labour as well as on capital, employers as well as friends of labour interested in industrial peace would do well to consider seriously the urgency of early introduction of Joint Works Committee, especially in jute mills and other large industrial establishments."

It is the conviction of the organizers of this union, based on several years' experience of factory labour, that the plant of constructive trade unionism based on European model will not take root for many years to come until, and unless, the soil is weeded out and workers receive primary instruction. Closer contact and better understanding between employers and employees is essential for future industrial peace and this can be achieved by only one method, viz., Joint Committee and working it honestly and earnestly and giving it a fair trial. The Kankinarrah Labour Union was the first to advocate the creation of a Joint Industrial Council as the following extract from the proceedings of the Labour Conference held at Kankinarrah on 11th and 12th May, 1929, and organized by this union will show :—

His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson sent the following message of sympathy to Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C., one of the organizers of this Conference and President of the Kankinarrah Labour Union :—

" Dear Mr. Ray Chowdhury—I am interested to learn that there is to be a Labour Conference at which the question of setting up of an Industrial Council with a view to promoting industrial peace, will be discussed. The establishment of industrial councils of employers and employed has made considerable progress in England. The method of settling industrial disputes by resorting to strikes and lock-outs has proved a failure and disastrous to all concerned. It should be possible for employers and employed to come together in conference and devise means by mutual understanding to secure that harmony in industry which is so vitally necessary in the general interest. I wish your proceedings every success and trust that the result of your discussions will prove profitable.—Yours etc., Stanley Jackson."

Invitations were posted to all the managers of the local mills in the hope that some of them would join the conference and co-operate with the Kankinarrah Labour Union in forming a Joint Industrial Council or Committee : which is deemed essential for the restoration of industrial peace. It was most unfortunate that none of the managers of the 16 local mills turned up, and the only European present at the conference was Mr. M. M. Stuart, I.C.S., the sub-divisional officer of Barrackpore,

who spoke to the president, deploring the absence of the representatives of the management. However, the conference had two sittings on Saturday and Sunday and passed off smoothly. Important resolutions, including the formation of joint councils, stoppage of bribery, indiscriminate dismissal, imposition of fines, etc., were adopted. And the two most important resolutions which had any bearing on the strike that followed in July were fully discussed in vernacular and finally adopted.

III.—Housing.

Dr. Brahmachary, Assistant Director of Public Health, in a report on the sanitation of Bhatpara municipality, comprising the 12 jute mills within the jurisdiction of the Kankinarrah Labour Union says—" Bustees are an important feature of the town; while almost 12,000 of the people are residential and a little over 7,000 persons are accommodated in the coolie lines of the mills, the whole of the remaining population (60,000) lives in the huts of the bustees about 30 in number. They are ill-drained, and ill-provided with passages and privies. Last year two bustees were provided with roads and pucca drains at municipal expense. Under the Act, the duty of improving the bustees devolves on the owners. Proceedings for removing huts, opening roads and constructing drains and sewers, are laid down in Section 245." Describing the condition of these huts, Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P. (for Dundee) who visited the bustees at the instance of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, says—" Two-thirds of the workers in this industry, which makes 90 per cent. dividends for the shareholders are housed in vile, filthy, disease-ridden hovels, called bustees. These bustees are one storied blocks of mud plaster on wicker and matting, with thatched roofs; no windows or chimneys or fire places; the smoke simply oozes through the thatch if it can not get out of the doorway, which is so low that one has to go down almost on hands and knees to enter. The bustees have neither light nor water supply; the floors are earthen; sanitary arrangements there are none; and usually access to groups of bustees can only be had along a narrow tunnel of filth where myriads of mosquitoes and flies breed and the stench is such that one fears to strike a match lest the atmosphere being combustible, should explode. Inside the bustee is a space for three or four people to sleep if they are not smoked out by the cooking fire, but we are assured that frequently two families lived in a bustee, though how that is physically possible we could not guess. One old man informed us that half the babies of the bustee died, though we for our part, could not understand how any lived. The Director of Public Health for Bengal in his Annual Report for 1923, declares that half the children die before they reach 10 years of age, but precise estimates are difficult, as there is no compulsory registration of births, and fortunately most women mill workers have the sense to go home to the Mofussil or agricultural village, when they are going to give birth to babies.

" The rents charged for these foul ant-heaps of pestilence are about one shilling to one shilling four pence a month. Often they are owned by the sirdars in the mill; sometimes they are owned by the company.

" The remaining third of the workers are housed in mill-lines or compounds. Some of these cement rows are a vast improvement upon the bustee, but the best of them are nothing to write home about. They are single-room cement houses, without light or water or sanitary arrangements in the houses. The rooms are usually 10 feet by 8 feet by 6 feet high and possess a window. Frequently they are built so closely, facing one another in rows, that there is little privacy, and many men refuse to take their families to live there. The rents vary, but usually run about 4d. a week, no taxes, and water supply is free at the end of the row. We found large numbers of these houses over-crowded with 4 or 5 men.

" The houses of these unfortunate workers (even though they only regard themselves as agriculturists, who are temporarily engaged in the jute industry) is a standing disgrace to the Government, the local authorities, the millowners and everybody who has the slightest responsibility for them." The Labour Union has repeatedly urged the local municipality for acquisition of these plague spots, but without any avail. Housing legislation is absolutely essential to convert these bustees into comfortable dwellings, and provision should be made to compel millowners to finance housing schemes and charge such rents as the workers are able to pay.

The Chairman of the Bhatpara municipality says in the annual administration report for 1927–28 :—" When compared with the mill villages, the private bustees or bustee, owned by private individuals for the residence of the labour class, may be described as most insanitary. The chief difficulty in improving the sanitary conditions of the bustees was the Zaminder's claim to most of the bustee roads and drains as his private property and his objection to any improvement that the municipal Commissioners propose to make on them. (The Zaminder above referred to is a leading Congressman, Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A.). The result of the insanitary conditions of the bustee is the frequent relapse of epidemic diseases in private bustees, while such things are rare in mill villages."

IV.—Health.

The number of births and deaths registered during 1926–27 was 1,188 and 1,195 against 1,232 and 1,060 respectively in the previous year, the number represented 18·1 and 18·2 per 1,000 of the census population and 14·8 and 15·2 of the present estimated population. Public latrines are few and congested and overcrowded. This will disappear as soon as the sewers already under construction are completed. There is great disproportion between the males and females, viz., 7 to 3 which accounts for low birth rate. The increase in the number of deaths is due to an epidemic of cholera.

Epidemic Disease.

	1926–27.		1927–28.	
	attacks.	deaths.	attacks.	deaths.
Cholera	158	115	228	142
Small Pox	45	18	60	12

Each of the 12 jute mills provides a dispensary in charge of a doctor, besides Maharaja Tagore's dispensary. The number of patients treated last year was 96,266 with a daily average attendance of 259. It is most unfortunate that there is no in-door hospital in a big labour centre like this and there is none within a radius of several miles full of jute mills. It is essential that a hospital should be established for the treatment of hundreds of patients requiring in-door treatment.

V.—Welfare Work.

The only welfare work of any importance is a baby clinic attached to Kankinarrah jute mills. It is essential that facilities should be provided for sports, games, cinema and theatrical shows, exhibitions, etc. The Labour Union has repeatedly urged without avail for a workmen's institute on the lines of the Spalding Institute at Kanchrapara (a railway centre within 10 miles of Kankinarrah) which includes a club, recreation grounds, a stage, a library, etc.

VI.—Education.

There are two or three primary schools in the locality run on most unsatisfactory lines. Only recently, the Labour Union has taken up the question of education amongst the children of the working class and a plot of land was accepted as a gift from Mr. Goswami, the local Zaminder and the Government has promised to pay a portion of the cost of the building and recurring expenditure, but sufficient funds could not as yet be raised for the preliminary expenses, and mill authorities are rather reluctant to help the union financially even for this educational purpose.

The Labour Union has urged without avail for an industrial or technical school for the training of half-timers in the technique of jute. It is one of the strange ironies of the jute industry in Bengal that more than 1,500 European supervisers had to be recruited from Dundee and elsewhere, although nearly cent. per cent. of the superior officers employed in cotton mills in Bombay presidency and elsewhere are recruited in India, and adjust themselves as efficiently as any Lancashire staff. This is partly due to the existence of that well known industrial school known as Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute of Bombay where textile students receive first class training. The Government is to be blamed mainly for its indifference to train boys for the jute industry mainly under the control of Britishers and Government apathy is best explained by the fact that up to now no Overseas Scholarships have been granted for the training of Indian scholars in the jute industry although thousands of rupees are annually spent on scholarships for training other industrial scholars abroad.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

Up to now claims for compensation have been regularly paid by the insurance companies with a few exceptions when cases had to be instituted before the Commissioner whose awards have been so far quite equitable and just. The proposed amendment of the Act, now pending before the legislature will materially improve matters.

IX.—Hours.

In all single shift jute mills, 60 hours a week have been introduced from the 1st of July, 1929, the maximum working hours permitted under the Act. In double or multiple shift mills which formerly operated four days a week, an extra day was added every alternate week providing 10 hours extra work for all. This arrangement, without providing for proportionate increase in wages specially of weavers caused great discontent and eventually culminated in one of the worst deadlocks ever

experienced in the jute industry affecting more than half the number of the mills and millhands. At a conference held at Bhatpara municipal office on the 5th of August during the strike which was attended by the District Magistrate and the managers of the local mills as well as officers of the Kankinarrah Labour Union the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and a factory inspector and also representatives of strikers, it transpired very clearly that the strikers employed in single shift mills were not so keen about the extra few annas wages as they were about the extra 6 hours they were obliged to work on Saturdays from the 1st of July, 1929. In the opinion of this union, which made a special study of the working hours in jute mills no individual worker should be permitted to work more than 9 hours a day considering the climate, domestic requirements, physique and dietary of the workers. In fact this is one of the main reasons why jute mills operatives are more or less happy in double shifts mills in which individual workers work 9 or 10 hours a day and are content with less wages than paid to single shift workers, and a strike follows when a double shift is replaced by a single shift of 11 hours per day.

The effect of 60 hours on jute millhands is therefore unsatisfactory. On the industry it is equally unsatisfactory as the extra output of jute fabrics would neither discourage opening of new jute mills or enable employers to capture the temporary trade passing to Dundee or the continent. The owners forgot when they decided to increase the working hours that the Sword of Damocles in the shape of the proposed imposition of extra duty on import of jute fabrics into U.S.A. was still hanging.

The number of holidays in mills working six days a week must be increased by statute and brought in line with the employees in railway and other large workshops.

X.—Questions relating to Women and Children.

The number of children employed in jute mills is on the decrease as the difficulties arising from the exploitation of child labour by timekeepers and sirdars as well as certification of age of children are more or less forcing employers to dispense with child labour, with the unfortunate result that the unemployed boys without facilities for education are becoming street urchins and several complaints were received about their conduct in the mill area. The position of women is however different as there is a certain class of work most suitable to women who are content with low wages. Consequently their number which stood at 53,000 in 1927 is on the increase and the restrictions placed on their employment under Section 24 of the Indian Factories Act proved quite satisfactory. It is desirable that a maternity benefit section should be included as well as provisions for baby clinic. It will be a good thing indeed if the proposal of the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale to compel all factories employing not less than 20 children to provide for them free education for not less than three hours a day be given effect to.

XII.—Wages.

Roughly speaking the difference between the wages of a single shift weaver or a spinner and that of a double shift weaver or a spinner is about Re. 1 and yet they prefer work in double shift mills because of longer leisure and more breaks in work during working days.

Wages in another district, viz., Budge-Budge, about 16 miles south of Calcutta, where most of the mills are on double shifts are rather low, although the cost of living is practically the same as in Kankinarrah, about 22 miles north of Calcutta, as the following statement will show :—

Warp spinner (4 days' work).

	Rs.	a.	p.
Wages	2	4	0
Extra	0	4	0
Khoraki	0	6	0
Rs.	2	14	0

Warp spinner (5 days' work).

	Rs.	a.	p.
Wages	2	11	6
Extra	0	4	0
Khoraki	0	7	6
Add 5 per cent.	0	2	9
Rs.	3	9	9

The average of two weeks is Rs. 3-4 annas per week.

Weavers (4 days' work).

	Rs.	a.	p.
At As. 10-6 up to 8 cuts ..	5	4	0
Bonus at As. 1-1½ per cent.	0	9	0
Khoraki	0	10	0
Rs.	6	7	0

Weavers (5 days' work).

	Rs.	a.	p.
At As. 10-6 up to 10 cuts ..	6	9	0
Bonus at As. 1-1½ per cent.	0	11	3
Khoraki	0	12	6
Add 5 per cent.	0	6	6
Rs.	8	7	3

The average of two weeks is Rs. 7-7 annas per week.

The wages in jute mills have grown as new conditions cropped up with items like lighting money, war bonus, Khoraki (compensation for enforced idleness) grain allowance. Due to enhanced cost of living an extra 5 per cent. for increasing working days from four to five (added in August last) have been included. This complication should be done away with and items which are meaningless at the present day should be abolished.

Wages.—In single shift mills working 60 hours of 5½ days a week.

Jute Carriers, receivers and feeder from Rs. 4 to Rs. 4–8 annas per week according to district.

	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.
Troaser women	3 6 0	to	3 12 0
Jute cutter	5 0 0	,,	5 8 0
Coolies and root cutter	4 0 0	,,	4 6 0
Preparing	3 4 0	,,	3 10 0
Roving	5 4 0	,,	5 10 0
Roving shifter	4 6 0	,,	4 12 0
Spinning hessian	5 12 0	,,	6 0 0
Spinning sacking	6 8 0	,,	6 14 0

Winding, beaming and weaving are under contract, but average earnings are as follows :—

	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.
Winder	8 0 0	to	8 8 0
Beamer	7 8 0	,,	8 2 0
Weaver (hessian)	9 14 0	,,	10 2 0
Weaver (sacking)	11 8 0	,,	11 12 0

The above wages include progressive bonus for piece-work and varies in different mills according to the quality and dimensions of fabrics.

The following is a typical scale of wages and bonus for weavers :—

Quality.	Rate.	Number of cuts (100yds.)	Bonus.	Amount.	Total.
	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
11 by 12 by 40in. hessian	0 9 0	7	0 6 0	3 15 0	4 5 0
	0 9 0	8	0 8 0	4 8 0	5 0 0
	0 9 0	9	0 14 0	5 1 0	5 15 0
	0 9 0	10	1 6 0	5 10 0	7 0 0
	0 9 0	11	1 12 0	6 3 0	7 15 0
	0 9 0	12	2 0 0	6 12 0	8 12 0
	0 9 0	13	3 0 0	7 5 0	10 5 0

In 1927–28 the number of operatives in the 12 jute factories including the two double-shift mills in Kankinarrah was 49,243, and the total wages paid to them per month amounted to Rs. 10,48,929. It works out at Rs. 5–8 annas per week of five days per head, including females and boys above 12 years of age, or about Rs. 1–2 annas per working day.

The agricultural wages in surrounding villages is about 12 annas per working day. The average wages of a skilled worker, viz., a weaver is about Rs. 8–12 annas per week or Rs. 1–12 annas per day. There is approximately one weaver to every 5·5 operatives in a mill.

In double-shift mills in Kankinarrah working four and five days a week, a spinner's wages for a 38 hour work is only Rs. 4, and for 47½ hours work his wages is about Rs. 4-13-6. A weaver in the same mills earns about Rs. 7 for 44 hours in four days and Rs. 7–15 annas for 54 hours in five days or an average of Rs. 7-7-6.

This union urges that the wages for time work should be reduced to a rate per hour and rates for piece-work should be so revised in all the mills in the different districts that no weaver should ever grumble that he is paid so much less than a fellow worker in another mill for an identical piece of work, viz., same number of cuts of the same quality in the same number of hours.

In the suburbs of Calcutta, say outside 10 miles radius, where most of the jute mills on either bank of the river Hooghly are situated and where supplies of such staple foodstuffs as rice, flour, dal, oil and clothing are supplied from the city, the cost of

living, excepting room rents, is more or less the same and rents only vary from 12 annas per month or 3 annas per week to Rs. 1-8 annas per month or 6 annas per week either in the mill quarters or in outside bustees from district to district. It is, therefore a poor excuse on the part of employers to say that wages are based on cost of living in different mill centres as if these centres are hundreds of miles apart. Another lame excuse is put forward in Budge-Budge centre and the mill area across the river, viz., Bowreah, that most of the millhands are villagers living in their own village huts and walking a distance of between three and five miles a day to reach the factories.

Relation of wages to cost of living is indicated by the actual figures quoted below taken partly from records and partly from personal investigation :—

Moslem Weaver.

	Rs.	a.	p.
Rice, 4 seers per week	0	13	0
Atta (flour) 3 seers	0	10	0
Dal, 1½ seers	0	6	9
Ghee, 6 chittaks	0	14	6
Oil, 6 chittaks	0	4	0
Vegetables, meat, spices and salt	1	0	0
Fire wood	0	6	0
Kerosene oil	0	1	6
Rent	0	3	0
Dhobi (laundry)	0	1	6
Barber	0	1	0
Soap and perfume	0	2	0
Smoking, pan and drug	0	12	0
Tiffin and tea	0	8	0
Match	0	0	6
Cloth, Rs. 25, one year	0	8	0
Rs.	6	11	9

Hindu Vegetarian Spinner.

	Rs	a.	p.
Rice	1	8	0
Flour	0	8	0
Dal	0	4	0
Ghee	0	9	0
Oil	0	1	6
Fire wood	0	4	0
Vegetables, spices and salt	0	13	0
Biri and match	0	3	3
Pan	0	1	6
Tiffin	0	5	6
Milk and Dahi	0	12	0
Soap	0	1	6
Rent	0	4	0
Cloth	0	8	0
Rs.	6	3	3

The above items of cost of living of a single worker do not include festival and other ceremonial or religious expenses incurred on some occasions during the year and are by no means exhaustive. All men who leave dependants at home have to send remittances varying from Re. 1 to Rs. 4 per week according to the needs and number of his dependants. Fair average wages should therefore aggregate individual weekly cost of living reduced to a minimum of Rs. 5 (7*s.* 6*d.*) plus a minimum remittance of Rs. 2 (3*s.*) or a total of Rs. 7 (10*s.* 6*d.*) per week. This, however, falls short of the present level of average wages by Rs. 2 per week or about Rs. 100 per year per head, which the industry can well afford to pay considering the continuous prosperity it has enjoyed for the last 14 or 15 years. This extra payment to 350,000 operatives will involve an extra expenditure of 3½ crores of Rupees per annum, which will reduce profits from 7½ crores to 4 crores and dividends from 50 per cent. to 26⅔ per cent.,

assuming that demands for jute fabrics remain steady and normal. It will be still more desirable if at least half a crore is spent annually on labour welfare work and housing, which seem more important than payment of extra wages. Another half a crore should be spent annually for providing cheap credit facilities and co-operative shops or stores for the rescue of over indebted workers from the clutches of Afghan usurers who infest the mill areas and exact 150 to 200 per cent. as interest on small loans ; and also for saving them from the hands of profiteering shopkeepers who vend unwholesome or adulterated foodstuffs and use short weights. In fact this union has often advocated for the establishment of co-operative credit societies and co-operative supply of foodstuffs and clothing and even co-operative housing institutions, but neither the Government nor the employers ever paid the slightest heed to resolutions passed year after year urging the adoption of these most pressing measures. Legislation for the creation of wages boards for all important industries like jute, cotton, coal, tea, etc., is essential to provide for the minimum wages each industry can afford to pay and the cost of living warrants in different industrial areas. This union often urged for an enquiry into the family budget of different types of industrial workers in different industrial centres without any response from any responsible quarters. Deductions of wages as fines is not a very serious matter in the jute industry. No change is necessary regarding periods of wage payment which is weekly in all jute mill areas. Some change is however desirable regarding retention of one week's wages by the employers until a worker is discharged. Mention has already been made of the indebtedness of jute mill hands and it is estimated that one out of every ten operatives suffers from chronic indebtedness and pays at least 2 annas per month for the loan of every rupee as interest per month, and this works out at 150 per cent. per annum Good bonus is actually paid to weavers and piece-workers on production but no reward is paid for good work to spinners and other time workers. It is, therefore, desirable to set apart a share of profits for payment to all time workers, say every six months. This will increase attachment of workers to particular factories and discourage long absence in village homes and materially reduce their indebtedness. Workers as a rule do take leave for a few weeks every 12 or 15 or 18 months, but no guarantee is given to them about re-employment on their return from their village homes. It is desirable that leave with full or even half-pay should be given at least for four days in the year during most important festivals, like Durga Poojah, Maharrum, Ganesh Pujah and Dewali, when expenses have to be incurred by workers as a matter of spiritual necessity.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency.

There has been considerable improvement in the efficiency of Indian weavers in jute mills in recent years partly due to progressive rates of bonus or premium bonus paid to them on production and partly due to supervision of better class of Indian sirdars and other causes. A twill weaver easily produces a little over 18 cuts of 100 yards each of 27 in. width in 5½ days of6 0 hours and earn Rs. 10–6–6 a week, including a bonus of Rs. 3–12 annas. It is reported that ten years back a twill weaver could not take more than 15 cuts of this quality in the same period. A weaver of nine porters 40 in. hessian takes a little over 14½ cuts in 60 hours and earns Rs. 9–14–9, including a bonus of Rs. 2–6 annas. It is, however, doubtful if there has been any marked improvement in the efficiency of time workers, e.g., spinner who receives about Rs. 5–12 annas per week of 5½ days and minds, say, 25 spindles, whereas a woman in Germany and U.S.A. looks after 150 spindles comfortably. A Dundee weaver's average wages is about £2 15*s.* per week, and he minds three looms—an Indian weaver minds only one loom—and his average wage is about Rs. 9. Assuming that hours of work being the same say 54 hours, and the quality and size of the fabrics being the same, and the production per loom per day being the same, the weaving cost of a ton in Dundee is about Rs. 26–8 annas and in Bengal about Rs. 20.

The poor efficiency of an Indian jute operative, viz., one-third of a Dundee man, is primarily due to his illiteracy or want of exercise of his brains. His comparatively poor physique is owing to low standard of living, climatic conditions. But in spite of all these handicaps his efficiency would undoubtedly improve if a proper system of apprenticeship is introduced and regular training is given.

There will be some appreciable effect on production if working hours are reduced and minor changes made in other working conditions. Any improvement of sanitation and on the present type of " vile, filthy, disease-ridden, hovels, called workers' bustees " (as Mr. Tom. Johnston, M.P., described them from his personal inspection of Kankinarrah dwellings, accompanied by the president of the union on the 19th November, 1925) will restore his energy and remove his depression and enable him to put forth his best efforts towards production. Fair wagesc onsistent with the record prosperity of the jute industry will improve the present low standard, reduce his indebtedness and make him more fit to put his heart and soul into production. Dietary will naturally improve with increased wages. What he takes in his village home, viz., good milk, ghee, fresh vegetables and fruits, costs him twice as much in the mill area, but with more money in his pockets he can choose and pick good food-stuff and eat

plenty of it. Unlike a coal miner, a jute mill operative is not very fond of intoxicating liquor, and he does not patronize ganza or opium, which however, cost him almost an anna a day even if he is addicted to either of these drugs.

Steps should be taken to minimize industrial fatigue as experience shows that many accidents do occur during periods of fatigue.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The combination of employers in the jute industry, known as Indian Jute Mills Association is one of the strongest capitalists in India and is in a position by virtue of its financial resources and its membership, including some of the cleverest British brains in the country, to dictate its own terms to labour or suppliers of jute, viz., ryots and even to Government and local bodies as its constituent members, viz., the jute companies pay very large sums as rates to mill municipalities and income and super taxes and customs duties on export of jute fabrics to Government. In fact the aggregate gross profits of all the jute companies within the association is not far short of the revenue of the Government of Bengal and they employ more hands than the Government of Bengal, including very highly paid officers, and their debentures and shares are considered as good securities as Government bonds There are not more than two unions of the employed including this union

Labour organization in the jute industry has produced a remarkable effect on the condition of workers notwithstanding the indifference of employers as the following extracts from the annual report of this union will indicate.

"The exaction of the sirdar from the men working under him or from new recruits varies from one to three months' wages paid in advance and often procured by a loan from money lenders, who charge interest at 150 per cent per annum. Some assistant sirdars' jobs are sold by the head sirdar to the highest bidder. The sirdars have to pay very high prices to the superior officers for their jobs."

This was the state of affairs when the union began to function in 1921, and things have materially improved in 1928–29 through the intensive agitation of the union and ceaseless representation to the employers and prosecutions of offenders in open court and dismissal of offenders on the representation of the union.

The union had some hand in the sanction of Rs. 7 lakhs by the Government of Bengal for the sewerage and waterworks in the Kankinarrah area as the following extracts from the last report shows :—" For some time past the president of the union made efforts to bring Lord Lytton, late Governor of Bengal, down to Kankinarrah and show him the wretched condition (housing, drainage, etc.) under which the jute workers eke out their existence, and although the ex-Governor was quite willing he was prevailed upon by some of the jute mill magnates not to have any direct dealing with labour. However, H. E. Sir Stanley Jackson proved himself too strong for the capitalists and accepted the invitation of the president, whose chief object was not only mere personal inspection by the head of the Government of the ' dung heaps ' known as mill bustees in which the workers are housed, but also to create a certain amount of consciousness in the workers' mind and to raise them in the estimation of the mill magnates and supervisers as well as the local raiyses, who treat the producers of wealth as mere coolies. His Excellency accompanied by Honourable Lady Jackson and their children and Sir Alexander Murray, of the firm of Mg. agent of the Kankinarrah Jute Company, Limited, and ex-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Collector of Alipore, visited Kankinarrah on the 6th December, 1927, and received a great ovation at the pandal erected in the compound of the Goswami Kutchery, by kind permission of Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A., the owner. His Excellency and Lady Jackson were introduced by the president to the members of the executive committee of the union (mostly millhands) and shook hands with them and other ordinary members of the unions. There was accommodation for 5,000 millhands at the pandal, which was crowded to suffocation. The president read an address of welcome and gave a short history of the union, its connection in the past with Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Dass and other national leaders, who visited Kankinarrah and addressed meetings under the auspices of the union. The address dealt with (*a*) jute mill strikes between 1922 and 1927, (*b*) communal disturbances in Kankinarrah and the formation of a local conciliation board at the instance of the union, (*c*) sanitation and municipality-absence of representatives of taxpaying millhands on the Board of Bhatpara Municipality; insanitary dwellings, (*d*) absence of co-operative credit societies and oppressions of moneylenders, (*e*) paucity of provident fund and welfare work, (*f*) want of educational facilities and the efforts of the union to provide a large school for the education of the workers' children. His Excellency in reply said : "I am pleased to note that your union considers that the best way of furthering the legitimate objects of your union is by avoiding, as far as possible, the mixing up of matters concerning labour with political issues. I note that for some years your union has been interesting itself

in the improvement of sanitation and health condition of the Bhatpara Municipality. I understand that administrative approval has been given to an improvement scheme involving an expenditure of Rs. 21,00,000 to be spent upon sewerage and waterworks in this area. Towards this, Government are contributing 7 lakhs and the mills of the district 12 lakhs. The scheme includes some incidental planning involving the opening of roads which should be facilitated with better housing conditions. I appreciate the request for direct representation of the workers on the Municipal Board. It is most desirable that the industrial interests in this area should have suitable representation on this body, and I hope sincerely that this can be and will be arranged. You express a desire for the institution of provident funds and co-operative credit societies for the working people. Any system for provision against old age is an object most worthy of support, and my experience has been that in England, where there has been establishment of welfare centres connected with works, it adds to the contentment and thereby to the efficiency of the artizans."

Since His Excellency's visit in December, 1927, and his notable pronouncement at Kankinarrah, the Public Health Department of Bengal tackled the project most seriously, and the construction of sewerage and water works have been taken in hand and will perhaps be completed next year. The union was mainly instrumental in stopping frequent dismissal of hands at the instigation of the sirdars, and letters from the secretary of the union to the managers of mills are in great demand by aggrieved workers.

For want of funds all the cherished projects of the union, viz., death and sickness benefit, and cheap loans and co-operative shops, remained unexecuted. The union was obliged to confine its activities to propaganda work and to constant representations to employers whenever workers had bona fide grievances.

Detailed history of the Kankinarrah Labour Union will be found in its report for 1926, copies of which will be circulated to the members of the Commission.

The union was started in Kankinarrah by the Khelafatists in 1920. Mahatma Gandhi was invited in 1921 by the executive and addressed a meeting at an open space, close to the present office of the union, and since called Gandhi Maidan, where most of the meetings of the union are held. Maulvi Latafat Hossein, M.L.C. (Labour), was its first secretary. The late Mr. Abdul Mazid, nicknamed as Karl Marx for his socialistic views, was its president. After his death Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C. (Labour), private secretary of the late Mr. James Keir Hardie, M.P., during his Indian visit and workers' delegate to the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1923, joined as president since 1922 and still continues to be its president (with exception of the year 1926, when Maulvi Wahed Hossein, M.A., B.L., was president). Late Mr. C. R. Dass presided over a mammoth conference organized by the union in 1921 and attended by several thousand jute millhands.

The union since 1922 opened a crusade against corrupt sirdars, who fleeced millhands right and left, antagonized hundreds of sirdars (supervisors) who placed every kind of obstruction and openly dissuaded millhands from joining the union with the connivance of the managers.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There were several lightning strikes in the district on flimsy excuses, e.g., discontent against sirdars supply of bad yarns, loss of cinder contract by one of the local landowners, abolition of double shifts and reversion to single shifts. The union took every possible step to discourage these strikes and counselled negotiations and achieved some measure of success in this direction.

The area of the local municipality is about 5 square miles and the Board consisted originally of 19 nominated commissioners, including 10 mill managers. The population is about 80,000, including 3,722 ratepayers, who were mostly millhands living in filthy bustees without any sewerage and insufficient number of latrines and water taps. Rates and taxes, including latrine fees, brought in an income of Rs. 1,18,158. Sanitation was, and is still, most unsatisfactory. The union openly agitated against the civic administration, and the constitution of the Board and succeeded in effecting some improvement. The Board was reconstituted in 1928, and three seats were given to labour as a result of a deputation of the union to His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson. One of the two secretaries, one of the vice-presidents of the union (a mill supervisor) were taken on the Board in 1928 and the sewerage and waterworks schemes were sanctioned and their construction taken in hand in 1928.

On the invitation of the union Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., Mr. Sime, secretary Dundee Workers' Union, Sir Oswald Mosley, M.P., and Lady Mosley, M.P., Mr. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P., the members of the International Textile Delegation,

headed by Rt. Hon. Thomas Shaw, M.P., Mr. Arthur Purcel, M.P., and Mr. J. Hallsworth, deputed by the British Trade Union Congress, Mr. Mardy Jones, M.P., Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, K.C.S.I., Member-in-charge of Industry and Labour, visited the union, and most of them addressed a few words to the members and inspected the bustees in which the workers live.

Kankinarrah was the scene of brutal murders and riots over the question of music before mosques and procession of images, but the union after several unsuccessful attempts eventually constituted a Hindu-Moslem Unity Conference in October, 1927, and elected two of the Hindu leaders, Babu Singeswar Prasad Sha and Babu Ram Prasad Sha, as joint secretaries of the union. Murder, bloodshed and breaking of heads on the immersion day has now ceased as a result of the conference.

Until recently the mere mention of the name of the Labour Union annoyed a certain class of mill managers, who could not tolerate their workmen joining the union, and often threw letters addressed by the union into the waste-paper baskets. In fact even workers were dismissed at the instigation of the sirdars for the heinous offence of joining the union as members. Managers and managing agents of mills, with some exceptions, ignored union letters even after the registration of the union under the Indian Trade Union Act. For this indifference they were not alone to blame, for many mushroom unions were recently created and functioned more or less as strike committees.

The union received a gift of about 6½ cottahs of land last year from Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A., for a school for the workers' children and secured a promise of a building grant of Rs. 2,000, and a recurring grant of Rs. 40 a month from the Government, and proposes as soon as more funds are forthcoming to establish an up-to-date school. The programme of the union includes education of workers' children, co-operative credit societies and co-operative shops, life insurance and provisions for old age, and sanitary dwellings for all workers. The benefit schemes need the help of honest and selfless organizers and funds both of which are slow in coming. Employers' co-operation, municipal assistance, as well as public munificence are essential for the fructification of these schemes. By discouraging strikes and adopting the policy of negotiation with employers when the workers had bona fide grievances, the union has to some extent won the employers' confidence. By inviting the head of Government and public leaders, and by frequent discussion of workers' needs with them, the union has won official as well as public sympathies. By inviting some leading Labour Members of Parliament and International Labour leaders and placing before them facts and figures regarding conditions of work, the union has received great encouragement from overseas trade union leaders, who still maintain contact by correspondence and inspire the union officers with progressive ideas of trade unionism. Thus the foundation is laid for a solid structure of constructive work, for the economic and social uplift of a large section of our countrymen engaged in the best manufacturing industry of India, viz., jute, that employs about 350,000 hands and pays annual wages to the extent of 9 crores of rupees to men, women and children not only natives of Bengal, but also of Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Central Provinces, United Provinces, and even a portion of the Punjab. The union invites young men interested in social service work to come forward and lend their helping hands in building up the nation from its root, viz., the working men—the producers. The union has also aimed at following the example of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union, which occupies a unique position in the trade union movement of India under the fostering care of Mrs. Anusua Bai, a sister of a millionaire millowner of Ahmedabad, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, who has persistently refused to affiliate the union with the All-India Trade Union Congress. The latter is more or less a creation of politicians, and is frequently utilized by politicians as a convenient means for taking trips to Geneva or for seats on Commissions and Committees, and may soon be merged into the Political Congress, notwithstanding the best efforts of Mr. Joshi and others to counteract political exploitation of labour.

Mahatma Gandhi, in refusing to accept the presidentship of the Lahore Congress, has made a most uncomfortable statement some time ago. He has stated that " whilst he wants power for labour and its progressive welfare, he does not believe in its exploitation for mere political purposes." This is perhaps a reply to Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose, the President of the Congress Committee in Bengal. Addressing a meeting of the workers at Lillooah the other day, he said " The labour movement was closely connected with the Swaraj movement, and what was needed at the present moment was a co-ordination of the two in order to force the hands of an unsympathetic Government." Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, and the leader of the Congress Party in the Council, burnt his finger and confessed his mistake, and expressed regret that his activities caused the loss of permanent employment to hundreds of Bhadrolog employees of the Assam-Bengal Railway during the strike in 1921, engineered by himself. Mr. Bose, young and inexperienced as he is in labour matters, will perhaps repent his mistakes for meddling with the workers at

Golmuri and Budge-Budge and prolonging their strike to the point of starvation. The adoption of a resolution in the Legislative Assembly on 25th September, 1929, to withdraw the protection granted to the tinplate industry in India by a narrow majority as a sort of censure on the Government of Bihar, which refused to refer the strike or dispute at Golmuri to a court of enquiry under the Indian Trade Disputes Act, will be very poor consolation to the several hundred men who lost their jobs through the strike. However, the organization at Ahmedabad, embracing five or six unions of cotton mill operatives, has made wonderful progress. Collective bargaining forms the primary business of the union. The union's procedure in attending to the complaints received from the members is so planned as to prevent undue friction and to make a strike a virtual impossibility. In case of disagreement with an individual mill, the union may refer the matter to the Mill Owners' Association. If within a reasonable time the association is not able to bring about a satisfactory settlement of the dispute, it is open to the union to make a demand for arbitration, which the association is in honour bound to accept. The arbitration award is binding on both parties. In the year 1924, 743 complaints were received; 30 per cent. of these related to dismissals, victimizations, fines, forfeiture and other unjust penalties; 24 per cent. to bad treatment, bribe taking, improper rules, and obstruction to the union; 15 per cent. to latrine and water and matters of sanitation; 15 per cent. to mode of payment of wages and other economic allowances; 14 per cent. to hours and holidays; 6 per cent. to bad and insufficient materials, stoppages, etc. Of these 471 were concluded successfully, 27 were compromised, 46 were rejected as being unreasonable, false or trifling, 64 were unsuccessful, the rest were either closed or pending.

The union has organized the following benefits :—(*a*) Free medical aid, expenditure Rs. 12,607; (*b*) Cheap loan, Rs. 10,668 were advanced at 6 to 9 per cent. interest; (*c*) Free education through 11 night schools with 529 students and 8 day schools with 580 students, expenditure Rs. 22,584 (of this Rs. 15,000 is paid by the Mill Owners' Association); (*d*) Free libraries and a weekly organ; (*e*) Free legal aid, (*f*) Compensation for accidents; (*g*) Municipal facilities; (*h*) Cheap stores; (*i*) Research; (*j*) Housing; a chawl has been taken on lease by the union and the rent charged is Re. 1 less than the former rent.

The attitude of jute millhands towards the Labour Union is more or less indefinite Membership grows very rapidly, during strikes or temporary excitements, and falls equally rapidly after the termination of disputes. To some of them, especially those who struck work through the instigation of officials of a particular union and had to resume without any satisfaction, the name of Anjuman or union has got into a bad odour. Their attitude, however, towards the union is fully recognized by employers who listen to the grievances placed by the union. This union is more or less under the control of the working-class representatives of the workers. The general secretary is a mill babu, the vice-presidents are either supervisors or assistant supervisors. The difficulty is to get these honorary workers to attend the union office regularly and enrol new members. Paid officers and collectors of membership subscriptions are absolutely essential.

The constitutional aspect of the union is unknown to them. Benefit schemes and successful negotiations with employers for removal of grievances are the only ties to bind members to the union.

All bona fide unions in Bengal have been registered under the Act. The rights conferred on the members of the registered trade unions, viz., immunity from prosecution for criminal conspiracy in trade disputes and from civil suits for breach of contract of employment or interference with trade or business are indeed substantial. The proportion fixed by the Act of officers, viz., one-half being actual employees in an industry is, indeed, sound. It is rather too early to judge the effect of the Act, but the very fact that some employers have recently expressed their unwillingness to correspond or negotiate with unregistered unions has produced a salutary effect on the growth of healthy unions and serves as a check on the so-called unions which exist on paper, or are created during strikes. If feasible more facilities should be provided by the Act for members to negotiate with employers, and to penalize employers who refuse or ignore negotiations with officers of registered trade unions, and further to penalize employers who dismiss or threaten to dismiss employees for joining a registered union.

Definite rules should be laid down regarding methods and procedure of negotiations between employers and employed through trade unions. The position of employees in State industrial concerns in relation to trade unions is most unsatisfactory. An amendment of Public Service Conduct Rules affecting employees in State railways and other industrial concerns is necessary. Some amendment of the rules regarding audit of accounts is also called for.

The years 1927, 1928, 1929 will be remembered as the worst period of unrest in the industrial history of Bengal and Bihar. The biggest strike in the jute industry

occurred in July and August, 1929, stoppages of works by strikes and lock-outs in railway workshops in Kharagpur and Lillooah were followed by sympathetic strikes in several engineering shops in Howrah and other incidents such as shooting of strikers at Bamungachi and holding up of traffic by strikers in front of the Law Courts in Howrah, caused widespread sensation, and they formed the subjects for interpellations in the British Parliament. The general public, having little interest in industries, realized for the first time in Bengal the significance of an industrial insurrection at the instigation of men unconnected with the labour movement of Bengal. Great excitement prevailed at Bowreah, about 12 miles from Calcutta, where the police had to open fire to suppress a revolt of the workers of the Fort Gloucester Jute Mill, who were subsequently locked out and went on strike for several months. Inflammatory speeches led to partial stoppage of work at the Ludlow Jute Mill at Chengail. Thousands of workers of the Tata Steel Works at Jamshedpur downed tools for several months. These strikes and lock-outs from June, 1927, to the end of 1928 affected over a hundred thousand men. More than twelve million working days and at least a crore of rupees in wages were lost.

The underlying cause of these stoppages was the growing consciousness of labour, but the immediate cause was partly economic and partly personal. The most deplorable factors in the strike situation were bad leadership, most careless handling of the strike situation by employers or their agents and the preaching of Bolshevism. It is a matter of profound regret that few of those who conducted these strikes have any experience of negotiations for a settlement, and they unconsciously did a great disservice to the infant labour movement in India. It is deplorable that in spite of the bitter experience of previous strikes they failed to realize that prolongation of strikes without funds or prospects of getting funds, without legal sanction for picketing and many other things essential for successful prosecution of strikes, may cause heavy financial loss to the employers, but the blow to the employees, who surrender unconditionally after weeks of semi-starvation and exhaustion of their slender resources (the strikes of Lillooah, Bowreah, Tatanagar are included in this category) is stupendous and crushing. Hundreds lost their jobs and neither newspaper articles with big headlines nor resolutions in the Council and the Assembly, nor open-air meetings and processions of strikers with red flags, proved to be any compensation whatsoever for the heavy loss of wages. The joint committee appointed by the Governor in Council in March, 1921, as a result of Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury's (president of this union) motion in the Bengal Legislative Council, enquired into the cause of the industrial unrest in Bengal and examined a large number of witnesses (workers as well as supervisors) employed in large industries, viz., jute, engineering, coal mining, cotton, railway, printing presses, etc., affected by an epidemic of strikes (89 in Calcutta, 12 in Burdwan coalfields, 2 in Barisal, and 1 in Kharagpur) in 1920 and 1921. The committee presided over by Sir John Kerr, the then Finance Member, after exhaustive enquiries (*vide* report of the Committee on Industrial Unrest, published by Government in September, 1921) came to the conclusion that a large number of these strikes (27 strikes not concerned with wages, 13 due to claims for overtime, khoraki, strike pay, shifts ; 10 due to dismissal of workmen and similar disciplinary action, one for better facilities for progress, one for assault on men by European officers) could have been prevented or curtailed if a better understanding had prevailed between the employers and the employed, and if some machinery existed for bringing the parties together, immediately the differences occurred and recommended the formation of a conciliation board consisting of about 20 members to be appointed by Government to include a due proportion of all classes of the community—European and Indian representatives of both capital and labour. This board did function in one or two disputes in public utility service, viz., the strike on the Howrah Amta Light Railway and was presided over by Sir Campbell Rhodes, now a member of the India Council.

The Trade Disputes Act passed in March, 1929, was only a natural corollary of the action taken by the Bengal and Bombay Governments from time to time for settlement of industrial disputes. The Bengal committee, however, laid the utmost emphasis on the creation of an industrial concern of joint works committee (associated with the name of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, late Speaker of the House of Commons and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour), *vide* page 18 of the report.

The following is an extract from the last annual report of the union :—" It is the conviction of the organizers of this union, based on several years' experience of factory labour, that the plant of constructive trade unionism, based on European model, will not take root for many years to come, until and unless the soil is weeded out and workers receive primary instructions. Closer contact and better understanding between employers and employed are essential for future industrial peace and this can be achieved by only one method, viz., joint committees (Panchayats), and working it honestly and earnestly to give it a fair trial."

The Indian Jute Mills Association decided in October, 1928, to increase working hours from 54 to 60 per week in single-shift mills and similar increase in the working of double shift mills. The change was necessitated in order to capture trade passing to Dundee and the Continent, and furthermore to discourage building of new jute factories, which were on the increase during the last two or three years. Before the change came into operation on 1st July, 1929, a conference of over 6,000 jute mill-hands organized by the Kankinarrah Labour Union, a registered trade union of over seven years' standing, was held on 12th March, 1929, on the maidan close to the Meghna Jute Mill in Jagatdal, and was presided over by Mrs. Dass, a Punjabee lady devoted to social service work.

The conference had two sittings, and the two most important resolutions which had any bearing on the strike that followed in July were fully discussed in vernacular and finally adopted as follows :—" That in view of the misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of 60 hours a week in the jute industry from 1st July, the conference urges upon employers to meet labour representatives at a conference and discuss the new terms and new rates of bonus for piece-work to be paid to weavers."

Mr. Roy Chowdhury, in supporting the resolution, said that he had heard all sorts of rumours regarding the attitude of labour towards the change. He suggested that in view of any misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of 60 hours a week, a conference should be called to discuss the matter and provide no handle to agitators already on the field to foment discontent. The above utterance was almost prophetic, and agitators seized the opportunity and did foment troubles.

The second resolution was as follows :—" That this conference urges Government to take drastic action against smuggling of country liquor from Chandannagore and illicit sale of cocaine and gambling in dens kept by notorious persons within the Bhatpara municipal area."

The proceedings of the conference and the resolutions were published in the papers in Calcutta and were forwarded to Government as well as to the managing agents of the local mills Some of the managing agents courteously acknowledged receipt of the above, but none of them was willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours and consequent change in wages. However, the resolution about the prevention of smuggling and gambling roused the ire of interested and influential persons in Jagatdal. They swore vengeance on Maulvi Latafat Hossain, M.L.C., general secretary of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, who was carrying on a crusade against gambling and drinking and drug taking, and even incurred the displeasure of the local police. The Excise officers took drastic action after a week or so, and raided many houses and arrested certain persons on suspicion. This goaded Mr. Hossain's enemies to fury, and they were determined to cause him humiliation. The Labour Union had a meeting on the 23rd June, attended by a number of local weavers, who reported that the management would increase the number of cuts necessary to obtain bonus from the 1st July, and this would mean some loss in wages for the extra six hours' work. They were all urged to work 60 hours and count the actual wages and find out the difference, and in the meantime the president undertook to negotiate with the managing agents for reconsideration of the weavers' bonus. Reports reached the union office that certain malicious persons of Jagatdal were spreading rumours that Mr. Latafat Hossain, the general secretary of the union, induced mill authorities to increase cuts in order to deprive the weavers of adequate bonus, and a pleader of Barrackpore, known to the gamblers and smugglers, was invited and was paid to fight the weavers' case in law courts. Certain steps were taken to counteract this false propaganda, and assurances were received from five or six mills that the weavers would work the first fortnight and draw their first week's wages at the end of the fortnight and afterwards decide on the course to be adopted.

What happened after the 1st July at Jagatdal is well known to all local managers. The weavers of the Alliance and three other adjoining mills informed the managers that they would not work more than 54 hours, and they actually left the looms on Friday evening. It is worth while recording here what was behind this scene of walking out. A pleader of Barrackpore, who had no connection with any labour union, quietly visited a certain shop at Jagatdal, and was induced by his retainers to speak to some of the weavers. He urged them not to work after 6 p.m. on Friday the 5th July. The pleader interviewed Mr. Milne, of the Alliance Jute Mill, and told the weavers that he was informed by the mill manager that he was quite willing to pay the old rate of bonus, but Mr. Latafat Hossain stopped him from doing so. He subsequently confessed to Mr. Ray Chowdhury that he could not grasp the question of bonus to weavers. The pleader told some of the weavers as early as Thursday the 4th that he would fight their case in law courts ; that is to say, he would either stop the mills working more than 54 hours or would realize extra bonus through law courts. He received his fees in advance for his proposed fight. As prearranged by the shopkeeper, his fellow intriguer, the weavers walked out on the 5th, but the weavers of the Alexandra Mill of the same group were under the influence of Mr. Latafat Hossain, and refused to follow suit. The walk-out on Friday afternoon

went on for about three weeks. Meantime, Mr. Roy Chowdhury kept on negotiations with the managing agents of the Alliance and other mills, and they decided on 22nd July to satisfy the weavers' demands in full, and to pay them the old rate of bonus and notices were posted and sirdars were asked to communicate the news to the weavers. On Sunday the 21st July the pleader's clients called a meeting. Mr. Ray Chowdhury attended the meeting against the wishes of Mr. Latafat Hossain. Mrs. Dass, who presided over the conference in May and accompanied Mr. Ray Chowdhury to Jagatdal, was requested by the pleader to preside over this meeting Mrs. Dass asked the men to wait a day or two and mentioned that Mr. Ray Chowdhury's negotiations were almost complete, and they would perhaps hear good news in a day or two. The pleader also spoke and asked the men not to strike but to continue work half-heartedly and demand Re. 1–8 per day. In fact, he repeated what he was told by his clients to do. The weavers returned on Monday the 22nd, but worked half-heartedly and stated that they were carrying out instructions. The good effect of the announcement on the same day that they would be paid at the old rate was neutralized by the pleader, who told the men on the same evening not to believe in the concessions mentioned in the notice posted at the mill gate, and that if the manager wrote to him direct he would then advise them on what to do. The weavers returned on the 23rd, but continued the tactics of passive resistance of the previous day. The mills had to be closed at 11 a.m.

Miss Prabhabati Das Gupta, President, Bengal Jute Workers' Union (with which none of the local millhands had any connections), visited Jagatdal after the 15th July and made the pleader's acquaintance and elected him as vice-president of her union. The idle workers of Jagatdal, at the instigation of the pleader and Miss Das Gupta, began strong picketing from 2nd August, and induced millhands of all the local mills—Anglo-India, Kankinarrah, Reliance—to come out. Mr. Latafat Hossain's house was attacked because he managed to keep going not only his own mill, Anglo-India, but also the Alexandra, belonging to another group. The strike fever, through the paid agents of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, spread to Tittagarh on the south and Gourepore on the north.

There was a conference on the 5th August at Bhatpara Municipal Office, attended by the district magistrate, the presidents and vice-presidents of the Kankinarrah Labour Union and the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Red handbills were distributed throughout the mill area asking millhands to demand 25 to 50 per cent increase in wages. By the 10th August almost all the mill managers in Tittagarh district expressed their willingness to pay proportionately for the increased working hours and make other concessions regarding maternity benefit and follow the footsteps of the Begg Dunlop group of mills in Jagatdal, and the strikers in that area were quite willing to resume on the 12th, but an intense propaganda was started against resumption by Miss Das Gupta, who published notices that the assurances given by the mill managers were false, etc., and the resumption was delayed. Dr. B. C. Ray, M.L.C. (Barrackpore), a Swarajist leader, moved for the adjournment of the Bengal Council on the 9th August to discuss the strike, and the motion was carried by a small majority. The Hon. Mr. McAlpin, on behalf of the Government, could not comply with Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta's request to take action under the Trade Disputes Act. However, the Government took departmental action and called a conference in the Secretariat on the 14th August. Mr. Laird, the president of the Indian Jute Mills Association, Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C., president, and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, M.L.C., vice-president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, and Miss Prabhabati Das Gupta, president, Bengal Jute Workers' Union, separately discussed the strike situation with the members of the Executive Council of the Government. The president and the vice-president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, gave their version of the origin and the progress of the strike, and declared that after the issue of the notice by the manager of the Alliance Jute Mill that " weekly wages from 1st July and onwards will be paid at the old rate of 54 hours " the dispute disappeared.

Miss Das Gupta had no other alternative but to sign the terms of settlement (recommendation of the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association to the members of the association). The terms were practically the same as were publicly announced by some of the members of the Jute Mills Association the week before, and were as follows :—(*a*) To pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours' work ; (*b*) to pay " Khoraki " on the same scale as before ; (*c*) the scale of bonus remains the same as it was before the 1st July, when the mills were working 54 hours ; (*d*) that favourable concession be given to an adjustment of wages to time-workers on the basis of concession to piece-workers ; (*e*) that there be no victimization ; (*f*) that favourable consideration be given to the provisions of maternity benefit ; (*g*) that there be no corporal punishment.

The same was also signed by Mr. Laird, the president of the Indian Jute Mills Association and Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union. The officers of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union were mobbed on 17th and 18th August at Tittagarh, Khardah and Kankinnarrah and asked to explain why

their agents issued false pamphlets against resumption the previous week on terms almost identical with those now before them. Mrs. Dass, of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, who motored to Tittagarh on the 19th August, 1929, to help in the resumption, was mistaken for Miss Das Gupta, and brickbats were thrown at her. She narrowly escaped severe injuries. By the 20th August most of the strikers resumed work.

The mills at Budge-Budge, 12 miles south of Calcutta, belonging to the Andrew Yule group and at Bowreah and Chengail were so far unaffected, notwithstanding intense agitation of the agents of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union which had neither any branch nor any members. The managers, however, under instructions from the head office, informed the millhands (who had little knowledge of the extent of the strike in the north or of the terms of the settlement) of the new terms of pay, khoraki, bonus, maternity benefit and 5 per cent increase of total earnings for the 5-day week, but the unexpected happened. The workers of 5 or 6 mills in Budge-Budge who were granted full terms of increase by the settlement without strike, downed tools on the 20th August, on the plea that some persons had told them that the increase granted to them fell far short of that granted in the north area. This strike was immediately followed by the strike of petroleum workers of Budge-Budge, organized by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, in sympathy with the strikers (tin plate workers) of Golmuri in Tatanagar in Behar. Six weeks' intense agitation and propaganda in favour of a sympathetic strike prior to the jute mill strike failed to create any impression on the oil workers but they came out with jute workers, who lived with them in the same bustees and enjoyed their fellowship. The strike at Budge-Budge spread across the river to Chengail, Chak-kashi and Bowreah. The jute mill strike at Budge-Budge lasted full 3 weeks, and affected about 25,000 hands including three mills across the river and approximately 280,000 working days and Rs. 315,000 in wages were lost without any gain whatsoever. This demonstrated the utter ignorance and extreme gullibleness of the Indian factory labour.

The executive committee of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union removed Miss Das Gupta from the presidentship of the union, on the ground that she acted in a way detrimental to the cause of the workers and also for her so-called undemocratic and reactionary mentality. She replied in the English Basumati: "The union executives' banishment of me may mean the banishment from the union all jute workers and presence thereof a few bourgeois exploiters only. But I know not that few of the jesters will shortly stand by my side. As for those that are mercenaries, I wish, I could still stand by their side after the strike has been called off. But I lack the resources." There was a split in the camp and two rival parties, both called themselves Bengal Jute Workers' Union. One favoured a fresh strike at once and the other under Miss Das Gupta was not in favour of a strike then.

42 out of 85 mills were affected by the strike and about 158,000 out of about 250,000 were out at different periods for 5, 10, 20 and 30 days. Total number of working days lost was 1,725,000 and total loss of wages amounted to approximately Rs. 20 lacs.

The weavers would receive extra wages to the extent of Rs. 5 lacs a year and the rest about Rs. 6 lacs a year. As a matter of fact the concessions secured through negotiations by the Kankinarrah Labour Union for the Jagatdal group of jute mills, would practically have had the same result minus the huge loss of wages and some lives.

A court of enquiry under this Act has been appointed only once since the passing of the Act in March, viz., for promoting a settlement of the dispute in Bombay cotton industry and the report of the court has just been published. It is therefore premature to pass any opinion on it as yet. In view of what has happened recently, viz., the refusal of the Behar Government to refer the dispute of the tin plate workers at Golmuri to a court of enquiry under the Trades Dispute Act, although circumstances warranted it and public opinion demanded it, an amendment of Section 3 of the Act is perhaps necessary to direct the Government under what conditions they must take action even if one of the two parties to the dispute applies to dispel suspicion that Government sides with employers whenever a stoppage occurs. In fact the conciliation board created for investigation and settlement of trades disputes by the Government of Bengal, in 1921, could not function excepting in one or two occasions, although pressure was brought on Government from time to time to utilize this splendid machinery whenever big strikes (viz., the strikes of workmen of Messrs. Jessop and Co. Ltd., of Messrs. Burn and Co. Ltd., Howrah, of the mechanics of Howrah Amta Light Railways Co. Ltd., and elsewhere) occurred. The Government of Bengal invariably refused on the plea that employers were opposed to a reference to the board.

The attitude of the present Government of Bengal or more correctly speaking, the present head of the Government towards labour union, is indeed most satisfactory as will be evidenced from the following extract from the last annual report of

union (vide page 2).—" For some time past, the president of the union made efforts to bring Lord Lytton, Late Governor of Bengal, down to Kankinarrah to show him the wretched condition (housing, drainage, etc.,) under which the jute workers eke out their existence and although Lord Lytton was willing he was prevailed upon by some of the jute mill magnates not to have any direct dealings with labour. However, H. E. Sir Stanley Jackson could not be hoodwinked by the capitalists and accepted the invitations of the union and visited Kankinarrah with the Hon. Lady Jackson and shook hands with common workmen and won the hearts of the members of the union. His Excellency's attitude in connection with industrial disputes was equally satisfactory as was evident from his personal activities to bring about a speedy settlement of that devastating strike of the workmen of the E. I. R. Carriage works at Lillooah in February, 1928, which spread like an epidemic to other factories in Howrah district, although the railway workshops are within the jurisdiction of the Central Government."

It must be said that the laws of India are most satisfactory from labour point of view and workmen had no occasions to complain of any legal persecution by employers.

XVII. Administration.

The Central Government and Legislatures have more or less monopolised labour. This is evidently a mistake, for the simple reason that local governments and local legislatures are in close touch with local industries and are familiar with types of legislatures or administrative measures, suitable to the peculiar labour conditions in different industries, plantations and mines within the province. One of the main reasons why the passing of such an important measure like the Indian Trade Disputes Act was delayed for 5 or 6 years, was the wrangle between the Government regarding jurisdiction, or whether the Act was to be central or provincial.

Australian labour legislations are perhaps the best and the most instructive in the world and India has more things in common with Australia than England, e.g. both are agricultural countries and the industries of both the countries are more or less of recent growth and the percentage of industrial workmen of both countries compare favourable. There are two types of laws in Australia, viz. federal or commonwealth and state and are modelled on the United States principle of specifying the function of the central government and leaving other functions to the individual states. The Canadian system is the opposite. It defines the function of the provincial government and leaves the rest to the central government. Thus in Australia and the United States, the most important developments in labour legislature have taken place in the states and most of the Industrial Peace Legislations are provincial. In some of the State Acts in Australia, e.g., New South Wales Acts, of 1918, certain strikes and lock-outs have been made illegal and persons aiding and instigating illegal strikes or lock-outs are to pay heavy penalties, viz., £1,000. Another new section added in 1918, lays down a penalty not exceeding £100 for the proprietor and publisher of any newspaper, which advises, instigates, or excites or aids or abets an illegal strike. Local legislations of this kind seem essential to protect illiterate workers from exploitation by those who are not by any means trade unionists. Some of the recent actions of the central government regarding constitution of committees and commissions for investigation of labour problems, leave no room for doubt that the administration of labour as well as labour legislations should be provincial in future. One has only to read the proceedings of the select committee regarding the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, and the Indian Trade Disputes Act, 1929, to come to no other conclusion than the above.

The relation between the central and local governments need drastic changes. It was most amazing that the autocratic Government of India did not think fit to consult the Government of Bengal in the matter of either the personnel of such an important commission as the Royal Commission on Labour or the terms of reference and the schedule of subjects. It is essential that there should be a whole-time labour officer in Bengal with an adequate staff to carry on the administration of a labour department with a special officer to collect labour statistics and intelligence and institute enquiries into the cost of living.

THE INDIAN JUTE MILLS ASSOCIATION.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) It is difficult to deal with the origin of labour as regards the associated jute mills, but so far as can be ascertained, the bulk of the labour force is non-Bengali. Most of the weavers come from Behar—from the following districts :—Chapra, Boalia, Ghazipur, Monghyr, Muzaffarpore, Patna, Bhagalpore, Arrah.

Most of the other workers come from :—Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces (Bilaspur), Behar, Bengal.

It is some time since census figures were taken, but in the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association the undernoted percentages are approximately correct :—

Bengal	17 per cent.
Behar and Orissa	60 ,,
Madras	14 ,,
United Provinces	5 ,,
Central Provinces	4 ,,

(ii) The main cause of the principal streams of migration is probably the increasing population, and the difficulty of finding work for all in the home villages. The young men leave their villages in search of work, and finding steady and remunerative employment in jute mills, eventually take their wives with them and gradually settle round the mills and raise families.

Madrasis were first seen in jute mill areas about 1906, when a few were employed in the Titaghur district. Since then their numbers have increased tremendously, and Madrasis are now in large numbers in most of the mill areas.

Bilaspuris have been coming to Bengal for many years, but previous to the year 1915, would only take open-air employment. In other words, they were employed principally at railway works and in brickfields. About 1915, however, scarcity of outside work and the high prices of food stuffs attracted these workers to the jute mills. They quickly adapted themselves to the new class of work, and there are now large numbers of this class of labour in the mill areas.

(iii) During recent years the tendency has been for all classes of foreign labour to come into the mill areas in increasing numbers.

2. (i) Most weavers send money to their homes periodically, and go home once a year for 2 to 3 months.

Madrasis go home for 2 to 3 months at intervals of 2 to 3 years, while Bilaspuris go for the same period at intervals of about 1½ years.

It is rather difficult to give accurate information under this heading, but the opinion is that, of the total labour force employed, only about 5 per cent. of the non-Bengali workers is permanently settled in the mill areas. About 17 per cent. of the total force is Bengali, so that only 22 per cent. of the total labour force is strictly permanent, but it should be understood that about 90 per cent. of the workers are entirely dependent on the jute mills for employment and have no other occupation to which they can readily turn apart from cultivation in their own villages.

3. (i) Recruiting so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, is not required nowadays, as, with the exception of three hot weather months, labour is in good supply all the year round. Some years ago recruiting was very necessary during the hot weather, but, as above indicated, even in the hot weather months the labour shortage nowadays is not serious.

Good management and fair treatment make the best recruiting propaganda. If a mill has a good reputation for unlimited water supply, healthy surroundings, good housing, steady employment and fair treatment, an ample supply of labour will always be available. The workers going home on leave undoubtedly talk in their villages of the conditions which obtain in the jute mill areas, and by so doing, induce others to accompany them when they return.

At most mills recruiting sirdars are kept, chiefly for Madrasi and Bilaspuri labour ; but their particular work is to look after their respective communities living in the workmen's houses.

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(iii) It is the opinion of the Association that public employment agencies are undesirable so far as jute mill labour is concerned. There is no general disturbance of family life. Numbers of the workers leave some member or members of their families in their native villages to look after their houses and fields. They send money to them regularly, and visit them generally year by year. By working in the mills they are frequently able to add to their property ; and in any case, the standard of living is improved.

7. (i) From August to February there is a certain amount of unemployment, especially amongst weavers, owing to a large influx of workers from upcountry during July and August ; some returning from leave and others coming down for the first time. Nowadays there are insufficient vacancies to go round, and it is some time until these workers are absorbed by neighbouring mills or find other employment.

(ii) (*a*) Dismissals for bad work are practically unknown outside the weaving departments. In other departments workers are only dismissed for flagrant misbehaviour or bad time-keeping.

(*b*) As is usual in other countries and in other industries, a worker who is in good health prefers—unless he has other means of support—to go on working.

(*c*) One other cause of unemployment in recent years has been multiple-shift mills changing over to the single-shift system. This change automatically throws fully 25 per cent. of a mill's labour force permanently out of employment.

(iii) The Indian Jute Mills Association has no suggestions to offer in this t tion.

(iv) It is the opinion of the Association that insurance for unemploy scarcely a practical proposition at the present stage.

8. In connection with labour turnover, the Committee of the Indian Jut Association have, for some time, been collecting various statistics. The stat have been submitted to the Chief Inspector of Factories for compilation.

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II.—Staff Organization.

11 The managing staffs of the jute mills in the membership of the asso are, almost without exception, comprised entirely of Europeans trained experienced in the United Kingdom, and consist in the majority of cases, of a mana in charge, one or more assistant managers, and an overseer in each departmen the mill. Selection is according to qualification, knowledge and general experien of engineering and of the various processes involved in the manufacture of ju and promotion depends on merit, reliability, adaptability and skill in handling labour.

12. (i) " Subordinate supervising staff " might conveniently be divided, s as jute mills are concerned, into two classes. In the first class there would be the more or less educated babu who has never been a mill operative himself, who is engaged, in the first instance, as an apprentice on a nominal salary and, having gained experience, may be promoted to supervision work, though possibly still incapable of doing the actual work himself. In some mills there is one babu in charge of each department under the European overseer. His duties would be to check attendances, to keep attendance registers and generally to assist in the supervision and work of the department. There is, of course, a separate clerical establishment employed in the mill offices and stores to look after production, wages, stores, etc., and to compile the various statements and reports required in connection with the running of the mill. The babu establishment is recruited, for the most part from the locality in which the mill is situated ; young applicants are employed in the less important and lower paid posts to begin with, and are promoted according to merit as vacancies occur.

The second class would include sirdars and under sirdars, who constitute the lower subordinate supervising staff of the mill. They are wherever possible, selected from the rank and file of the mill labour force, on the recommendation of the managing staff, according to capability, efficiency, service, and the authority which they display over their fellow workers.

(ii) If training implies direct instruction from the managing staff, or even from the supervising staff, facilities for the training of jute mill workers are negligible. The bulk of the work in the mill is unskilled, and where training is necessary, as for instance in the spinning department, this is obtained in the course of actual employment, by the efforts of the worker himself. It frequently occurs, however, that a young workman learns his trade by assisting a relative at his loom or sewing machine, as the case may be, until efficiency is acquired.

As mentioned above, promotion to the status of sirdar is strictly by merit, and is effected by the European overseer in consultation with the manager.

13 (i) Relations between the staff, European and Indian, and the rank and file of the workers are, with rare exceptions, harmonious without being intimate. Upsets must and do occasionally occur, and are due, in the majority of cases, to oppression on the part of the subordinate supervising staff. This is severely dealt with by the management, to whom every encouragement is given to interest themselves in the personal health and general welfare of the mill employees. All grievances brought to the notice of the management are carefully investigated, either by the European in charge of the department or by the mill manager, who is always accessible for the hearing of complaints either by the workers themselves or by a deputation of sirdars. The employees have a right of appeal to the managing agents, to whom questions affecting wages are invariably referred.

(iii) The committee are not aware of the existence of any works committees in connection with the mills in the membership of the association, all disputes being settled amicably in the manner described above.

14. (i and ii) *Complements.*—In each department throughout the works, with the exception of piece-paid departments, a complement is drawn up, showing the number of hands it requires to run satisfactorily; and against this number is shown the amount in wages that such departments are bound down to. It can, therefore, be easily ascertained whether or not any of the departments are drawing money in excess of what they should actually be working to.

The European Mill Clerk each week selects any of the department's wages books, and checks the extension of each worker's daily attendances, the calculation of the amount of the worker's weekly wages, all additions, and particularly the carrying forward of totals.

Overseers.—As soon as work is commenced of a morning, and at each change of shift, the European overseer in charge of each department goes round to see if all his workers are present. In cases of absenteeism, this is recorded against the name of that particular worker in the register. At the end of each week, wages books are prepared by departmental babus, checked by the European overseer, and submitted to the general office where they are re-checked, and the number of hands working compared with the departmental complement number. After the books are checked, wages tickets are made out in the general office, checked for comparison with wages books, and then each ticket is initialled by the departmental European overseer.

Piece-work.—Although a complement of workers in piece-paid departments is laid down, no fixed amount in wages can be adhered to; but a check is made by calculating the total production of each section of the department, so that the total amount actually earned by production must equal the amount to be paid out.

Tokens.—Each department in a double shift mill has a differently shaped token, made generally of metal, and each shift worker is in possession of one on which is stamped the worker's number. Tokens are not necessary in single-shift mills as the operatives all work throughout the running hours of the mill.

Issue of Tickets.—Departmental babus receive pay tickets from the general office; and after having been checked and initialled by the European assistant, these are issued to the workers on pay day.

Payment by Europeans.—Unless on occasions where found to be inconvenient, payment of workers is made by the European assistants, and on completion, pay boxes are sent round the general office, and the balance, if any, checked and compared with the total amount of unpaid tickets.

15. (i) So far as it is possible to generalize, the following works *may* be given on contract:—(1) Importing, carrying, and storing of jute in mill godowns; (2) opening and selection of bales at the commencement of the process of manufacture; (3) carrying of jute from godowns to the mill building; (4) carrying of cloth to the finishing department; (5) calendering; (6) cloth lapping; (7) baling and bale pressing; (8) carrying of bales of finished goods and loading into railway wagons and boats; (9) discharging coal and carrying to boilers; (10) removal of mill dust and carting of ashes from furnaces; (11) foundry work; (12) small repairs to machinery and component parts.

The practice in regard to contracting work varies from mill to mill, and the above list covers the items which may be, but are not necessarily, given on contract.

(ii) Generally speaking, sub-contracting is not recognized by the mills, and is rarely, if ever, known.

(iii) Where, as is usually the case, the contracting work is done within the mill premises, control is exercised by the management in much the same way as the ordinary work of the mill and factory is supervised. Small repairs to machinery are frequently done outside the mill compound.

(iv) Contracting labour is, for the most part, employed on a piece-work basis, and the work is usually done more satisfactorily and more expeditiously than by time-paid workers. Where the contractor is held responsible for the work, direct supervision by the mill management is minimized.

III.—Housing.

On 11th June, 1929, the Director of Public Health, Bengal, addressed the Indian Jute Mills Association, indicating that the question of the housing of industrial operatives had recently been receiving the consideration of the Government of Bengal, and that a report was required on the present condition of affairs existing in the industrial areas adjacent to Calcutta. In this connection, all mills in the membership of the Association were asked to supply the following information:—(*a*) whether housing of any description was provided by the mill for its operatives; (*b*) the number of dwellings so provided; (*c*) the number of operatives housed; (*d*) the nature of the accommodation provided, accompanied, where possible, by blue prints showing the layout of the mill lines and plans of the houses.

The associated mills went very thoroughly into this question, and copies of the replies received from members, along with fully detailed plans, were sent to the Director of Public Health, Bengal, on 6th August, 1929.

16. (i) About 30 per cent. of the total workers in the jute mills are housed in lines built by the various companies.

(ii) Housing is not provided by Government or other public agency.

(iii) The majority of workers, so far as can be ascertained, live in private lines owned mostly by sirdars working in the mills, or by shopkeepers trading in the bazaars.

(iv) A large number of Bengali workers live in their own houses, as do most of the sirdars.

17. Unfortunately, there are no facilities for the acquisition of land for workers' houses, and it is owing to the want of such facilities that most mill areas are so crowded and congested. It it were possible to purchase land at a reasonable cost, many mills would re-model their bazaars on modern town planning lines, to the great advantage of their workers.

At present it is usually impossible to secure land for improvement schemes, and when it is obtainable, then only at exorbitant rates. It may be of interest to the Commission to quote a particular example. In the Howrah district, terms for the purchase of 40 bighas of land for housing, schools, and a clinic for women and children, were arranged to the satisfaction of the mill and the landlord in 1927. But several people who were not even tenants put forward claims to the land, without, so far as the mill could ascertain, any proof of their title. The mill therefore, is asked to take the risk of these claimants holding up the scheme in contemplation ; and in addition, it must be prepared to evacuate the present occupants who, though they are all monthly tenants and have no claim whatever to the land, will not refrain from forcing the mill to take ejectment proceedings.

The financial aspect of this arrangement is instructive. The landlord at present draws under Rs. 5,000 per annum in rent. His return on the purchase amount which is equivalent to £2,600 per acre, calculated at 5 per cent. will be 4½ times greater.

The Calcutta Port Commissioners have also been instrumental in raising land values in certain districts. Land purchased by them in the Howrah area is leased back to the mill at Rs. 8 per cottah per month, equal to a valuation of Rs. 38,400 per bigha, or nearly £9,000 per acre. Other plots are rented from the Port Commissioners at Rs. 10 per cottah per month, or more than £11,000 per acre.

18. (i) In many districts the worker elects to remain in a congested unhealthy *bustee* area, instead of taking advantage of the sanitary quarters provided by the mill owners, which, in most cases, are available at a cheaper rental than is being paid for the quarters provided by sirdars. The usual type of accommodation in mill areas is a number of rooms built either in a row, or round the four sides of a square courtyard.

(*Note.*—As regards this particular enquiry the Royal Commission will no doubt have received from the Director of Public Health, Bengal, the fully detailed statements supplied by the Indian Jute Mills Association.)

(ii) The lines provided by Mills are a vast improvement on the private lines. These are *pucca* built, and are kept in good repair. Each room has a door, a window, a ventilator in the roof, and a verandah with cooking place. In most cases all roadways and drains are *pucca*.

There are, of course, different types of lines in various districts, some being single-storeyed and some double-storeyed, according to the area of land available for building.

(iii) In practically all jute mill centres, roadways in the lines are lit by electricity.

There is generally a septic tank latrine in the centre of the lines, with separate divisions for males and females. There is also, in practically all instances, a *pucca* drainage system throughout the lines, and a special staff of sweepers is kept solely for looking after the cleansing of the lines.

Except in certain quarters, such as in Calcutta where Corporation water is available, all mills provide free of cost, a continuous supply of filtered and chlorinated water, with the necessary standpipes ; while, in several instances, this supply of water is extended throughout the bazaar.

19. It is very seldom that the lines are unoccupied to any extent, and it is only during the hot season, as a general rule, that there is accommodation available.

20. Rent charges vary a good deal according to district and class of work. The general monthly charge made by the mill is about 12 annas per room capable of housing four people, but this figure may be as high as one rupee per room per month, or as low as 4 annas per room per month. Indeed, in many cases, a certain amount of accommodation is provided free, chiefly to Madrasis and Bilaspuris, and also to poor Hindustani women living alone.

21. The amount of sub-letting in the jute mill areas must be very small, while the occupation of rooms in the mill lines by tenants in other employ is not allowed, although this must go on undetected to a small extent.

22. Living in lines provided by the mill owners undoubtedly improves the worker's standard of living, and labour must miss :—(1) filtered water supply; (2) electric lighting ; (3) *pucca* drainage ; and the comfort of the *pucca* houses, when they return to their somewhat primitive villages. In an industrial centre, however, there are always temptations for the young that are not found in their up-country homes, such as gambling, drugs, etc. ; and stronger and more energetic action on the part of the police could minimise these evil influences to a great extent.

IV.—Health.

23. The general health condition of workers is, on the whole, very good ; and with the exception of malaria at certain seasons, and occasional cases of cholera, jute mill labour has been immune for many years from anything in the nature of an epidemic.

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(iii) Working conditions in jute mills in Bengal must compare very favourably indeed with jute mills in Europe. The mills in this country have much more clear space, and as the process of manufacture is confined to the ground floor, it is a simple matter for the management to see that everything is kept as clean as possible.

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(iv) The staple diet of the workers is rice, dhal, atta and vegetables, to which, in some cases, are added fish, eggs and milk. In the case of Mahommedans a certain amount of meat is consumed.

(v) Generally speaking the physique of the workers is fairly good. Those operatives who come from up-country, are usually sturdier than the Bengalis, or people who have been permanently settled in Bengal for a long number of years. The weavers, in particular, have very good physique.

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(vii) Bad housing accommodation will increase mortality. The *bustees* in bazaars, owned by private landlords, are always congested and overcrowded. There is also a lack of drainage, which is bound to cause disease.

24. (i) At practically all mills, dispensaries are provided under the charge of a qualified Doctor, with perhaps one or two Assistants. These dispensaries, in most cases, are supervised by the Company's European Doctor, who pays periodical visits.

The whole cost of running these dispensaries is borne by the employers, and all workers are given free medical attention and free medicines.

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25. The majority of workers nowadays take full advantage of the medical facilities provided. Women do not attend a dispensary for treatment as freely as men, but this is being gradually overcome ; nowadays women are more willing to be vaccinated against smallpox or inoculated against cholera.

26. (i) Septic tank latrines are provided in practically all mills, while where workmen's houses are provided, similar latrines are installed. These septic tank latrines are built in accordance with Government regulations, so far as design and capacity are concerned. There are separate latrines for males and females. The effluent from these latrines is analyzed monthly by Government officers and reports are sent to the various mill agents.

While writing on the subject of latrines, it might be of special interest to give a short account of two improvement schemes which have recently been undertaken in two of the chief mill areas.

The first of these schemes is known as the Titaghur Sewerage Scheme, the work for which was put in hand in January, 1924, and completed by the end of August, 1927. The scheme was worked to full capacity until the end of 1927, when it was found that the land for irrigation was inadequate to absorb the effluent, and for a time the old system of trenching the nightsoil had to be reverted to. To remedy matters, an activated sludge or Simplex plant was adopted and duly installed, and the Titaghur Sewerage Scheme is now working to its full capacity. There is no doubt that this scheme is a decided asset to Titaghur district, and a step in the right direction towards improving the cleanliness of the drains and the health of the inhabitants. Titaghur district comprises an area of about two square miles, and a population of about 70,000, so that it is obviously somewhat congested. With the introduction of the sewerage system, nightsoil carts have been entirely eliminated. The total cost of the complete scheme amounted to Rs. 13,20,000, which sum was contributed by the mills, less one-third allowed by Government.

It is now proposed to give an account of the other scheme, viz., the Bhatpara Improvement Scheme, which covers three headings, viz. :—(1) Sewerage, (2) water supply, (3) town planning.

Bhatpara is a riparian municipality, situated on the left bank of the River Hooghly, about 24 miles north of Calcutta. The area of the municipality is approximately 5½ square miles.

The following figures show the growth of the population :—1891, 11,764; 1901, 21,464; 1911, 50,414; 1921, 65,609; 1929, 80,000 (estimated.)

The increase in population is due almost wholly to the development of the jute manufacturing industry, as is evident from the following figures, showing the number of looms working in the respective years :—1891, 420 looms; 1901, 1,244 looms; 1911, 5,697 looms; 1921, 6,379 looms; 1929, 8,987 looms.

The 1929 figure represents 17·2 per cent. of the loom power of the jute mills in Bengal.

The number of workers employed in the jute mills in Bhatpara is 49,000, and the number of workers employed in other industries using mechanical or electrical power is 1,321.

The municipality is, roughly, half-moon shaped, the western convex boundary being the River Hooghly. The railway, which runs north and south, virtually forms the eastern boundary, but the municipality extends in places to the east of the railway. The only main road, which runs through the municipality, follows the convex contour of the river at some distance from it, the space between the road and the river being occupied by jute mills. A narrow strip along the eastern side of the road, and portions towards the north and south of the municipality, are built upon in a haphazard and congested fashion, but the bulk of the interior land is undeveloped and has no proper road system.

A water supply system, to which the mills give a free supply of water, has been in existence for many years, and there is a system of surface drains of a total length of 19 miles, which, owing to insufficient fall, has proved inefficient. These represented the efforts to cope with the problem of water supply and sanitation in the first decade of the century, but with the subsequent rapid expansion of the jute industry, it came to be realized :—(1) That it was necessary that an efficient sewerage scheme should be laid down; (2) that the water supply should be improved and extended and (3) that new roads should be constructed for the relief of congested areas.

After considerable delay, due chiefly to the difficulty of deciding on the scheme best suited to the needs of the municipality, work is now in progress on a combined scheme, based on the requirements of an eventual population of 125,000 people. The municipal water main has been laid, and the water supply scheme, with 23 miles of piping, will be in full operation early in 1930. The acquisition of land for the sewerage scheme is practically complete and the work of excavation has been started.

It is expected that the work will occupy four years. The scheme includes a series of new roads, meeting at a central circus, and one of these will be the main artery running north and south through the town. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at Rs. 21,10,000, one-third of which will be contributed by Government. The mills will contribute Rs. 11,50,000 and the remainder will be met out of the municipal funds.

Apart from the two schemes detailed above, other schemes in other districts are under consideration.

(ii) The supply of pure drinking water is one of the most important items in connection with industrial areas, and this is certainly the case so far as Calcutta jute mills are concerned. At all mills pure drinking water is supplied free of cost and, apart from being available inside the mill proper, the supply is provided by means of taps and hydrants to workmen's houses, in many instances the supply extending throughout the whole bazaar. In comparatively recent times, many tube wells have been sunk by the mills, and these now total, in the whole of the jute mill area, something between 60 and 70 wells. The other method of water supply is filtration of the river water, the chief filters in commission being the Paterson and Jewell filters. The Jute Mills Association has an arrangement with the Director Bengal Public Health Laboratory, to make monthly examinations of water, both from the tube wells and filters, and a perusal of the 1928 report indicates a very satisfactory state of affairs, so far as the supply of water in the jute mill areas is concerned.

(iii) At practically all mills there are bathing ghats on the river front, both inside and outside the compounds; these are now made free use of at all times. At the same time, inside the compounds at many mills, bathing tanks are provided, while in many instances, bath sprays are also available in the workmen's lines.

Those workers not living in the lines, and the inhabitants of the bazaars generally bathe in the river at public ghats.

27. (i) Supervision of health and sanitary measures is carried out by doctors and engineers employed by the mills, in co-operation with municipal sanitary inspectors. The latter send returns in this connection to the Bengal Public Health Department.

(iii) Preventive work is carried on systematically, including vaccination against smallpox and cholera inoculations at the particular seasons when such diseases are supposed to be prevalent.

On 13th September, 1929, the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, indicated that in connection with the evidence to be given by the Certifying Surgeon of Factories, the Royal Commission would probably make enquiries regarding the progress of vaccination and prophylactic inoculation amongst factory operatives; and he invited the co-operation of the Indian Jute Mills Association in the collection of the necessary figures. The committee of the Jute Mills Association undertook to collect from mills the particulars required by the Certifying Surgeon of Factories, and details have been forwarded on account of each mill, showing the number of employees who have been treated during the past three years for :—(1) Vaccinations; (2) anti-cholera inoculations; (3) bili-vaccine (cholera) inoculations; (4) typhoid and para-typhoid inoculations.

No doubt, Government will have prepared a full statement in this connection for the information of the Royal Commission.

29. (i) It is impossible for the Indian Jute Mills Association to give particulars in this connection, but the opinion is held that industrial disease does not apply so far as this particular industry is concerned.

(ii) The School of Tropical Medicine, to which institution the Indian Jute Mills Association subscribes Rs. 27,000 per annum, has in recent years made several searching investigations in regard to the prevalence of tropical diseases in the jute mill areas, and some years ago a special officer was deputed to carry out research work regarding hookworm disease. This work was proceeded with for some time, but so far the Indian Jute Mills Association has not been informed of the result of the investigations, and to all intents and purposes, active work in the mill areas appears to have been stopped. Recently, the Bengal Branch of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association has been dealing with the question of leprosy in the mill areas.

30. The Association understands that the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, have been in correspondence with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in this connection, and that a letter has been forwarded to Government indicating that at this stage legislation for sickness insurance, so far as the jute mills are concerned, would be a practically impossible proposition. The chief reason for this, of course, is the constant migration of the workers.

31. (i) Until recently the question of maternity benefits has not seriously arisen, but when the recent strike in the jute mills took place, the matter was considered in connection with the terms of settlement as between the Association and the Government of Bengal. There is no doubt that in the case of most mills, maternity benefits were paid in some form or other, but no particular rules were laid down. The position now, however, is somewhat different, as a definite recommendation has been put forward to members by the Indian Jute Mills Association. The following details give a general idea of the direction in which mills are aiming so far as maternity benefits are concerned :—

A woman worker reports her condition to the departmental timekeeper, who then advises the assistant in charge. A form is completed and signed by the departmental assistant, and also by the mill manager. The woman's name is then removed from the ordinary wages book, and the completed form is handed over to her. This form is presented at the mill weekly by the woman or a relative and the payment is recorded thereon. Report of the birth is made by the sirdar, and in the event of any trouble or doubt, the mill doctor—a qualified man—will make enquiries.

There is no standardized form of remuneration, but payment is made weekly at the rate of Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per week for five weeks, at the mill office. The fifth payment being a special payment, must be sanctioned by the manager, when the condition of the woman will be reported to him. Should the woman be seriously ill after the birth of her child, her leave pay may be extended for a further period of two weeks, after which payment stops.

A special maternity book is kept by each department, with the particulars of each case entered up. When payments cease, the completed form is sent to the mill office and filed.

The maternity benefits apply only to those women who have been employed in the mill concerned for not less than six calendar months, and in this connection any sick leave during this time is not counted as absence, or as breaking the continuity of the above period. If during the time of payment of maternity benefits it becomes known to the manager that the person receiving such benefits is working elsewhere in any capacity for a wage, the payments from the company on account of maternity benefit immediately cease.

(iii) Tke Indian Jute Mills Association is not averse to legislation so far as maternity benefits are concerned, but, in view of mills generally having adopted some form of payment, the opinion is held that at this stage legislation is unnecessary.

34. (i) At practically all mills provision is made for refreshments and shelters, and with regard to creches, the Indian Jute Mills Association has the following remarks to make :—

In July of this year, the Chief Inspector of Factories for Bengal addressed the Association on the subject of admission of infants into factories, and the provision made for their protection in jute mills by means of creches. A copy of the Chief Inspector's letter was circulated to all members of the Association, and, in the light of the replies received, the position was dealt with as follows—(*a*) The names of the mills in which creches are at present in use ; the number of creches in each mill and the departments in which they are installed ; (*b*) the names of the mills in which creches have been tried and ultimately discarded, the period they were in use in each mill before being discarded, and the reasons for discarding them.

The committee's reference to members indicated clearly that creches are not at present in use in any of the mills comprising the Association ; and so far as can be ascertained, no experiments with creches have in the past been undertaken.

(*c*) The experience of mills regarding :—(1) The extent to which creches are appreciated and used ; (2) the attitude or objections of the women employees; (3) the extent to which separate creches are necessary for the different castes; (4) arrangements for supervision ; and (5) the benefits, if any, derived from the use of creches.

In view of the reply given to questions (*a*) and (*b*) above, these points do not in practice arise, and any expression of opinion with reference to them must, therefore, be theoretical. The view generally taken by members of the Jute Mills Association is that a system of creches would not be welcomed, and would, for various reasons, be made use of only to the extent to which the admission of infants to factories was otherwise prohibited. The question must, however, depend to a very large degree on the type of labour employed, and it is not one with reference to which it is possible to generalize.

(*d*) In comparison with past years, it is considered that there is a marked decrease in the number of infants and young children being brought into jute mills. If this is the case, to what reason or reasons can the decrease be attributed.

The replies received from members of the Indian Jute Mills Association on this point are conflicting. Some agree that a decrease in numbers is apparent, and attribute this to the better class of labour being employed, to improved housing conditions, and to the stricter control and selection made possible by the single shift system of working. Others state that no change has taken place, while, in one case, an increase in the number of infants and young children being brought into the mill is reported. Here again, it is not possible to make any definite statement in view of the numerous factors to be taken into consideration, viz., the caste and class of the female labour employed in the preparing and sewing departments ; the housing accommodation and the domestic arrangements of the labour force ; the birth rate, and the extent to which the practice of bringing children into the factory is discouraged, or otherwise, by the mill management.

(ii) Several mills have provided playgrounds, which, so far as can be ascertained, are taken full advantage of, but the Association has no further information to give under this particular heading. Many mills also provide free cinema entertainments for their workers.

(iii) There has, in recent years, been a movement on the part of a few mills to inaugurate health centres and baby clinics, and it seems very likely that this movement will spread very considerably in the near future.

It might be advisable at this stage to give details of the health centre and baby clinic at one of the mills in Titaghur district. This welfare scheme was inaugurated about six years ago, and has increased in popularity with the female workers ever since. The qualified lady in charge has gradually overcome the reticence and mistrust with which this venture was once held in the eyes of the workers.

In many cases the mothers do not bring their children to the clinic until these are very emaciated by lack of proper nourishment, and it is only with careful treatment and strict adherence to the instructions received that such children receive another lease of life. A chart is kept showing the progress of babies, and in the event of a minor illness occurring, the baby is immediately seen by the matron, who gives the necessary instructions to rectify the trouble.

Pamphlets relating to the benefits of maternity and child welfare are distributed among the people of various castes.

With regard to this particular clinic, the following is a summary of the work done during 1928 :—

Total attendances at the clinic	10,177
Daily average attendance at the clinic	40
New patients	2,048
Midwifery cases—calls to	6
Visits to houses where there were newly-born babies.. ..	505

The work of vaccinating the children has proved quite successful, and as many parents now realize the benefits of these precautionary measures, they are quite willing to allow their babies to be vaccinated.

Shortly after this clinic at Titaghur was started, another on more or less the same lines was inaugurated at Kankinarrah, and the building was completed in October, 1926.

The centre is under the charge of a qualified European lady worker, who holds the Diploma of the London Board of Education for Health Visitors, as well as the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board.

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The work of welfare centres is mainly to promote, by educational means, a higher physical standard among the children of mill workers, and to reduce the existing high rate of infant mortality, which is attributed almost entirely to ignorance of simple hygiene. Classes in hygiene and child care are held for midwives and expectant mothers, and in addition sewing classes have been formed for young girls, whose parents are workers in the mills. In the case of the latter, a course of callisthenics and girl guide games has been added. Active propaganda work is also carried on by means of pamphlets published in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu, which convey simple instructions in child care, diet, etc., and the prevention of disease. Such pamphlets are distributed among women workers, who can either read themselves, or whose relatives can do so.

The lady worker in charge of the centre carries out a great deal of visiting in the lines, in houses where births are notified, and where women are unable to attend the welfare centre on account of illness.

The lady worker in charge, so far as medical attention to children is concerned, administers a few simple medicines for minor ailments, but all cases requiring medical attention are dealt with by the qualified mill doctor. In special cases, where children are under-nourished and sickly, free milk is given, as well as Virol, Scott's Emulsion, etc.

All children visiting the clinic are bathed, and those under one year old are weighed periodically, and a record of such weighments kept.

It is noticeable that during the early stages of the welfare centre's activities, the number of women who attended varied very considerably, which fact was undoubtedly due to the novelty of the institution. Recent reports, however, indicate that the popularity of such welfare centres is very considerable, and that there are large numbers of women workers who display a genuine desire to learn more of child care.

As is well known, jute mill labour is migratory, a fact which makes it difficult for records to be kept of the physical progress of children born in the mill lines. There are, however, in the experience of the Jute Mills Association, many cases of children who have been under observation for periods varying from 2½ to 5 years, and there can be no doubt of the improvement in their physical condition.

At Bhatpara a Health Welfare Exhibition, financed chiefly by jute mill contributions, has been held annually for the last three years. The following extract from the last report of the municipality indicates the lines on which these exhibitions are run :—" The exhibition dealt with, amongst others, mother-craft and child welfare, and spread and control of principal epidemic and infectious diseases, such as cholera, small-pox, typhoid, dysentery, kala-azar and tuberculosis. Food-stuffs, dietary and vitaminology with models of sanitary and insanitary food-stalls were also exhibited. A new stall was opened dealing with leprosy, for which posters in Bengalee, English and Devnagri were kindly lent by Dr. E. Muir, M.D., and models of a whole family affected with leprosy, and a clawhand resulting from it, were exhibited. Three models were prepared locally by the municipal staff dealing with the insanitary condition of our villages, physical culture and sanitary and insanitary houses. Each stall was in charge of two volunteers who explained everything to the visitors.

The Social Service League also exhibited their charts and posters which were appreciated by the visitors.

A printed booklet, containing useful hints on sanitation and hygiene, and an essay on 'How to keep fit and healthy' in easy Bengalee, was freely distributed. Cinema shows, dealing with public health matters, etc., were arranged for daily, six hours' show being allotted for the Purdah Day. A baby show was also held and prizes given.

VI.—Education.

On 5th August, 1929, the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, addressed the Indian Jute Mills Association as follows :—" I have the honour to inform you that Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduq Ahmed, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division, has been placed on deputation by the Government of Bengal, in the Department of Education, to enquire into the existing educational facilities given to the workers and their children in the various industrial and trade centres and tea plantations in the province, in connection with the impending visit of the Royal Labour Commission. I should be obliged by your kindly notifying the different constituent concerns under you, of the appointment of the Khan Bahadur, and requesting them to give him every facility in carrying out his work. As the matter is urgent, I would request that early action may be taken on this reference."

On receipt of this letter, all members of the association were advised accordingly, and on 24th September, the following letter was received from the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal :—" I have the honour to express my keen appreciation of the great assistance which the members of your association rendered to Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduq Ahmed, the special officer deputed to enquire into the educational facilities existing for the labourers and their children in tea gardens, industrial areas and collieries, in connection with the Royal Labour Commission. The Khan Bahadur will always remember with great pleasure the unfailing courtesy, which he received wherever he went."

In these circumstances, it appears likely that a full report has already been prepared under the headings (40), (41) and (42), and it seems unnecessary for the association to deal with the heading " Education."

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VII.—Safety.

43. It is the opinion that the provisions in the Bengal Factories Rules, 1928, are quite adequate.

44. It has been impossible, in the short time allotted, to collect statistics in this connection from all the associated mills, but as a basis, a statement is attached hereto, showing the number of accidents that have occurred at a mill, the extent of which is 1,300 looms, during the five years July 1924, to June 1929. This statement may be summarized as follows :—

	Total accidents for five years.	Average per year.	Incidence.
Fatal..	2	·4	——
Serious	57	11·4	1 per 782 workers.
Slight	58	11·6	1 per 768 workers.
Total	117	23·4	1 per 381 workers.

It will be observed from the statement that the reported number of slight accidents is increasing, and this is due to the fact that even the most trifling accidents are now reported to the factory inspector and the Workmen's Compensation Claims Bureau.

In the majority of cases, the workers make the most of the slightest injuries, in the hope of getting some compensation.

45. Of the accidents in the foregoing statement, 73 were caused by the injured person's own negligence or carelessness ; 20 were due to the negligence or carelessness of others, and 24 were purely accidental.

Accidents vary in character to such an extent that no definite causes can be given. They may be caused by the carelessness of another worker, ignorance on the part of the injured person, and by breaking rules regarding the interfering with machinery in motion.

46. " Safety first " propaganda is very difficult to put into operation, owing to the illiteracy and ignorance of the worker. It is impossible to prevent accidents altogether, but a lot can be done by the efficient guarding of machinery. Very good work in this direction has already been done in recent years by the Factory Inspection Department, but the association thinks it would be to the advantage of all concerned if this department would issue annually an analysis of all the accidents that have occurred in jute mills during the year. Accidents should be classified as fatal, serious and slight, and figures should be given showing the number of accidents at each separate type of machine. In the case of those machines at which accidents are found to occur most frequently, the actual part of the machine should be detailed. This would enable managers to set themselves to eliminate this particular type of accident, and give valuable information regarding accidents generally.

48. In all mills, a properly equipped surgery and dispensary, with a qualified Indian doctor in charge, is provided within the mill compound. All accident cases

are taken direct to the dispensary, where first aid is given and minor operations are performed. Serious cases, after receiving first aid, are immediately sent to the nearest hospital.

49. *Stringency of inspection and enforcement of regulations.*—This is adequate as regards the jute industry.

50. An analysis is attached, showing the time of day and the time of year when the accidents enumerated in the previous statement, occurred. It is difficult to draw any conclusions of value from this analysis, but it would appear to show that working by artificial light, at the end of the day, had some bearing on the cause of the accidents.

The working conditions generally inside a jute mill are very good. Lighting, both natural and artificial, is excellent, and as from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. of extra workers are provided for relieving purposes, the continuous working time, in both single and multiple shift mills, is not excessive.

Accidents (Time of Occurrence).

*5.30	6.30	7.30	8.30	9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	*5.30
*6.30	7.30	8.30	9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	*7.30
5	11	7	13	12	9	4	7	9	9	7	5	19

Total .. 117

Accidents.

1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
†2	4	9	27	38	†37

Total .. 117

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

It is not proposed under this heading to deal with the various subsidiary headings, but it is the desire of the Indian Jute Mills Association to state that the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 has up to now worked very smoothly indeed. All claims for compensation, so far as is known, are settled in an expeditious manner to the mutual satisfaction of employer and employee.

In January of this year the Indian Jute Mills Association through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was asked for an expression of opinion on certain proposed amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act. Sixteen questions were put forward for consideration and these after being examined by the Committee and after consultation with members of the Indian Jute Mills Association were answered in the following manner :—

1. *To what classes of employees if any should the Act be extended ?*—Looking at the matter from a purely jute mill point of view no extension of the Act is necessary as all jute mill labour is at present covered by Schedule II. Certain members of the Association have, however, expressed an opinion on the general point raised by Government, and the Committee of the Chamber may find it useful to have these observations before them. Admittedly no great extension of the scope of the Act is at present possible if the principle of including only these persons employed in industries, which are both organized and hazardous, is adhered to. The principle is justified, however, only on the grounds of expediency and practicability, and as India's economic development continues, the classes of workmen which the principle excludes will gradually diminish, while the claims of certain classes to inclusion within the Act will correspondingly increase. For the present it is certainly impracticable to extend the Act to cover all classes of manual labourers, particularly unorganized rural labour ; but the Committee feel that by definite additions to Schedule II, the benefits of the Act might now gradually be extended to all workmen engaged in branches of industry which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension.

2. *Should any provision be introduced for securing workmen against possible loss by reason of the inability of their employer to pay any compensation that may be due ?*—The Committee are not aware of any single instance of failure on the part of a workman to secure compensation by reason of the inability of his employer to pay, though on this point Commissioners of Workmen's Compensation will be able to speak with greater authority. Under present conditions, when the Act applies only to well organized industries, there would appear therefore to be no urgent necessity for legislation in this direction. At the same time, the absence up to the present of cases of inability to pay does not necessarily mean that a similar satisfactory state of affairs will continue, for the possibility of default will undoubtedly increase as the scope of the Act is extended. The Committee are accordingly in favour of protecting the interests of workmen by some form of legislation, and it is with regret that they note that the Government of India are inclined to regard as impracticable a scheme for compulsory insurance by employers coming within the Act. In the case of insured

* Artificial Light. † Only half-year's record.

employers, workmen, it will be noted, are afforded a measure of protection under Section 14 of the present Act, and unless the administrative difficulties, to which Government refer in paragraph 3 of their letter, are insurmountable, this Association would welcome legislation making it necessary for employers coming within the Act to insure against compensation claims. And if the principle of including only persons employed in organized branches of industry is maintained, the Committee do not quite appreciate how obstacles to compulsory insurance under the Act arise.

3. *To what extent, if any, should recurring payments be substituted for the lump sums at present payable under the Act* ?—The Committee of the Association are inclined to favour continuance of the present system of lump sum payments, though they appreciate the arguments which can be brought forward in favour of pensions. They are aware of no strong desire on the part of their labour for any change in the present system, which has worked with the greatest smoothness and satisfaction during the years for which the Act has been in force. Schedule I of the Act provides for the payment of lump sums in cases of permanent partial disablement, and enables the injured workman to return from the jute mill to his village, where he may buy a plot of land or engage in some business, and thus be in receipt of a recurring income with the capital under his own control. The present system also enables the employer to settle claims rapidly and without the difficulties and litigation which would be liable to arise under a system of recurring payments. On the other hand, as is indicated by the Government of India, the payments of pensions, if it could be smoothly effected, might result in the receipt of substantially greater benefit for an equivalent amount of expenditure ; but this argument pre-supposes, in the case of permanent disablement, improvidence on the part of the worker concerned, and, in the case of a deceased worker, either ignorance or improvidence on the part of those to whom the compensation is payable. So far as the latter case is concerned the Committee understand that the Workmen's Compensation Amendment Bill* now before the Central Legislature, aims, *inter alia*, at protecting the interests of minors and of female dependants by giving Commissioners discretion to invest, apply or otherwise deal with the compensation payable, as he may think fit. The Committee consider that sufficient protection will thus be afforded, and they are not prepared to admit the improvidence of the average adult workman, or to agree that the interests and wishes of a majority, and the convenience and security of the employer, should be sacrificed to the interests of an improvident minority. Should Government, however, consider it absolutely necessary to provide for the payment of pensions in certain cases, this Association would recommend that the necessary discretion be placed in the hands of the Commissioners of Workmen's Compensation.

4. *Should the scales of compensation be enhanced either for the more poorly paid workmen or generally* ?—Replying to this question from the point of view of jute mills, the Committee think they may fairly say that, in general, the present scales of compensation are adequate, whether in the case of death, permanent disablement or temporary disablement. In so far as the more highly paid workers are concerned, the compensation paid is certainly liberal, and the scales for these workmen should not, in any circumstances, be enhanced. But the question of increasing the scale of compensation to the more poorly paid jute mill workers appears to merit some consideration. The suggestion has been made by certain members of this Association that more liberal rates of compensation might be introduced for the benefit of workers earning Rs. 15 per month or less ; and by others, that the minimum "assumed wage" under Schedule IV might be fixed at Rs. 15 per mensem. It is questionable, however, whether either of these suggestions could be recommended generally, for an increase in the amount of compensation would increase the difficulties of extending the Act, and it appears to the Committee more desirable that the scope of the Act should be widened than that the benefits obtained by a few should be enhanced.

5. *Should the waiting period be reduced either generally, or in the case of those workmen who are disabled for more than* 10 *days, and if so, to what extent* ?—Members of this Association are of opinion that the present waiting period of 10 days involves no great hardship in the large majority of cases, and they consider that its present length constitutes the most equitable compromise between the claims of the worker upon his employer on the one hand, and the protection of the employer against malingering on the other hand. A reduction in the waiting period, besides materially increasing the administrative work of the employer by reason of claims in respect of trifling injuries, would undoubtedly strengthen the temptation to malinger, and until efficient medical inspection becomes a simpler matter than it at present is in the case of many employers of labour, any encouragement in this direction is to be deprecated.

The main object of a waiting period, whether 10 days, 7 days or less, is to discourage malingering by making the workman bear the loss of wages himself during the first few days of incapacity ; and in the case of a minor injury entailing say ten or eleven

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* Since passed.

days absence from work, the Indian workman may reasonably be expected to do so by reason of the fact that he usually has one week's back wages to draw. But as Government point out in their letter, the waiting period operates to diminish the amount of compensation payable to workmen disabled for comparatively long periods, and it is here, if at all, that hardship arises. Government refer in this connection to the possibility of introducing "dating back" provisions; they mention that the disadvantage of the system is that the man who returns to work on the tenth day receives no compensation, whereas if his disablement lasts for one more day, he receives compensation for a week. The incentive to make the period of the injury exceed ten days would thus be emphasised, and on this ground the Association does not favour the introduction of the "dating back" system as a general rule. But this objection would not apply with the same force to a suitably modified form of the "dating back" system, designed to increase the gross amount of compensation paid to a seriously but temporarily disabled workman. If, for instance, it were feasible to arrange that a workman disabled for three weeks or more would receive compensation from the second or fourth day of disablement, this Association would have no strong objections to raise; for the longer period of disablement would make it easier to expose malingering, while the actual tendency to malinger would be less than in the case of a minor injury by reason of the difficulty which the worker would experience in maintaining himself for three full weeks on half pay or less.

6. *Should the list of relatives entitled to claim compensation be enlarged* ?—The list of relatives who come within the definition of "dependant" under Section 2 (1) (*d*) of the present Act is reasonably comprehensive, and, so far as the Committee are aware, it has covered the vast majority of cases without causing hardship. But as Government point out in their letter, there is the possibility that the Commissioner may be compelled on occasion to grant the whole of the compensation to relatives who are in no way dependent, and that he may find himself unable to give compensation to other relatives who are in fact dependent but who do not come within the definition. The Committee are of opinion that in these circumstances the Commissioner should have discretion to go beyond the present definition of "dependant," and to distribute the compensation to those who, he is satisfied, were dependent upon the deceased; they consider that a provision to this effect might with advantage be incorporated in the Act, and they also recommend the addition to the list contained in Section 2 (1) (*d*) of "widowed sister" and "widowed daughter."

7. *Should proof of dependence be required in order to enable a relative to claim compensation* ?—This Association is very strongly of opinion that claims to compensation should be subject to the claimant's ability to prove some degree of dependence; and certain members have recommended that, failing such proof of dependence, compensation should be withheld altogether. The Committee think it is logical to make dependence a necessary condition of the right to compensation, but it appears probable that justice would be best served by leaving the actual distribution to the discretion of the Commissioner.

8. *Should the compensation payable vary with the number of dependants and with the extent of their dependence on the deceased workman* ?—If the underlying principles of Workmen's Compensation are admitted, it may reasonably be argued from the point of view of the workman and his dependants that compensation should vary with the number of dependants and with the extent of dependence; but a provision of this nature, if carried to its logical conclusion, would be impracticable from the point of view of the employer, and in many respects unjust to him. For if the compensation were to vary directly with these two factors, it would be illogical to impose a limit to the amount payable in any particular case, and this surely is not a proposal to be contemplated seriously. It would place employers of labour to an unreasonable extent in the hands of the Commissioners, with whom, presumably, the responsibility of ascertaining the number of dependants and of estimating the extent of dependence would rest; it would impose upon the employer an almost unlimited liability, and in the case of an insured employer would interfere seriously with the relationship between him and his insurance company, If, on the other hand, the suggestion is to prescribe a maximum for the amount of compensation payable in any particular case, at what figure and on what basis is this maximum to be fixed ? To fix the limit above the present rate of compensation would be to increase the scale of compensation payable in certain cases, and the Committee have already argued against any such increase; and to fix the limit at the present rate would merely operate to diminish the amount of compensation payable in the case of few dependants or a small degree of dependence, which, although naturally acceptable to employers, would be very undesirable from the point of view of employees. Even with a limit, the proposal would obviously introduce serious administrative problems in view of the difficulty of estimating the extent of dependence under conditions such as those at present prevailing in India; it would also tend to defeat the objects of Section 8 of the present Act, for the employer would not be in a position to deposit compensation until such

time as the question of dependence was decided. The Committee trust therefore that the Chamber will offer strong opposition to the suggestion that compensation should vary with the number of dependants and the extent of dependence, and that they will point out the desirability of compensation bearing a fixed ratio to earning capacity, which is at least a measure of the relationship which existed between the employer and the deceased workman.

9. *Should Section 12 be amended :*—(a) *so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the person directly employing the workmen in every case, or* (b) *so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the principal, or* (c) *in any other manner?* —The main objection to the law as it at present stands is that referred to by the Government of India, namely, that neither principal or contractor can, in the absence of an express contract governing the point, secure indemnification from a sub-contractor, though it is open to the workman to decide in a particular case which of the parties he is going to hold ultimately liable. Amendment of Section 12 is threefore desirable, and the primary object of any amending legislation should be in the direction of specifying clearly what party is to be sued for compensation. Members of this Association generally are of opinion that the Act should be amended so as to place liability in every case on the person directly employing the workmen, and they are opposed to the suggestion that contractors and sub-contractors should be legally entitled to indemnification by the principal ; always provided, of course that there is nothing in the law to prevent specific contracts being made between the principal, the contractor and the sub-contractor, independently of the Act. The main advantage of this position would be that the principal could make arrangements to accept liability in respect of steadily contracted labour, such as jute and coal unloading labour, and would at the same time be in a position to refuse liability in respect of sporadic labour, over which he has no control. Reference is made in Government's letter to the fact that contractors who are responsible for the employment of labour have little or no control over working conditions. This may be to some extent true ; but, on the other hand, the principal has no control over the labour so employed and experience would appear to indicate that the majority of accidents do not occur through defects in working conditions, but through carelessness on the part of the workmen or through inadequate supervision.

10. *Should any penalty be provided in the Act for failure to comply with Section* 16 ?— A provision of this nature would chiefly affect uninsured employers of labour, as Mutual Indemnity and Insurance Companies at present undertake to submit the returns called for under Section 16 of the Act on behalf of their insured employers ; and presumably it is mainly, if not entirely, uninsured employers who fail to supply the required returns. The provision of a penalty would therefore form an additional inducement to insure against compensation claims, and is desirable on that account ; but the penalty should be leviable only where gross negligence or intentional default is established.

11. *Should employers be required to submit returns of accidents in respect of which compensation has not been paid, and if so, to what extent should this provision apply ?*— The objections to a provision of this nature enumerated in paragraph 12 of Government of India's letter are, in the opinion of the Committee, convincing, apart from the almost intolerable burden which the provision would impose upon employers of labour. The main advantage of enlarging the scope of the Act in this connection would be to enable Government to judge of the extent to which insured persons succeed or do not succeed in obtaining compensation, but, as pointed out by Government, it would be extremely difficult to define the accidents in respect of which the employer was liable to pay compensation and did not do so. It might, however, be feasible to arrange for returns to be made only where compensation for death or disablement lasting more than 10 days is debarred under Section 3 (*b*) and 3 (*c*) of the Act.

12. *Should a dependant claiming compensation be relieved of the necessity of approaching the employer for settlement of his claim ?*—In view of Government's explanation of the present position, the Committee see no reason why in the event of an employer failing to deposit compensation, the dependant of a deceased worker should not be entitled to apply to the Commissioner direct, but care should be taken to ensure that notice of the accident reaches the employer, and that his failure to deposit compensation is not necessarily construed as a repudiation of his liability to pay compensation. No change, however, should be introduced which relieves an *injured* workman of the necessity of first approaching the employer for settlement of his claim.

13. *What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that dependants who may have valid claims for compensation, do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights ?*—Members of the Association agree to the suggestion made by the Government of India in paragraph 14 of their letter, namely, that employers should be required to report all fatal accidents to the Commissioner, who would then be in a position to

enquire into cases where compensation had not been deposited. Moreover, it is presumed that while a Commissioner is prevented by Section 22 of the Act from initiating proceedings on his own motion—and this is a position which the Committee consider should be maintained—the Commissioner has freedom to draw the attention of dependants to their right under the Act. It might also assist if notices explaining the rights of dependants to compensation were prominently displayed at all public works, at Municipal Offices and at Post Offices. The Committee, however, deprecate the suggestion that Inspectors of Factories and Mines should be authorised to prefer complaints.

14. *Should employees be required to maintain a register of relatives of their workmen* ?—The Committee very much regret to note that the Government of India are inclined to favour this suggestion, and they trust that the Committee of the Chamber will strongly oppose it. In the first place, the additional labour which would be imposed upon employers in initiating and maintaining the register would be out of all proportion to any advantage which might accrue. The register could never be regarded as reliable, and might by reason of incompleteness or of erroneous entries be actually detrimental to the interests of certain dependants. The suggestion is a thoroughly impracticable one, not only so far as unorganized industries are concerned, but also for factories, mines, railways, etc., because of the frequent and numerous changes which occur in the personnel of the labour force. And it seems unreasonable to impose this burden on these industries in which cases of non-payment of compensation are comparatively rare, just because their superior organization makes the suggestion a less impracticable one, whereas other less organized trades, in which the chances of non-payment are greater, escape.

15. *Should Commissioners be empowered to call on employers depositing inadequate compensation for fatal accidents, to make a further deposit* ?—This appears to be a very reasonable proposal, provided the total amount of the deposit called for does not exceed the amount of compensation payable, as calculated on the deceased's "assumed wage." The Committee understand that Commissioners have in practice called upon employers to deposit the correct amount, and they see no objection to the amendment of the Act in conformity with this practice.

16. *Should provision be made for the suspension of distribution by the Commissioner pending disposal of an appeal against his decision* ?—The Committee recommend the amendment of Section 8 (1) of the Act on these lines for, here again, Commissioners do in the majority of cases withhold payment of compensation pending disposal of appeals. The change suggested will not therefore involve any departure from the present practice.

IX.—Hours.

A.—Factories.

55. (i) When the Factories Act of 1912 came into force on the 1st July of that year it was decided more or less unanimously by the Jute Mills in Calcutta and district, after a great deal of discussion, that 13½ hours per day would be worked, with only such changes in the then existing shift system as were necessary to meet the requirements of the new Act.

At that time there was a fairly general feeling in favour of working an 11-hours day with a single shift of adult workers and a double shift of children. From the point of view of the management at the works, the single shift presented a strong inducement as against any other system of working ; but apart from this altogether, there were mills in favour of both single shift and multiple shift working, due no doubt to the particular districts of the mills, and the particular class of labour which these mills had to deal with.

During the period 1912 to 1922, several mills changed from multiple shift to single shift working, and in 1922, when further legislation resulted in the Factories Act of 1912 being modified, new rules and regulations came into force on the 1st July, 1922. In accordance with these new rules, mills are not permitted to work any adult more than 11 hours on any one day, or more than 60 hours per week. So far as half-time workers the minimum age limit was raised from 9 to 12 years, the maximum working hours remaining unaltered at 6 hours per day. This change, however, merely meant a re-arrangement of shifts, without in any way increasing the number of half-time workers employed.

The position at the moment, so far as the mills in the Indian Jute Mills Association are concerned, is that 50 per cent. of the total loomage are working under the single shift system and 50 per cent. under the multiple shift system, the exact loomage figures being 25,256 looms on single shift, and 25,265 looms on the multiple shift system.

The present agreement between members of the Jute Mills Association is to work 60 hours per week, and there are two methods of working this agreement :—(1) single shift ; (2) double shift.

The *single shift mills* work 60 hours every week, made up of five days of 11 hours each and one day of 5 hours; theoretically each worker operates for these hours, but in actual practice, the mills employ anything from 10 to 15 per cent. of extra hands for purposes of relief.

So far as single shift mills are concerned, there is, of course, no complicated system of shifts, the workers operating as under:—From 5.30 a.m. to 11 a.m., equals 5½ hours; from 1.30 p.m. to 7 p.m., equals 5½ hours, a total of 11 hours per day. And to make 60 hours per week, these mills run five days of 11 hours each, and 5 hours on Saturday, the latter being from 5.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

With regard to *double shift mills*, attached hereto is a diagram shewing the general arrangement for multiple shift working; and this diagram may be taken as a basis for all mills which are working on this particular system.

The hours of labour are from 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., worked, as the diagram shows, on a system of shifts. The shift system for daily workers is divided into three shifts, termed Nos. A, B and C shifts, which are worked as follows:—A and B shifts start at 5.30 a.m., and continue until 9 a.m., a period of 3½ hours. A is then relieved by C and has a period of one hour for breakfast. A shift on resuming work at 10 a.m., takes the place of B which has worked from 5.30 a.m., a period of 4½ hours. The workers of B shifts are now free from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. At 2 p.m. B shift relieves C which goes off for tiffin from 2 to 3 p.m. C shift resumes work at 3 p.m., and works till 6 p.m., being relieved by A which works from 6 to 7 p.m., so that each of the respective shifts works a period each day as under:—A shift, 9½ hours; B shift 9½ hours; C shift, 8 hours.

The details given above do not entirely coincide with the diagram attached, because each shift is given a spell of electric light working in rotation.

Extra workers are also employed to the extent of being sufficient for relieving those who require to leave the mill for any particular reason.

Piece workers, the majority of whom are adult males, are also employed on the shift system, but in their case, a working day is one of 11 hours, and five shifts are employed. The system is that four shifts start work at 5.30 a.m. The first relief arrives at 6.30 a.m. for a period of 1½ hours, and this continues all morning until each of the four shifts has had, consecutively, 1½ hours rest. No. 5 shift, which has worked from 6.30 a.m., is now free for 1½ hours, and on resuming after that period of rest, the same relief routine is gone through. The shifts, however, only get one hour's rest in the afternoon, and on resuming work, continue until 7 p.m.

The working day of 11 hours is thus broken up into three periods, so that labour generally has long intervals of rest, and by no means, as many think, a spell of continuous work.

(ii) There is no overtime work. Previous to 1st July, 1929, any broken time caused by strikes or holidays, was allowed to be made up, but since 1st July, in accordance with the agreement arrived at by the Indian Jute Mills Association, there is now no making up of lost time.

(iii) Workers are only on call during the actual period they are at work.

56. The days worked per week are regulated by the Indian Jute Mills Association; or, in other words, production, as far as possible, is kept in line with the demand for jute goods.

As an instance of this, it will perhaps be of interest to detail below how the Indian Jute Mills have worked for a period of years, viz:—

1909—Mills worked five days per week January–September, and six days per week October–December.

1910—Mills worked six days per week January–August, and five days per week September–December.

1911—Mills worked five days per week January–September, and 80 per cent of the mills worked four days per week October–December.

1912—80 per cent. of the mills worked five days per week January–June, and six days per week July–December. On 1st July, 1912, the new Factories Act came into force, which embodied 81 hours working per week, instead of 90 hours.

Note.—It will be assumed from this, of course, that all mills were at that time working on double shift.

1913—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1914—Mills worked six days per week January–March. 81 per cent. of mills worked five days per week April–September and six days per week October–December.

1915—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1916—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1917—Mills worked six days per week January–March and five days per week April-December.

1918—Mills worked as follows:—Six days per week from 18th January to 9th November, 1918; five days per week from 10th November to 22nd November, 1918; four days per week from 25th November, 1918 to 8th January, 1919.

1919—Mills worked as follows :—Four days per week from 1st to 15th January, five days per week from 15th January to 31st March, four days per week April–December.

1920—Mills worked as follows :—Five days per week January–March, six days per week April–December.

1921—Mills worked as follows :—Five days per week January–March, four days per week April–December.

Since then, up to 1st July, 1929, all mills in the membership of the association have worked 54 hours per week, this applying to both single and double shift mills. In November, 1928, however, owing to an obvious increased demand for jute goods, and also owing to competition both abroad and on the banks of the Hooghly, the Indian Jute Mills Association decided, as from 1st July, 1929, to increase working time to 60 hours per week, and this is being worked on the undernoted lines :—

Single-shift mills—five days of 11 hours and one day of 5 hours, 60 hours per week.

Double-shift mills work as follows :—One week of 4 days of 13½ hours, 54 hours ; and one week of 4 days of 13½ hours and one day of 12 hours, 66 hours, making a total of 120 hours per fortnight, of 60 hours per week, which means that both single and double shift mills are producing on exactly the same basis.

The Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which might force those mills on the multiple shift system to adopt the system of single shift. It is undoubtedly a fact that single shift working is suitable to certain districts, but it is likewise a well established fact that certain districts, for many reasons, prefer to adhere to the system of multiple shift working.

In 1927, in his report to the Local Government, the Chief Inspector of Factories recommended that the Factories Act should be amended to meet certain difficulties, and prevent various irregularities that had been experienced. The following amendments were proposed and put before the Government of India, viz. :—(*a*) The multiple shift system should be made illegal ; (*b*) the working hours for women and children to be limited to between 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. ; (*c*) the working hours for women to be limited to 10 hours daily ; (*d*) the working hours of the mill machinery to be limited to 11 hours daily.

The local government put the above proposals before the Chamber of Commerce, who forwarded them to the Indian Jute Mills Association for consideration, and undernoted is the record of the consensus of opinion :—

	In favour. per cent.	Against. per cent.	Neutral. per cent.
(*a*)	45·17	52·41	2·42
(*b*) and (*c*) ..	11·78	85·80	2·42
*(*d*)	17·00	52·41	2·42

**Note*—With regard to(*d*), some members of the association refrained from voting.

The percentage in favour of (*a*) represents very nearly that of the mills already working on single shift.

As the result of this opinion, Government took no action, and it is to be hoped, as already indicated, that no action in this connection will be taken.

As previously stated, 50 per cent. of the total loomage on the river have adhered to double shift working, and so far as can be gathered, it is the intention to continue working on this system.

From a commercial point of view, it is admitted that the system of multiple shift is not an economic proposition ; but in districts like Titaghur, Budge-Budge and Bhatpara, where this system is being worked, there would undoubtedly be very serious trouble if single shift working was to be introduced. Those working on double shift undoubtedly earn lower wages, in comparison with mills operating on the single shift system, but the hours of labour are less, and this is one of the chief arguments to be put forward. Another very important point and one which the Indian Jute Mills Association cannot impress too strongly, is the question of unemployment, and it is an admitted fact that unemployment is very prevalent in certain of the jute mill areas. Should those mills, working at present on double shift adopt the system of single shift, it would mean, automatically, approximately 50,000 people would be immediately thrown out of employment ; and this, it must be admitted, would be a very serious matter indeed.

As already indicated, there are points in favour of both systems of working, both from the view of labour and from the view of the management, and it should therefore be left to individual mills to decide as to how working operations should be conducted.

The chief inspector of factories has, on various occasions, complained that the inspection staff has found it impossible to check the register books of those mills on multiple shift. This statement the Indian Jute Mills Association emphatically contradicts, and there are several groups on the river who have proved, time and

again, that this is not the case. If certain groups on double shift working can prove this conclusively, it should apply to all, and it seems rather to be a question of increasing the inspection staff. Undoubtedly, from the factory inspector's point of view, single shift working makes checking very easy, but this is surely no reason for legislation towards making those mills, at present on multiple shift, adopt the single shift system. It is interesting to note that at one mill in the membership of the association—Union South—the system of working was recently changed from single to double shift at the request of the workers themselves.

57. (i) The restriction under the Factories Act to a sixty hour week has, undoubtedly, been very beneficial to labour. Workers have more leisure, especially at week-ends, and general efficiency has been considerably increased.

(ii) The restriction has had little or no effect on the jute industry, the increase in the efficiency of the workers making up for the restriction in working hours.

58. The effect of restricting the daily limit to 11 hours is hardly noticeable in multiple shift mills, where the majority of workers, i.e., time workers, do not work more than 9½ hours per day.

59. Here, again, the Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which would curtail present working hours, and it is to be hoped that no action in this connection will be taken at the present time. The Indian jute mill worker undoubtedly prefers starting work in the early morning, and looks forward to a period of rest during the heat of the day. It may be argued that this does not apply in the case of those mills working on multiple shift, but against this argument it has to be kept in mind that the operative has short spells of working, and is in a position, as a rule, to choose the periods of rest that best suit his individual domestic arrangements.

60. (i) (*a*) In all mills, both on the multiple and single shift system of working, relieving hands are provided, equalling at least 10 per cent of the total number of employees, which means that 10 per cent. of the workers are always resting during the working period.

(*b*) So far as single shift mills are concerned, there is, apart from the number of relieving hands, a spell of 2½ hours in the middle of each working day for a period of rest; and during these 2½ hours the machinery is silent. So far as double shift mills are concerned, all workers, as the diagram of shifts discloses, have a generous allowance for recess.

(ii) In the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association, the existing law is quite suitable, but provision should be made to allow for extra hours for cleaning, repairs and maintenance work.

(iii) The hours worked at present under both systems are the most suitable from the workers' point of view.

(iv) All workers have at least one holiday per week, and in the mills working under the multiple shift system, all—except a few, required for cleaning and repairs—have from two to three full holidays each week-end. In addition these weekly holidays, other holidays are observed, these being on the occasion of the principal religious festivals, both Hindu and Mahommedan.

61. (i) Sunday is a day of rest, and no work is done on that day, except in case of emergency. Multiple shift mills are closed one week on Friday, Saturday and Sunday; and the next week on Saturday and Sunday alternately. Repair work and cleaning are carried out on Fridays and Saturdays each alternate week, and the only people employed on Sundays are boiler attendants, electric engine drivers, and filter plant attendants. Each of these workers is given a day of rest every fortnight, and the same applies to workers engaged in the transport of goods, as, according to law all persons must get one day of rest every fortnight.

In those mills working on the system of single shift work ceases at 10.30 a.m. every Saturday, and is not resumed until 5.30 a.m. on the following Monday morning.

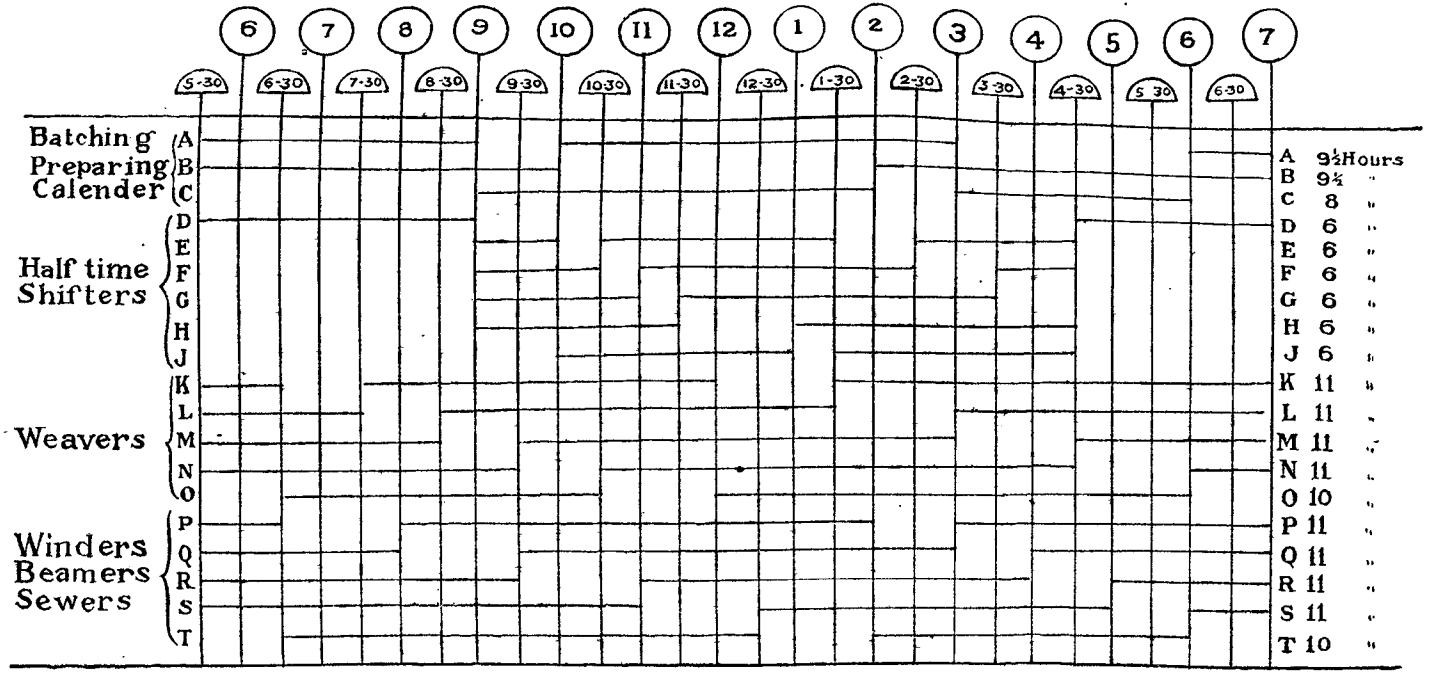
(ii) It is the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association that the law as it at present stands, is suitable, and that no alteration should be made.

62. Exemption from the 60 hours per week, although not specifically permitted under the Act, is sanctioned on application by the Mill to the Factory Inspection Department, in respect of workers who come under the heading of "maintenance staff." These workers may be classified as follows:—(1) Boiler attendants; (2) electric engine drivers; (3) pump attendants; (4) mistries; (5) General outside staff.

Full advantage is taken of these exemptions, as rope repairing or repairs to machinery, after hours, can be undertaken without infringing the law; that is to say, that the workers detailed above can operate, say, for 14 hours on any particular day in case of emergency, but the total hours per week must not exceed 66 and one full day of 24 hours off work every 14 days.

Workers engaged in transporting jute, gunny bales and stores, also come under this head, and exemption for these workers is the same as for the maintenance staff.

Diagram shewing General Arrangement for Multiple Shift Working.



X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

A.—*Factories.*

81. So far as can be ascertained, the 1922 Act has had no effect on employment, in a general sense.

82. The admission of infants to factories has been discussed at various times, and it appears to be difficult, under the circumstances, to alter existing arrangements. The women, who work in the mills, must have their young children with them to feed and keep under observation. Apart from this, however, the admission of infants to factories is a matter which rests entirely within the jurisdiction of the Chief Inspector of Factories, and if, in his opinion, it is dangerous for the children to be inside any particular department, he may prohibit their admission. So far as the Indian Jute Mills Association can gather, the presence of children in the mills has never been seriously questioned, and the opinion is held in many quarters that the children are much better off being with their mothers inside the mill, than being left with relatives in the bazaar.

83. The regulations for women's work are probably more suitable for women in the mills working multiple shift than in those mills working the single shift system. Women under the former system have longer periods of rest during the day, shorter hours, and more days of rests during the week.

84. (i) Regarding the suitability of regulations affecting children, the hours worked are short, six hours being their full working day. Four hours at a stretch is the longest working period, and the shortest working period is 1½ hours.

(ii) Ages vary from 12 to 14 years, but many of these children try very hard to get employment before they reach the specified age. In all cases half-timers are certified for employment by the Government Certifying Surgeon.

85. There is no doubt that children try to find double employment, and invariably succeed in doing so in districts where mills are situated close together. They are encouraged in this by their parents, and also by the sirdars who employ them, but the mill authorities try to prevent this as far as possible. The parents of the children encourage them to work double in two mills, so that they may earn more money, while the sirdars also encourage the system as they probably make more money out of these children, by promising to keep quiet and not report double employment to the authorities concerned.

86. The preparing side of the work in a jute mill does not call for highly skilled labour, and apprenticeship is therefore not required, a few weeks at any of the machines being long enough to make the worker proficient. It is certainly the case that so far as weavers are concerned, this class of labour is skilled, but, generally speaking, weavers become proficient very quickly.

With regard to mechanics, joiners, blacksmiths, etc., no specified time is served as an apprenticeship. These particular men start work as boys, and are paid a nominal wage until they become of use. There is no system of regular apprenticeship such as at home, the result being that although the boys in Indian jute mills get on much faster, they are not so highly trained as they might be.

87. There is no " blind alley " employment in jute mills, and none of the children are dismissed on reaching full age. What usually happens is that they simply step up to higher-paid jobs. When vacancies for sirdars occur, the workers with the longest records of service receive consideration, and, if at all suitable, are promoted.

88. It appears to be the general opinion that young adults and children on the double shift system have some advantage over those mills working on single shift, the reasons being (1) shorter hours; (2) longer periods of rest; (3) more holidays.

At the same time this statement should not be accepted as general, as there are in certain districts, certain classes of labour who have their own ideas as to both single and multiple shift working. One point to be kept prominently in mind is that the worker on single shift earns more money, which, of course, is a very important factor.

89. Women and children, who work in factories not subject to the Act, should have some protection, and no doubt it would be advisable to extend the Act for their benefit.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Wages for both time and piece workers vary considerably in accordance with the situation of the mill and the particular system of working, but the undernoted figures for a mill of 1,000 looms may be taken as a reliable average for a mill working on the multiple shift system :—

Statement of Average Weekly Wages.

Department.	No. of hands.	Hours worked. Hrs. 11	Hrs. 9½	Hrs. 8½	Average wages per worker. 4-day week.	Average wages per worker. 5-day week.
					Rs. as. p.	Rs. as. p.
Batching—						
Head sirdar	1	—	1	—	11 0 0	13 13 0
Other sirdars	19	—	13	6	4 13 0	6 2 6
,, workers	609	—	406	203	2 12 9	3 9 9
Sacking preparing—						
Head sirdar	2	—	2	—	8 13 0	11 10 0
Other sirdars	36	—	24	12	5 0 6	6 3 0
,, workers	588	—	392	196	2 7 9	3 3 6
Hessian preparing—						
Head sirdar	2	—	2	—	9 5 0	11 10 0
Other sirdars	33	—	22	11	5 5 6	6 3 0
,, workers	554	—	369	185	2 7 6	3 2 6
Sacking spinning—						
Head sirdar	2	—	2	—	7 8 0	9 12 6
Other sirdars	39	—	8	31	4 12 3	6 2 0
,, workers	810	—	278	532	2 9 6	3 4 9
Hessian spinning—						
Head sirdar	2	—	2	—	7 8 0	9 12 6
Other sirdars	41	—	12	29	4 12 3	6 1 3
,, workers	745	—	286	459	3 0 3	3 14 0
Sacking winding—						
Head Sirdar warp ..	1	1	—	—	5 0 0	6 11 0
,, ,, cop ..	1	1	—	—	6 14 0	8 15 0
,, ,, beaming ..	1	1	—	—	7 14 0	10 0 0
Other sirdars	2	2	—	—	4 6 6	6 0 0
,, workers	142	136	—	6	4 9 6	5 1 3
Hessian winding—						
Head sirdar warp ..	1	1	—	—	6 14 0	8 15 0
,, ,, cop ..	1	1	—	—	6 14 0	10 8 6
,, ,, beaming ..	2	2	—	—	7 8 0	9 10 0
Other sirdars	6	6	—	—	4 15 0	6 11 0
,, workers	377	372	—	5	4 8 6	5 6 0
Sacking weaving—						
Head sirdar	2	2	—	—	15 12 9	20 6 0
Other sirdars	13	13	—	—	8 5 3	11 1 9
,, workers	266	255	7	4	8 2 9	9 3 0
Hessian weaving—						
Head sirdar	7	7	—	—	19 11 3	22 0 9
Other sirdars	51	51	—	—	8 8 6	10 12 3
,, workers	1090	842	248	—	5 15 0	7 4 9
Calendering—						
Head sirdar	1	—	1	—	6 4 0	8 1 6
Other sirdars	5	—	5	—	4 7 9	6 2 0
,, workers	230	—	153	77	3 2 6	4 0 0
Machine sewing—						
Head sirdar	2	2	—	—	5 13 0	7 9 3
Other sirdars	4	—	4	—	4 2 9	6 2 0
,, workers	172	154	18	—	2 4 3	3 6 3
Hand sewing—						
Head sirdar	1	1	—	—	5 13 0	7 9 3
Other sirdars	6	—	6	—	4 9 3	6 0 0
,, workers	226	223	3	—	2 3 0	2 15 0
Inspection department—						
Workers	12	—	8	4	2 4 3	2 15 3

Also detailed below is a statement of average monthly wages, which likewise can be taken as a fair average for a mill working on the multiple shift system :—

Statement of Average Monthly Wages.

	No. of workers.	Hours worked per day.	Average wages per worker. Amount.	
		Hours.	Rs.	as.
Head babu (factory)	1	9	180	0
Head babu (mill)	1	9	135	0
Doctor	1	7	165	0
Draughtsman	1	6	105	0
Departmental head babus	3	9	90	0
Other babus	85	9	32	0
Jamadar	1	—	20	0
Other durwans	38	—	15	0
Mehter Jamadar	1	—	22	8
Other mehters	17	—	14	8
Boat manjhees	148	—	16	8
Head Engine viceman	1	10	120	0
Others	27	10	34	0
Head engine joiner	1	10	58	0
Others	21	10	33	0
Head tinsmith	1	10	53	0
Others	9	10	30	0
Head blacksmith	1	10	52	0
Others	10	10	37	8
Hammermen	7	10	18	0
Head turner	1	10	66	0
Others	24	10	33	0
Head electric fitter	1	10	70	8
Others	3	10	30	0
Engine sirdars	2	10	34	0
Boiler sirdar	1	7½	38	0
Firemen	23	7½	26	0
Head mill viceman	1	10	50	8
Other vicemen	23	10	25	0
Pin boys	28	12@10 16@ 6	10	0
Head spinning viceman	1	10	52	0
Other vicemen	11	10	30	0
Head winding viceman	1	10	52	0
Other vicemen	9	10	30	0
Head factory viceman	1	10	52	0
Other vicemen	26	10	30	0
Head factory joiner	1	10	52	0
Other joiners	15	10	30	0
Head sewing viceman	1	10	52	0
Other vicemen	9	10	30	0

With reference to single-shift mills, a statement is submitted below on the same lines as that given for mills working on the multiple-shift. In the case of single-shift mills, all workers are paid on the basis of 60 hours per week, and the average weekly wages are as under :—

Department.	Average wages per worker for 60 hours. Rs. a. p.
Batching—	
Head sirdar	12 15 3
Other sirdars	7 2 9
,, workers	4 5 3
Sacking preparing—	
Head sirdar	13 12 9
Other sirdars	9 13 6
,, workers	3 12 6
Hessian preparing—	
Head sirdar	13 12 9
Other sirdars	9 13 6
,, workers	3 12 6
Sacking spinning—	
Head sirdar	14 6 0
Other sirdars	10 6 0
,, workers	4 2 0
Hessian spinning	
Head sirdar	14 6 0
Other sirdars	10 6 0
,, workers	4 2 0
Sacking winding—	
Head sirdar warp	9 11 0
,, ,, cop	10 8 0
,, ,, beaming	13 4 0
Other sirdars	10 0 0
,, workers	5 12 0
Hessian winding—	
Head sirdar warp	9 11 0
,, ,, cop	10 8 0
,, ,, beaming	13 4 0
Other sirdars	10 0 0
,, workers	5 12 0
Sacking weaving—	
Head sirdar	24 8 0
Other sirdars	13 4 0
,, workers	9 8 0
Hessian weaving—	
Head sirdar	24 8 0
Other sirdars	13 4 0
,, workers	8 4 6
Calendering—	
Head sirdar	11 2 0
Other sirdars	8 6 0
,, workers	5 0 0
Machine sewing—	
Head sirdar	12 0 0
Other sirdars	8 8 0
,, workers	5 0 0
Hand sewing—	
Head sirdar	9 8 0
Other sirdars	7 8 0
,, workers	3 8 0
Inspection department—	
Workers	3 8 0

The above figures deal with one particular mill, but are a fair average for any mill working on the single-shift system.

With regard to monthly wages, it is not necessary to differentiate as between multiple-shift and single-shift mills, and the wages given in the case of the former are equally applicable to the latter.

97. (i) There have been no decreases in jute mill wages, and undernoted are increases which have taken place in recent years :—

May, 1918	10 per cent.	January, 1920 ..	20 per cent.
September, 1919 ..	10 ,,	October, 1920 ..	10 ,,

In connection with the recent strike, a further increase was conceded, which varies from 7½ per cent. to 10 per cent., so that in the last 11 years the Indian jute mill workers' emoluments have been increased to the extent of approximately 60 per cent.

When the Indian jute mills curtailed production to a four-day week, the workers were granted a *khoraki* payment, which was practically equal to another day's pay. This payment was paid according to the undernoted scale :—

Half-timers	4 annas per week.
Workers earning from Re. 1 to Rs. 3 7 9 pies	6 ,, ,,
,, ,, Rs. 3 8 annas to Rs. 5 7 9 pies ..	8 ,, ,,
,, ,, Rs. 5 8 annas upwards ..	10 ,, ,,

This *khoraki* payment was first paid in December, 1918, and was continued to December, 1919, when it was stopped owing to mills working six days per week. Since April, 1921, however, this payment has always been made, and has eventually been incorporated in the wages. It should be explained that in the case of single-shift mills no *khoraki* is, or can be, paid, but that the rate of wages is so adjusted as to include the equivalent of the *khoraki* payment.

(ii) The reasons for variation in wages are due to higher costs of living.

98. A statement showing the total amount of money orders issued by the post offices serving the Calcutta jute mills, during the years 1910 to 1928, is detailed below, and alongside these figures is a statement of loomage, showing the increase at this point :—

Year.	Amount of Money Orders. Rs.	Looms.	Year.	Amount of Money Orders. Rs.	Looms.
1910	78,37,347	31,755	1920	1,41,19,282	40,367
1911	72,92,292	32,711	1921	1,32,22,237	40,898
1912	79,33,694	32,632	1922	1,32,32,150	41,339
1913	82,84,806	36,841	1923	1,41,72,263	45,563
1914	81,96,055	38,120	1924	1,48,16,726	48,018
1915	94,02,588	38,354	1925	1,42,07,449	49,399
1916	98,63,492	38,652	1926	1,54,39,832	49,848
1917	98,56,349	39,065	1927	1,64,28,425	50,354
1918	1,19,29,434	39,401	1928	1,73,57,816	50,521
1919	1,09,99,346	39,451			

In this connection it will be advisable to deal with a district such as Titaghur, where there has been no extension of jute mills since 1910. This being the case, the population has likewise remained more or less stationary, and it is estimated that 45,000 jute mill workers are employed in this particular district.

A statement is detailed below showing the total number and amount of money orders issued by the Titaghur post office during the years 1910 to 1928. This shows that the number of money orders has increased by 10,713, while the value of them has increased by Rs. 3,25,976 :—

Statement showing the total number and amount of Money Orders issued by the Titaghur Post Office during the years 1910–1928.

Year.	Number.	Amount. Rs.	Year.	Number	Amount. Rs.
1910	29,828	4,33,039	1920	46,360	8,51,948
1911	27,080	3,83,760	1921	35,284	6,41,806
1912	30,642	4,40,424	1922	35,060	6,89,122
1913	34,304	5,22,484	1923	39,647	8,09,051
1914	31,742	4,84,146	1924	38,928	7,97,758
1915	39,351	5,90,699	1925	37,523	7,69,269
1916	38,562	6,14,047	1926	37,652	7,39,845
1917	35,247	5,54,226	1927	41,958	7,83,307
1918	40,783	6,88,838	1928	39,541	7,58,975
1919	40,117	5,58,167			

In connection with the recent strike, the following details with regard to Titaghur are interesting.

The amount sent from Titaghur post office to villages under normal conditions is approximately Rs. 15,000 per week, whereas the amount sent from Titaghur post office to villages during the period of the recent strike was approximately Rs. 5,000 per week.

Likewise, the amount received in Titaghur post office under normal conditions is approximately Rs. 1,000 per week, whereas the amount received during the period of strike was approximately Rs. 5,000 per week, showing that money was being withdrawn from up-country centres during the strike period.

Another important mill area may be taken, namely Bhatpara, which is served by three post offices, Bhatpara, Kankinara and Jagatdal. The following are the amounts remitted from these offices by money order for the years 1914 and 1928 :—

	1914. Rs.	1928. Rs.
Bhatpara	1,35,227	3,67,425
Kankinara	2,17,453	5,09,125
Jagatdal	2,47,020	6,85,865

With the further increase in wages recently granted, remittances for 1929 are likely to be still larger.

. . . . . .

101. There is no particular method of fixing wages. The whole question is very complex, and individual mills, in certain districts, arrange amongst themselves what the fair rate should be for any particular fabric or for any particular class of work.

102. Overtime is confined to the mechanical and engineering departments, and is paid for at time and a quarter rate, with double rate for Sundays if, by any chance, work on Sundays should be necessary.

103. There is no standardization of wages, and rates for both time and piece workers vary in accordance with particular districts.

Mills in the Calcutta area are at a decided disadvantage compared with those situated at Titaghur, Kankinara, Budge-Budge, or similar places. The former are not only cramped for space, which has prevented all possibilities of expansion in the past, but must pay higher wages for the inferior labour, which alone can be secured in the urban area. Jute mill workers much prefer to work outside, where the amenities of life are greater, and the cost of living lower than in the city area. In consequence, the labour available in Calcutta consists, to some extent, of inferior workers, who, by reason of their lack of skill, cannot obtain employment in more agreeable surroundings.

The effects of such inferior labour are twofold ; a higher class of jute is necessary to obtain the normal quality of cloth, and production, as a general rule, is considerably reduced.

105. There is no minimum wage ; workers are paid according to attendance in the case of daily labour, and according to output in the case of piece work.

106. (i) Fining is only resorted to after repeated warnings have been given and, in practice, amounts to only an extremely small fraction of the total wages paid. The particular department affected is the weaving. Should a person be caught stealing, it is the custom to give full pay and dismiss him or her on the spot.

(ii) There are no other deductions.

(iii) The money realized by fines is simply a deduction from the general wages, although, in some instances, the money realized through fines is set aside against pensions paid to old servants.

(iv) It is the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association that legislation, so far as deductions are concerned, is not desirable.

107. (i) Wages are paid weekly to operatives and monthly to other employees.

(ii) Weekly wages are paid usually on the last working day of the week following that during which they were earned ; and monthly wages on the 15th of the month following.

(iii) The Indian jute mills are strongly of opinion that no legislation is necessary in this connection, as the present methods are quite suitable and cannot be improved upon. In other words, wages are paid as quickly as possible, which means that the time kept in hand is necessary for making up wages, both as regards weekly and monthly labour.

(iv) Unclaimed wages amount to a very small fraction of the total wages billed, as all workers are paid wages actually earned, when claimed. In many cases, the small amount of back wages unpaid is utilized for pensions to old servants.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Generally speaking, there has not been much change in the efficiency of Indian workers in recent years, but there is no doubt that in comparison with, say, 20 years ago, it has been proved that the shorter hours have resulted in more efficient working. In other words, the operative has had to work harder to make a wage more or less in line with what was earned previously. Although jute mill labour migrates and changes to a certain extent during the year, the same workers over a period are employed, and efficiency, therefore, at the present time, may be considered quite satisfactory.

113. In the opinion of the Jute Mills Association, a comparison such as this can be of little value. There is undoubtedly a great deal of difference between the efficiency of Indian and foreign workers in the textile trades, and these remarks undoubtedly must apply to other industries. So far as the jute mill industry is concerned, one foreign worker, either in Dundee or the Continent, has to do work that requires the services of two operatives in this country. It is not that the work is unduly hard, and not on account of climatic conditions, but simply because this has been the custom so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned.

114. (i) Comparisons are not affected to any extent by the migration of workers, and this particular phase does not apply to Calcutta jute mills. The same labour is employed all the year round, and there are practically no "slack" seasons.

(ii) Comparisons apply more to the use of machinery and handling of the work. Unless there is expert supervision, the workers would take very little thought about the quality of production.

(iii) The general efficiency of plant, so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, is undoubtedly high, and machinery generally is kept up to a high standard of efficiency, and scrapped when machines of an improved nature are placed on the market.

(iv) The comparative efficiency of management may be taken at a good average, and only those who have had long service and very thorough experience, are appointed to any of the responsible posts. At the same time, conditions differ so much that it is very difficult indeed to make any real comparison.

(v) The physique of the workers, on the whole, can hardly be described as satisfactory. This is probably due to climatic conditions, and also to the lack of interest in anything that requires exertion. In certain areas, playing fields and play-grounds are provided, with the idea of improving physique.

(vi) Health, in many cases, affects the efficiency of the workers, and, as a general rule, fever is the cause, due not to the nature of work in the mills, but to climatic conditions, particularly at the change of seasons. Generally speaking, workers have ample leisure time in comparison with workers in other countries, which, if taken advantage of, should be to their benefit.

(vii) Facilities for education, except in a few isolated instances, are conspicuous by their absence, and it is to be admitted that in comparison with the standard of European countries, little progress has to be recorded. Indeed, the workers themselves are very indifferent so far as improved education is concerned.

(viii) Standards of living vary to a very great extent, although it is an undoubted fact that in recent years there has been some improvement in this respect, and it is quite reasonable to anticipate that such improvement will gradually continue. There has always been and, as far as can be seen, always will be, a vast difference in the mode of living of the various castes who operate in Calcutta jute mills. At the same time, it is hardly correct to judge the standard of living by what is seen in the jute mill areas, as a large majority of the operatives do not use their earnings in these particular districts, but remit, as has already been illustrated, a large percentage of those earnings to their up-country homes.

(ix) The climate of Bengal, in comparison with those of other countries, is certainly not conducive to high efficiency. The mills are built to minimize as much as possible the effects of the heat on the operatives. During the hot weather months, work is undoubtedly very trying, and, on the whole, the workers in a modern jute mill realize that they are well off so far as air space and spare room, in all parts of the mill buildings, are concerned.

115. (i) This heading must, naturally, apply to single-shift mills, where the working hours have been changed to suit new conditions. It is understood that so far as single-shift mills are concerned, production has been maintained at a level more or less equivalent to what was the case when these mills were on multiple-shift; and from a commercial point of view, this must profit the millowners. So far as the changes in the number of working hours in the double-shift mills are concerned, production has increased more or less in proportion with the number of extra hours worked.

Note.—In making these remarks, the change as from 1st July, 1929, from 54 hours to 60 hours is referred to.)

(ii) The changes in other working conditions again apply to the single-shift mills, and it is understood that those mills which have adopted this system of working are quite satisfied with results. Single-shift working undoubtedly makes for better control and efficiency, but this should not be taken as any criterion that production or efficiency in multiple-shift mills is in any way less than is obtained in the case of single-shift working.

(iii) The association has no records to show to what extent expenditure on health and sanitation affects output.

(iv) As explained under a separate heading, the housing of workers is a very big question, and one which receives continued attention from the Calcutta jute mills; but so far as production is concerned, the housing of workers has little or no apparent effect.

(v) There have been no alterations in the method of remuneration, except for increases in wages from time to time, and the Indian Jute Mills Association doubts very much if production or the quality of work is affected by any change in this connection.

(vi) It is the opinion of the association that alterations in wages have no effect on production one way or another. There has certainly been, in recent years, in spite of substantial increases, little or no improvement either in quantity or quality of work produced.

(vii) *Legislative Enactments.*—The Indian Jute Mills Association has nothing to say under the heading of legislative enactments.

(viii) Dietary, so far as the jute mill workers are concerned, has no direct effect on production, and, notwithstanding the substantial amounts remitted to up-country homes, workers generally appear to have plenty of food.

(ix) The Indian jute mill worker, with a few exceptions, is not addicted to the use of alcohol or drugs and so far as this is concerned, no material effect on production is noticed.

(x) Industrial fatigue has not been experienced in any way so far as the jute industry in Bengal is concerned.

116. It is difficult to say what methods should be adopted for securing increased efficiency. When labour is plentiful, the work is done more efficiently, for the simple reason that workers are afraid of being deprived of their jobs. The system of fining workers to improve efficiency, is undoubtedly unsuccessful but, at the same time, very necessary to keep in check the tendency towards bad work, especially in the factories. The labour in Indian jute mills is entirely different from the labour in mills abroad, and illiteracy, undoubtedly, has a great deal to do with this aspect.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) Employers are organized under the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) Although there is a registered trade union in the Kankinara district, the workers at present are dealing with members of an unregistered trade union, and any complaints or grievances are supposed to be dealt with by this union.

120. The comparative failure of trade unionism as a responsible force in this country is due, the association considers, to the absence of controlling legislation.

Take for instance, the recent widespread strike in the jute mill area. This may have been, to begin with, and in the case of a few mills, something in the nature of an industrial dispute. Apart from this phase, however, members of the so-called Bengal Jute-workers' Union were entirely responsible for bringing 70 per cent. of the trade to a standstill, by addressing meetings in the various industrial centres, and giving promises and assurances which could never, on any account, be complied with. Without going into any further detail, the Indian Jute Mill Association wishes to refer in this memorandum, to an extract from the Report of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for the year 1924, on the subject of trade union legislation :—

In 1922, the Chamber made representation to the Government of Bengal on the proposal for the introduction of legislation for the registration and protection of trade unions. The question arose from a recommendation that was made by the Legislative Assembly early in 1921, and the Government of India thereupon consulted the local governments. After receiving and considering their replies, the Government of India drafted a Trade Union Bill, which they circulated at the end of August, 1924. On the bill being sent to the Chamber by the Government of Bengal, the committee examined it in consultation with their industrial sub-committee, and expressed views upon it in a particular letter.

The general position of the chamber in respect of trade union legislation was defined in 1922. It was, briefly, that according to information available, there were but few labour organizations in India, having as an object the protection and the

improvement of the conditions of labour. The Committee of the Chamber, however, indicated that trade unionism should be encouraged to develop along proper lines, and that legislation, with that end in view, might be undertaken. At the same time the Bengal Chamber of Commerce deprecated the application to India, where *bona fide* labour bodies were recent in origin, few in number, and premature in organization, of legislation framed to suit conditions in western countries, where labour unions are of long standing, numerous and highly organized. The chamber went on to emphasise the point that in England legislation for the registration and protection of trade unions did not precede but had followed the establishment of labour organizations. Although holding this view, the Committee of the Chamber recognized that advantage ought to be taken of the experience gained in the United Kingdom, and therefore did not object to the main features of the proposal, which were at that time put forward.

The Chamber of Commerce stated at that time that genuine combination of workers, formed not with the object of creating discord, but with the object of advancing the prosperity of the workers, would be welcomed by all employers of labour.

As regards the provisions of the 1924 Bill, the following points were dealt with :— (*a*) The exclusion of political purposes from the statutory objects of a trade union ; (*b*) registration ; (*c*) immunity from civil suits ; (*d*) picketing.

With reference to (*a*), political purposes were excluded by the Bill from the list of the statutory objects to which the funds of a union might be devoted. But the opinion was held that something more than this was required to preclude the possibility of unions developing into political organizations, and it was suggested by the Chamber, that three-fourths of the members of the executive of every union should be persons actually employed as workers in the industry with which the union is connected. It was also suggested that an attempt should be made to insert in the Bill provisions penalizing the expenditure of union funds in any shape on political work.

Regarding the question of the registration of trade unions, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce re-affirmed an opinion previously expressed, *viz.*, that registration ought to be compulsory. There are, unquestionably, difficulties in the way of compulsory registration, but there is no doubt that the question ought to be considered in every detail. It seemed impossible to support the provisions of a Bill which gave, in certain circumstances, immunity to trade unions from civil suits in respect of acts done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute. The Chamber of Commerce at that time did not support the Government of India in excluding from the Bill any provisions relating to picketing, and recommended that a definite responsibility should be laid on unions, or executives of such unions, for the prevention of the issue of orders authorizing picketing in any form by the members of the unions. The Chamber concluded by stating that should the unions authorize, or their members or executives take part in picketing, they should be held responsible for their actions, and their funds should be made liable accordingly.

The views of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in regard to the provisions of the 1924 Bill, were summarized by Sir Willoughby Carey in a resolution which he moved on behalf of the Chamber at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon on 16th December, 1924. The resolution was as follows :—

" That this association accepts the principle of the development on sound and healthy lines of trade unionism in India, and that, with this end in view, it supports the legislative proposals of the Government of India, subject to the following qualifications :—(i) that registration should be compulsorily enforced in respect of every trade union ; (ii) that political purposes should be definitely excluded from the scope of the activities of every union ; (iii) that picketing should be declared illegal ; and (iv) that no immunity should be afforded to unions to relieve them of collective responsibilities for acts committed by their members."

No action was taken by Government in connection with this resolution, but the whole matter has again been brought to a head by the strikes which have recently taken place in the jute mills in and around Calcutta. As a result of these strikes the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association have considered the question of interference with mill labour, in particular by unregistered trade unions ; and the committee, after careful consideration, have suggested to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that a resolution on the following lines might be moved at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon, which takes place in Bombay at the end of this year :—

" That this association requests the urgent attention of the Government of India to the extent to which, in recent industrial disputes, unregistered trade unions have interfered between employers and their labour ; the association affirms the views

expressed in the resolution of 16th December, 1924, to the effect that registration should be compulsorily enforced in respect of every trade union, and that picketing should be declared to be illegal and effectively dealt with; and in the interests of peace and prosperity in the industries of India, the association urges Government to introduce, at as early a date as possible, legislation to amend the Trade Unions Act, XVI of 1926, accordingly."

The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association trusts that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, at the meeting of the Associated Chambers at the end of this year, will put forward this particular point in as strong a manner as possible.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

The jute mill industry has for many years been more or less immune from industrial disputes, and labour, on the whole, has been contented. It is well known, of course, that the Indian jute mill worker is comparatively highly paid in comparison with other industrial labour in this country, and this is illustrated to a very great extent by the number of people constantly applying for work, and by the surplus labour in the various jute mill areas unable to find employment. Recently, however, a widespread strike has taken place, and this has affected, at intervals, practically every mill on the banks of the Hooghly.

The Indian jute mills, under an agreement made in 1921, have worked continuously for the last eight years, 54 hours per week; but owing to very distinct indications that the supply of jute goods did not equal demand, it was decided in November, 1928, to increase working hours from 54 to 60 per week as from 1st July, 1929. It is to be noted, however, that this change was not decided upon altogether from a commercial point of view, but with the instinct of self-preservation. The Calcutta jute mills, by curtailing output, were undoubtedly making substantial profits. On the other hand, by curtailing production, it was possible for competitive jute mills, both in Dundee and the continent, to work full time and increase loomage, while, so far as Calcutta was concerned, new mills, were started on the banks of the Hooghly. Such being the case, it was obvious that the associated mills had to take action, and this action, as stated above, was a resolution passed in November, 1928, to increase working time from 54 to 60 hours as from the 1st July, 1929. It was not anticipated that such a change would disorganize labour, as it was a case of longer hours and higher wages, which, in the ordinary course of events, would be welcomed by labour in other countries. To begin with, when the change was made, there were undoubtedly adjustments which had to be given effect to, and for a short time work proceeded on smooth lines. About the middle of July, however, agitators, posing as leaders of labour and as members of the *unregistered* Bengal Jute-workers' Union, began to get busy, and taking advantage of a few mills being on strike, eventually managed to bring to a standstill about 70 per cent. of the jute mills in Calcutta and district.

Matters got to such a stage that Government were forced to take action, and with almost 300,000 people out of work, there is no gainsaying the fact that the position was very serious indeed. The Jute Mills Association refused to negotiate with the so-called Bengal Jute-workers' Union but Government did so, and eventually arranged with the Indian Jute Mills Association to meet their labour to some extent.

The terms of the settlement arranged with Government, who were acting as intermediaries between the association and the Bengal Jute-workers' Union, were as under:—

(i) *Wages.*—The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association agreed to recommend to members of the Association the terms already publicly announced:—(*a*) to pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours worked; (*b*) to pay khoraki on the same scale as heretofore.

They also agreed to recommend to members:—(*c*) that the scales of bonuses remain the same as they were before 1st July, when the mills were working 54 hours a week, and (*d*) that favourable consideration be given to an adjustment of wages to time workers on the basis of the concession suggested for piece workers.

(*Note.*—This did not apply to mills where such adjustments had already been made).

The Committee also agreed to recommend to members:—(ii) that there be no victimization; (iii) that favourable consideration be given to the provision of maternity benefits; (iv) that there be no corporal punishment.

(*Note.*—The committee wish to point out that corporal punishment is already strictly prohibited.)

(v) That the authorities of each mill will consider favourably reasonable statements of grievances put forward by their workers.

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As an illustration of the absence of strikes, so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, the following information is perhaps interesting.

In terms of the Calcutta Jute Fabrics Association Forms of Contract, sellers have to send cabled information to their buyers when notice has been received from a jute mill that there is a possibility of delay in the shipment of goods on account of a strike at the mill, fire, accident to the machinery, or any similar cause. At the same time as the notice is sent by the sellers to the buyers, a notice must also be sent to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. On receipt by the Chamber, the notice is entered in a special register under a serial number.

The register was commenced in May, 1915, *and up to the end of* 1927, *the tota number of notices entered in it was* 113, *most of which were in connection with strikes. From the beginning of* 1928, *to July,* 1929, 46 *more notices were registered, and from the middle of July to 5th September,* 1929, *the number of notices registered was* 624.

The undernoted statistics, compiled from figures supplied by all associated mills affected by the recent jute mill strike, are also instructive :—

(i) Time lost on account of the strike, (*a*) Total number of loom-hours lost, 5,444,005 ; (*b*) number of looms involved, 41,643.

(ii) Total loss in production for the period of the strike ; (*a*) Hessian, 64,021,775 yards, (*b*) Sacking, 51,795,746 yards ; estimated to represent in value Rs. 170,17,142.

(iii) Total loss to labour force in wages for the period of the strike, Rs. 21,11,409.

(iv) Total number of hands affected by the strike, 2,67,345.

There was a serious and prolonged strike at Fort Gloster Jute Mills last year, which lasted for a period of fully six months. It is well known that this strike was not of an industrial nature and was fomented all the time by men posing as labour leaders, a few of whom were arrested and are now undergoing trial in Meerut. The managing agents of the Fort Gloster Jute Mills, *viz.*, Messrs. Kettlewell Bullen and Co., have decided not to give a written statement regarding this strike, but are prepared, if the Royal Commission so desires, to give oral evidence. The Indian Jute Mills Association is of opinion that this evidence should be taken.

XVIII.—Intelligence.

145. (i) Attached hereto is a statement* shewing the retail prices of certain articles of foodstuffs at Calcutta, and the Indian Jute Mills Association is indebted to the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics for these details.

It is rather difficult to form a correct list of foodstuffs consumed by jute mill workers inasmuch as they usually belong to different religious sects and different provinces, the dietary therefore being different in each case.

It will be seen that the prices prevailing at the end of June have been shown for each year, excepting 1914, for which year the prices at the end of July have been given, June prices not being available. Retail prices have been shown for all but three commodities, *viz.*, chillies, turmeric and raw sugar (gur), for which retail prices are not available. Wholesale prices from the Calcutta Prices Current and Money Market Report have been given in these three cases. It may be noted that in the registers kept of retail prices, potatoes are not shown with any qualifying clause to show the class, but from 1924, the quotations are the lowest published in the Municipal Gazettes. In the case of wheat, the quotations up to 1923, are for country flour, while the rest of the quotations are for " atta ".

From the details set forth, it will be noticed that the increase in the prices of foodstuffs as between 1914 and 1929, is as under :—

Rice—coarse	37 per cent.	Salt	50 per cent.
Wheat flour—country ..	36 ,,	Potatoes	13 ,,
Gram (Channa)	37 ,,	Chillies	50 ,,
Arhar Dal	58 ,,	Turmeric	73 ,,
Mustard oil	33 ,,	Raw Sugar (Gur) ..	71 ,,

Although these percentages cover a period of 15 years, special note should be made that in between the various years, prices at certain times for most commodities have ruled considerably lower than the prices given at the end of June, 1929.

In connection with the percentages given above, it must again be recorded that this compares with an increase in jute mill workers' wages, in recent years, of at least 60 per cent.

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* Not printed.

Mr. R. P. ADAMS, O.B.E., M.I. MECH. E., CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES, BENGAL.

I.—Recruitment.

3. (i) In textile factories the existing method of recruitment is almost entirely through sirdars (gangers). In shipbuilding yards, structural engineering works, and jute presses, the labour is principally obtained through, and their work controlled by contractors. In smaller engineering concerns and specialized industries recruitment is usually direct by the management.

(ii) Direct recruitment by the management is undoubtedly desirable, but the sirdar and contractor methods of recruitment have been long established and are practices which have been engendered by conditions. All attempts to change these methods appear to have failed.

(iii) It is considered that the establishment of public employment agencies would serve no useful purpose. As there is no apparent unemployment, the principal function of an employment agency, viz., the providing of employment, would be of no value.

4. There are undoubtedly two kinds of disturbance of family life :—(*a*) rural or up-country ; (*b*) suburban or local.

Generally speaking, persons employed in jute mills and some of the larger engineering establishments are affected by (*a*), inasmuch as they maintain homes in their villages whilst engaged in work in the industrial areas of Bengal, and to which they return periodically. In such cases there is either partial or complete severance of the principal of the family from his home for the greater portion of the year (*b*), however, is confined principally to jute mill workers not covered by (*a*), and where the extent of disturbance may be modified according to whether (1), the families live in the vicinity of the mill, (2), live at a distance from the mill or (3), employed on the multiple or single shift system of working. Where the multiple shift system is in operation there is no simultaneous enjoyment of meals and prescribed rest of the family, and where workers live at a distance from the mill no matter what the shift system, the extreme hours of departure for work and return encroaches on the home life and deprives the families concerned of time for leisure, common association and improvement.

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II.—Staff Organization.

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15. (i) The shipbuilding, general engineering and jute pressing industries, employing about 81,000 persons, let out the greater amount of their work on contract within their own premises. The extent varies from 70 per cent. in general engineering and 80 per cent. in shipbuilding, to 95 per cent. in jute pressing.

Regarding the character of contract work, all work in the industries noted above, with the exception of small jobs for which contracting is impracticable, is divided into its various processes and sections and given on contract.

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(iii) In so far as the observance of the provisions of the Factories Act is concerned the manager is responsible for all labour, whether directly employed, or by contractor.

(iv) Some of the effects of the contract system are :—(*a*) The workers' wages are entirely in the hands of the contractor ; (*b*) employers can rely on the necessary supply of labour and on the completion of their own contracts to time ; (*c*) employers are enabled to tender for jobs with a greater degree of accuracy.

IV.—Health.

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26. (i) (a) Under the Factories Act, all factories with the exception of those outside municipal limits, are required to provide latrine accommodation in accordance with a scale laid down in the factories rules, and they must be designed and constructed to the standard approved by the Chief Inspector of Factories and the Director of Public Health. In most of the larger factories, septic tank latrines are provided. Eighty-seven septic tanks have been installed during the past ten years and these provide accommodation for approximately 375,000 workers.

As regards tea factories and small concerns outside municipal limits, only a few have been provided with latrine accommodation. The difficulties being experienced are the scarcity of conservancy coolies, the natural habits of the labour, and the necessity for separate latrines for different castes. Owing to the open position of most of these factories, the absence of latrines seldom gives rise to any nuisance within the factory compound.

(*b*) Where housing accommodation is provided by factory owners the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory.

(ii) (*a*) The provision of drinking water in factories is governed by Rule 29 of the Bengal Factories Rules.

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Its enforcement gives no anxiety except perhaps in the smaller establishments in congested areas or away from municipal water-supply where lack of general cleanliness and up-to-date control makes pollution and inadequacy possible. Purity and adequacy of supply in the smaller establishments depend largely on the habits of the workers themselves and they are such that no small employer can keep abreast of them in attempting to comply with the above rules.

The larger industrial establishments however, notably jute mills, go far beyond the requirements of the Act in this matter, and where municipal supply is not available tube wells are sunk from which sufficient water is obtained to meet more than the workers' needs, or expensive plant for purifying the river water is installed. Some jute mills whose tube wells have proved unsatisfactory have even routine arrangements for bringing down water by boats from Calcutta to meet workers' requirements in that respect.

(*b*) Where workers live in quarters provided by the factory owners and near the factory itself, the same system of water supply of the factory is extended to the quarters for the workers' benefit. Where workers live away from the factory and within municipal limits of water-supply, water is generally available in the shape of a common hydrant or road taps so distributed that all living within the vicinity may make use of them.

Outside of municipal areas, however, or wherever there is no water supply, workers have to rely upon wells and tanks which may, or may not, be polluted or adequate, depending upon the workers' habits and the state of the previous monsoon.

(iii) It can be generally said that with respect to all large industrial establishments bathing and washing facilities are provided for the workers. In smaller factories, however, situated in the congested areas of municipalities on account of the lack of space, adequate bathing and washing arrangements cannot be provided, although perhaps there is no bar against an employee making use of the municipal tap within the factory for that purpose. Such workers, therefore, have to rely upon the adequacy of water-supply and the municipal hydrant near their own homes. Those workers living outside the reach of municipal water supply make use of tanks and the water from wells, the former often being polluted possibly, shared by buffaloes and made use of for all domestic purposes.

28. (i) There is no provision in the Indian Factories Act embracing the control of temperature in factories, from the point of view that extremes of temperature cause distress or ill health to workers. Extremes of temperature are undoubtedly detrimental to the health of workers but limits and extent are unknown. To consider the problem is to decide on standards, and the latter are impossible without prolonged scientific investigation. The subject is inseparable from the consideration of humidity and ventilation; distress and ill health do not arise necessarily from extremes of these factors individually; the sum total of their effect is the true criterion or the cooling power of the atmosphere. The aim should be the establishment of cooling power standards for different industries, and not the limiting of temperature. But the inclusion in the Act of a provision giving the Chief Inspector of Factories discretion in curtailing temperature by alteration to structures and the like would serve as a temporary expedient and possibly given an impetus to the proper consideration of the problem, i.e., cooling power and the establishment of cooling power standards. See Appendix M.

(ii) (*a*) The local Government has attempted to give effect to the recommendations of Mr. Maloney in his report on the humidifications of cotton mills in India. There are only 17 cotton mills in this province and it appeared to the local Government from the data gathered by Mr. Maloney that the conditions were not so severe in those mills as to necessitate restrictions of the kind he proposed. Government were reluctant to impose on an impoverished industry any control which would give a doubtful result. The local Government therefore called upon the Factory Inspection Department to make further investigations and to report as to the applicability of (*a*) the Humidity Schedule proposed by Mr. Maloney; and (*b*) the cooling power standard, and also to take whatever steps they could to improve the conditions by application of the Ventilation Provisions of the Act. The steps taken by the local Government are:—(*a*) inauguration of investigations; (*b*) issue of special rules to enable the investigations to be carried out; (*c*) adoption and embodiment in the rules of Mr. Maloney's proposal of prohibition of artificial humidification by steam when the temperature reaches 85 degrees Fahr.; (*d*) issue of other rules to curtail temperature;

(*b*) A report has been issued on these investigations for Government's consideration, together with simple recommendations to conform to local conditions. The effect of Government's interest in this subject in the manner described above has been to stimulate the interest of employers of cotton mills in the systems on the market for the control of temperature, humidity, and air movement, automatically.

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V.—Welfare.

34. (i) *Provision for Refreshments, Shelters and Creches.*—In so far as the smaller establishments are concerned there can be said to be no definite arrangements to accommodate workers in these respects. It is not only a question of lack of room but small employers have not reached the stage of consideration of such refinements. As regards refreshments, workers are left to look after themselves and apparently there is no objection raised to food sellers entering the factory compounds. In the larger engineering concerns, however, better arrangements are generally made with respect to those workers who cannot return to their homes on account of distance; food stalls and shelters being provided within the precincts of the factory.

As regards textile factories and the meal time accommodation of workers living at a distance, little has been done to provide special shelters or refreshment rooms. Like other large industrial establishments, food vendors are permitted to enter the precincts of the factory, but generally speaking, that is the maximum of progress in this direction. Where mills are comparatively isolated, however, and the majority of workers live in the immediate neighbourhood of the mill and in the mills property, bazaars in many cases, have been erected by the employers, and are controlled by them, thus clean and wholesome food is guaranteed to the workers at reasonable prices.

The provision of creches or enclosures for infants has long been under consideration by employers, but the difficulties of the situation can only be appreciated by those intimately acquainted with the customs, habits and prejudices of the workers. Two or three employers have actually made the experiment of erecting enclosures within the mill for the purpose of segregation of infants, and have encouraged but not forced its use on female workers. Differences of caste, habits, and customs, however, appear to have been an insuperable barrier to the establishment of their effective and correct use. Those enclosures, erected by way of experiment, have had to be dismantled.

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VII.—Safety.

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44. Mines, docks and railways do not come within the administration of the Indian Factories Act and, therefore, there is no obligation on their part to submit returns or statistics to the Chief Inspector of Factories. In all regulated factories, however, i.e., factories registered under the Indian Factories Act, managers are compelled to submit returns of accidents in a prescribed form according to Rule 65 of the Bengal Factories Rules. The particulars of the form ensures such information that accidents may be classed as fatal, serious or minor, on an " absence from employment " basis.

The statistics show that accidents of greater severity take place in districts in which the more important industries are established. This points not so much to the greater hazards of those industries, jute and engineering, but to the greater precision in complying with the law in respect of accident reporting as the result of better management and control. The increase in the totals year after year (see Appendix C (1)) is a measure of the increased efficiency of the department in registering factories both new and long established, and is a result of increased inspection staff and rigour in enforcing the provisions of the Act. The efficacy of the safety provisions is thereby overshadowed and not made apparent by these statistics.

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45. A review of the analysis of accidents for the past ten years shows that causes of accidents in order of danger are :—transport, falling objects, persons falling and jute machinery. Generally speaking, these accidents could not have been prevented by any safety devices and there was little neglect on the part of managers in taking reasonable or prescribed precautions to ensure safety. In most cases the injured workers themselves or their colleagues were largely responsible for the accidents or they were victims of circumstances which could not be foreseen. Generally the measures taken by inspectors as regards preventable accidents are sufficiently effective to prevent their growing to commentable totals.

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47. On the average about half a dozen accidents reports per annum reach the department in connection with serious and fatal accidents to workers in non-regulated establishments. . . . From the number of accidents so reported it is obvious that the majority are not brought to notice. This statement would seem to suggest an extended application of Section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Indian Factories Act, but as explained hereafter, there is a limit to the efficacy of the Act in remedying evils of this nature in small concerns, for drastic action in many cases would only lead to their liquidation. These remarks regarding the extension of the Act apply in the main to small concerns, but there are other classes of employment not at present regulated which appear to call for some sort of control, viz., the unloading and loading of ships in dock, the work on boats made fast to pontoons and jetties, and the construction of buildings and bridges. During the construction of the King George's Dock many serious and fatal accidents occurred, and generally the dependants of the deceased and the injured workers received compensation ; but a dispute over a particular fatal accident in which the port commissioners sought to establish their right to refuse compensation, brought to light the helpless position of a large number of workers on account of their being outside the protection of the Indian Factories Act ; a strange position in view of the fact that there were present all the elements of danger which engendered such an Act.

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49. *Stringency of Inspection and Enforcement of Regulations.*—(i) *In industry generally.*— . . . It may be rightly claimed that the provisions of all chapters, other than Chapter IV (employment of labour) present little difficulty in establishment and that the Act properly functions in those directions, but the attempt to restrict the hours of employment of workers under Chapter IV has given rise to innumerable difficulties, particularly in jute mills where the majority of factory labour is concentrated. Jute mills have adopted systems of overlapping shifts which have nullified the efficiency of administrative measures designed to enforce the provision of Chapter IV with precision. The position now is that either the local Government or the Chief Inspector of Factories should be given powers to modify shift systems, or approve of them, or the Act amended to make the present administrative arrangements more effective. This matter is enlarged upon in the reply to item 88.

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There is another very important matter with regard to rigour in the enforcement of the Act which strikes at the root of all departmental work—adequacy of fines and due appreciation of the underlying principles of the Act by magistrates. A glance at the lists of prosecutions, offences and fines in past annual reports will suffice to demonstrate how widely different are magistrates' views regarding Factory Act infractions. Indeed, it has become part of the inspector's consideration when instituting proceedings whether the inspector's power to arrange for punishment of the offender, is not more effective in print than in actual test in court. A manager, hitherto law abiding, and having a proper respect for law and the court, is not likely to be impressed by a subsequent visit of the inspector or a warning from that officer, after having been brought to court and taken part in lengthy proceedings ; the net result of which was the imposition of a few rupees fine only.

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IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories* (see Appendix M).

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57. (i) The 60 hours' restriction imposed by the Act, generally speaking, has had little effect so far as the larger industries are concerned, as it merely legalized conditions previously in existence, but in some of the smaller industries such as printing presses, oil mills, etc., it has certainly had the effect of reducing the total weekly hours. In the case of maintenance staff and other non-process workers, the conditions of the various exemption notifications restricting the weekly hours to an average of 60 or 66 hours in any one month has undoubtedly effected a reduction in the number of hours worked and a consequent reduction in wages. Judging from the number of applications for relief from the 60 hours' restriction received from employers from time to time, it is evident that the restriction has had considerable effect.

(ii) The 60 hours per week restriction has had no apparent adverse effect on industry.

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58. The daily limits for women and children of 11 hours and 6 hours respectively afford a fair measure of protection and have undoubtedly had some beneficial effect, but in engineering, shipbuilding and other non-textile industries the want of elasticity

or accommodation in hours to meet the demands of the market has been the cause of considerable inconvenience to employers, and it is questionable if any benefft accrues to the worker.

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59. It is considered that reduction of the daily limit in respect of women to 10 hours per day would not adversely affect any industry in the province. No industry actually works women more than 10 hours per day. In single-shift jute mills, although the hours for women are specified at 11 per day, extra hands are employed to enable all women to take periods of rest, which are not specified, at least half-an-hour during both the morning and afternoon shifts.

In so far as adult males are concerned, it is considered that in view of the want of elasticity or accommodation in daily hours, the daily limit should be withdrawn and hours restricted only to a weekly maximum. This question will be further enlarged upon when proposed amendments to the Act are put forward. A reduction of the weekly maximum to 55 hours is worthy of consideration.

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60. (i) (*a*) The principle of a rest for recuperation from fatigue is embodied in the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act. There is no substantial evidence that the periods of continuous work as permitted by the Act are excessive, or that the prescribed hour, or half hour as the case may be, for rest is too little. There are no comprehensive records as to the effect of various periods of continuous work on fatigue with respect to the Indian worker. It might be a subject for special investigation but there are no medical records in existence or obvious cases of injury or ill health due to fatigue to justify investigations at present.

(*b*) Generally the prescribed rest periods coincides with the workers' natural meal times. This may not apply, however, to multiple-shift mills, where the machinery is run continuously throughout the day, as this system necessitates a departure from the laws regarding employment of women in textile factories in Great Britain where the meal times of all women must coincide. There is evidence that, generally speaking, the workers take a meal by habit during the middle of the day and also later when they reach their homes in the evening. The question of meals should not altogether be treated with relation to fatigue from the point of view of actual work within the factory. A large number of workers employed in jute mills have to start for work before 5 o'clock in the morning and it is doubtful whether they prepare any meal before leaving. Again, they do not reach their homes until 8 p.m. or so in the evening when they partake of their principal meal of the day. Meal times and rest should be considered from the point of view of the time they leave their homes and return to them, and also the actual continuous long-period rest they receive at night as a result of the extreme hours to which mills compel them to work during the day.

(*ii*) With the exception of multiple-shift mills, the prescribed rest periods appear to be suitable, but the existence of conditions as explained above, seems to call for some sort of control in such factories, so that the principles of Chapter IV of the Act may be properly established and also Article 3 of the Geneva Convention observed.

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(iii) The hours of work of the majority of non-textile factories are reasonable. They generally conform to a single-shift, so that all workers of a particular factory have the same hours of employment and enjoy a simultaneous mid-day rest. The running of the machinery, therefore, is controlled by the prescribed hours of the factory. This makes for comparatively easy detection of infractions of Chapter IV, and, in consequence, the enforcement of the provisions of that chapter is more certain. Rest is provided during the hottest part of the day and coincides with the time when workers take their meals by force of habit. The division of the hours of rest of Section 21 into two portions of half hour each, together with relief from the complete hours' rest, on a short day, by the proviso to that section, is a recognition of the requirements of the workers and their established habits.

Generally, non-textile factories declare a length of working day less than that permitted by law, and hence the evils of early rising and late return from work do not arise.

These observations, however, do not apply to the hours of employment of jute mills. Both systems of employment, multiple-and single-shift, in that industry are guilty of encroachment on workers' leisure by reason of early departure and late return ; but whereas the single-shift guarantees an extended rest period at the most beneficial time during the middle of the day and the precise enforcement of the provisions of Chapter IV, the multiple-shift cannot.

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(iv) As a general statement, it may be said that the workers of engineering and miscellaneous non-textile establishments of fair size, enjoy, besides the weekly holiday prescribed under the Act, a half holiday on Saturdays and approximately 16 festival

or religious holidays distributed throughout the year. Jute mill workers on the other hand, employed on the multiple-shift system, have, up to July of this year enjoyed besides their legal weekly holiday, two extra days each week together with festival holidays varying from 9 to 15 days distributed throughout the year. Single-shift workers of the same industry, however, have had only one extra day's holiday each week together with the other holidays already mentioned. The holidays of cotton mill workers are akin to those of jute mill workers on the single-shift system, except that they do not enjoy a half holiday on Saturdays.

61. The general practice is to give the Sunday holiday, and this or a substituted day is rigorously enforced. It can be stated that the large majority of the workers in the province enjoy a full day's rest per week. No change in the law is necessary.

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X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

A.—*Factories.*

82. The entry of infants into factories can be prohibited, but if this power were used, an embargo would be placed on female labour in textile factories which would cause grave labour troubles and economic difficulties. Their presence, therefore, has to be tolerated, and for the purpose of avoiding accidents which sometimes occur to little children, one or two tentative attempts have been made to establish creches. These attempts, however, have been more or less unsuccessful, but profitable experience has been gained, and it is hoped will be used to advantage in future ventures. It is difficult to understand why female employees will not take advantage of enclosures or creches provided for the safety of their children, and it would seem that any such welfare work, in which there is possibly a gesture of force, is likely to end in failure.

83. The regulations for women are unsuitable in so far that they permit women to be employed between 5.30 a.m. and 7 p.m., hours which unduly encroach on their leisure. In many cases, women have to leave their homes with children before 5 a.m. in darkness, and get back to their homes in darkness about 7.30 or 8 p.m. The present practice in single-shift jute mills is to allow a 2½ hours' midday rest period. This is obviously desirable. The restriction of the daily limits by half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening, i.e., 6 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., would result in a 10-hour day, provided the 2½ hours' midday rest period is retained. It would also pave the way to a desirable reduction of one hour in the working day of children.

Some form of legislation in connection with the employment of women before and after childbirth seems necessary. Regulations somewhat on the lines of the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929, might be considered.

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84. (i) The hours of work permitted under the Act, viz., six hours per day, are unsuitable from the point of view of education, and should be reduced to five hours. This would work in conveniently so far as the textile industry is concerned, with the proposed 10 hours' working day for women. The adoption of a five hours day would eliminate the necessity of prescribing a rest period.

(ii) The present maximum and minimum ages, viz., 12 to 15 years, is satisfactory and no change is advocated.

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85. Section 44A of the Factories Act, which was introduced in the amended Act of 1926 for the purpose of preventing the employment of children in two factories on the same day, is ineffective. A fair amount of double employment is known to exist, but it is impossible for either managers or inspectors to detect it. The evil can only be remedied by compulsory elementary education.

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88. The multiple, double, or overlapping shift system of employment is peculiar to approximately 50 per cent. of the jute mills of Bengal, the remainder, together with other textile factories, having adopted the single-shift system of working. The working hours in all other industries are on the single-shift principle.

The shift system in a typical multiple-shift mill is shown below.

Time-workers.—A. 5.30 to 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. B. 5.30 to 9.30 a.m. and 2 to 7 p.m. C. 8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Piece-workers.—A. 5.30 to 7 a.m.; 8 to 12 noon and 1.30 to 7 p.m. B. 5.30 to 8 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. C. 5.30 to 9 a.m.; 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. D. 5.30 to 10.30 a.m.; 12 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

Half-timers (children).—A. 5.30 to 10 a.m. B. 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. C. 2.30 to 7 p.m.

It will be observed that the morning starting hour and the evening stopping hour are the extreme limits permitted by the Factories Act for the employment of women and children. Work is continuous over the 13½ hours' period, i.e., the maximum daily output from the machinery is obtained consistent with the limits prescribed for women and children. Such a system is claimed by its sponsors to be satisfactory, in that it enables the jute mill group to satisfy the market on a short week (hitherto four days, now a week of four days and a week of five days alternately) and at the same time retaining sufficient time in reserve for the purpose of accommodating increased demands for their product and the continued control of the market. When that reserve is absorbed, as it is now being absorbed, then the time will have come for the establishment of more factories with consequent possible loss of control. It is understandable, therefore, that such employers will seek, with all the powers and influence at their disposal, to postpone that event and oppose any interference which deprives them of the maximum advantage from their machinery and block.

It is necessary to state what is conceived to be the employers' position, in order to appreciate the difficulties of enforcing the provisions of the Act affecting women and children as embodied in the hours of labour restrictions of Chapter IV. With the multiple-shift system, the mill machinery is in operation continuously for thirteen and a-half hours each day, and it is possible, therefore, for a man, woman or child to be "on call" for that time, provided that the internal discipline of the mill, the management, the routine, and the arrangements made, administrative or otherwise, are insufficient or defective in preventing such an abuse. The point in question, therefore, is, Do conditions which promote abuse of this kind exist in such mills? In the first place, and in so far as concerns mills not provided with near housing accommodation, the system confines a large percentage of employees to the mill premises for the whole of that period of thirteen and a-half hours, since their working day is spread over that period. The intervening periods of rest, whether short or long, are not rest therefore in the true sense of the word. They do not provide the change and complete detachment from the work and influeuce of the mill that the same leisure would do if enjoyed before the commencing hours of the mill or after the latter has closed down for the day, or if there were no possibility of the workers being "on call" as guaranteed by the single-shift system. In fact, in order to meet the industry's requirements, as understood by multiple-shift employers, the rest periods, from the point of view of the health of the workers, are not beneficially placed. The question regarding what happens when there is a shortage of labour must now be considered. With the multiple-shift system there is maintained within the precincts of the mill a superabundance of labour to satisfy any shift and, therefore, is it reasonable to assume, bearing in mind the policy of the jute mill group outlined above, that a manager will differentiate between this and that person's prescribed hours of labour, even if he is in a position to confound or check the information supplied by his recruiting sirdars? The instrument permitted to inspectors of factories to check abuses of this kind is the employment register, and it goes without saying that where shifts overlap, the essence of precise enforcement as regards hours is precision in recording attendance of workers by employers. It is obvious, and it has been shown by facts and by prosecutions, that precise attendance recording is impossible in a multiple-shift mill, and therefore the establishment of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act must always fail in such circumstances. Wherever there are probabilities of the eleven hours and six hours' limits allowed to women and children being exceeded, there the health of those persons is jeopardized. Wherever there are probabilities of women and children having their intervening rest periods taken away from them to satisfy the continuity of a process and maintenance of an estimated output, there also health is jeopardised. Wherever women and children are compelled to rise early, sometimes at 4.30 a.m., possibly without food, in orderr to be in the mill at 5.30 a.m., and are unable to reach their homes until about 7.30 or 8 p.m. at night, conditions from a health point of view cannot be accepted as satisfactory. It may be said on behalf of the multiple-shift system that the short week gives a compensatory long period week-end rest, but as a matter of fact the multiple-shift mills have now encroached upon that long week-end rest to suit their own ends.

Another and important aspect of this question is that the multiple-shift system undoubtedly interferes with the customary habits of the workers. By habit the worker takes one of his principal meals of the day between the hours of 12 a.m. and 2 p.m., and the above system cannot guarantee that; in fact it deliberately upsets it to suit manufacturing interests. There is a provision in the English Factories Act which enjoins that the meal times of women, young persons and children shall be simultaneous.

"Meal times to be simultaneous, and employment during meal times forbidden. With respect to meals the following regulations shall (save as is in this Act specially excepted (*a*)) be observed in a factory and workshop:

(1) All women, young persons and children employed therein shall have the times allowed for meals at the same hour of the day ; and

(2) A woman, young person or child shall not, during any part of the times allowed for meals in the factory or the workshop, be employed in the factory or the workshop or be allowed to remain in a room in which a manufacturing process or handicraft is then being carried on."

There are certain exceptions permitted in the English case respecting textile factories, but it lays down that in no case must the meal time arrangements interfere with the customary habits of the workers concerned, so that, judged by the experience of Great Britain, the multiple-shift system is condemned. The early hour of 5.30 a.m. for commencement of work compels employees to prepare their food over night for next day's consumption, and all persons with knowledge of Indian conditions realize the danger of eating stale food.

Regarding the single-shift system of working, the extreme hours permitted by law to women and children are here again the criterion of the mill working day, but with the exception of children all workers have the same hours of employment. Moreover, there is a common rest period in the middle of the day (the hottest period) for the simultaneous enjoyment of meals and rest for all workers. The very nature of this system precludes any possibility of gross irregularities as regards the provisions of Chapter IV with respect to women and men ; for once a woman is registered as a worker she works for the whole time the machinery is in motion, the mill hours being within the law. It is possible, however, when labour is short for children registered on a morning shift to be employed, also on the afternoon shift, but with the elimination of the possibilities of illegal employment of women which are inseparable from multiple-shift employment, concentration on child employment becomes possible and administrative methods made more effective.

The evils of early and late employment explained above, resulting from working to the extreme hours permitted by law to women and children, also applies to the single-shift system but obviously in a modified form. On grounds of health, therefore, the present extreme hours which engenders the multiple-shift system should be reduced, thereby shortening the working day. Single-shift mills have hitherto worked for five days of the week but now, in furtherance of the policy of the jute mill group six days are worked, and the weekly hours of adults extended to the limits permitted by Section 27, viz., 60 hours. There is, therefore, no long week-end compensating rest for a long working day or long absence from home for single-shift employees, but, on the other hand, there is no legal enforcement of the long rest in multiple-shift mills. In fact the latter have now encroached upon that rest to meet manufacturing requirements, which shows that, when establishing these systems, health conditions did not receive proper consideration.

There is one very important point which should be noted here and that is that all mills by working to the morning and evening limits permitted by law to women are contravening Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, ratified by India, in so far that female workers do not receive a continuous rest of eleven hours per day. This matter and the proposal to reduce the working day has been commented upon elsewhere, but the underlying interest of both is that of health of workers.

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89. *Work of Women and Children in Factories not subject to Act*—(i) *Use by Local Governments of Section* 2 (3) (*b*).—There is undoubtedly a large number of factories in Bengal which fail the twenty persons stipulation of Section 2 (3) (*a*) of the Act for registration purposes. These comprise in the main soorkey mills, rice mills, iron foundries, printing presses, match factories and a miscellaneous collection of establishments in the congested areas of the province. In all of these factories, however, the number of women and children employees can be considered negligible. In one instance only use has been made of Section 2 (3) (*b*) ; it was as the result of an attempt by the proprietor of a factory already registered to avoid the administration of the Act by dispensing with the use of power-driven machinery. The majority of these factories are badly situated, and their structures not designed for the housing of machinery and employees. There is, therefore, a limit to the utility of the Act in such cases, for generally the concerns have so little capital that compulsory fencing and structural alterations would probably precipitate liquidation.

(ii) *Advisability of extended application.*—There appears to be no real grounds for the extended application of Section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Act on account of the few women and children involved. Factories of that class should undoubtedly be subject to some sort of control whether the employees are male, female or children, but authority can be most effective in such cases if it is applied before the premises are actually licensed. Moreover, there should be no consideration of such small concerns becoming registered until the Act can be effectively administered in existing factories. Owing to the difficulty of ascertaining the number of persons actually employed in

small tea factories, however, the extension of the Act under this sub-section is now being considered in respect of these concerns. Another aspect of this case is the position of such employers with respect to the Workmen's Compensation Act. A fatal accident in many of these factories would possibly impose on the manager a compensation payment which would ruin him.

Refer to Appendix "M" (Defects and proposed amendments to the Indian Factories Act), paragraphs 8, 9 and 36.

XII.—Wages.

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99. *Payment in Kind and Allied Problems.*—Little has come to the notice of the Factory Inspection Department regarding matters of this kind. In so far as the establishments of the larger industries are concerned, it can be safely said that the practice of payment in kind does not exist and that managers naturally and probably keep within the requirements of the English Truck Act unknowingly. As regards smaller factories, however, the conditions of employment and the poverty of employers do probably engender abuses of a sort, but it is doubtful whether payment in kind is one of them.

A few complaints have reached the department having bearing on Truck Act matters; two of them referred to the non-payment of wages on account of failure of the concerns in question. An investigation of another revealed the fact that the workers had been housed and fed by the proprietor over a considerable period, but no wages had been paid to them.

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106. *Deductions.*—The absence of trade union organization or societies with authority to attend to the interest of workers other than those engaged in industrial establishments, would make it extremely difficult to obtain reliable information as to the extent to which fines are imposed on such workers, although the practice undoubtedly exists in regard to all employment.

Legislation, therefore, would be very difficult to frame for such employment, and also to administer, circumstances which appear to be appreciated by the Government of India, who suggest, in their letter No. L-1418, dated 25th June, 1925, that it would be "impracticable to extend its scope (Legislation) beyond industrial establishments." It appears, therefore, that district magistrates would not be in a position to give useful advice in such matters, since establishments, other than industrial, are excluded in the first instance.

Chambers of Commerce and commercial associations would probably be able to give reliable information as to the extent of such fining systems and the purpose to which such fines are placed in so far as the firms they represent are concerned, but what Government might consider abuses of such systems would obviously be impolitic for them to put forward.

The trade unions which are in existence in this Presidency are weak, and it would be difficult to assert that they exist to uphold or secure employees' legitimate rights. Complaints have been received from such so-called unions, mostly malicious, pointing out infractions of the Factories Act as an offset to deserved dismissals of an employee, etc., but no case regarding the abuse of the fining system has ever been reported to this department by such associations. Information received from labour unions is usually found to be unreliable and a waste of the department's time to investigate.

The fining system may be said to be general in all industrial establishments and fines are generally imposed for (*a*) breaches of discipline, (*b*) bad or negligent work or injury to materials and (*c*) injury to machinery or tools supplied by the employer. (*a*) and (*b*) are generally the causes of fines in jute and cotton mills and tea gardens and (*a*) and (*c*) in engineering concerns.

As about 80 per cent. of the total labour force in this Province is employed in textile and engineering concerns, instances of fines taken at random from their registers will probably serve to show whether the system is abused and whether it constitutes an evil or not. An inspector of factories has power to inspect employment registers and the wages come under his investigation from the point of view of overtime (Section 31 of the Act). Further as it is the practice on the part of managers to impose fines on subordinates for breaches of the Factories Act and so be in a position to produce evidence of due diligence in the event of prosecution, the inspector is in a position to check up the fining system and detect abuses.

It has been found in jute mills that the majority of fines are inflicted on piece workers and, in particular, weavers for bad and negligent work and injury to material.

The following are cases taken at random from a few mills :—

——	Wages. per week.	Fines.	Cause.	Per cent. of wages.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		
A—mill—weavers	3 14 3	0 2 0	(*b*) for bad work.	3
	6 8 0	0 4 0	(*b*) Do.	3·8
	6 11 6	0 4 0	(*b*) Do.	3·7
	6 0 0	0 2 0	(*a*) Committing nuisance.	2
B—mill—weavers	8 4 0	0 4 0	(*b*) For bad work	3
	7 13 9	0 4 0	(*b*) Do.	3·2
	8 8 0	0 8 0	(*b*) Do.	6
A.—mill—Preparing Department.	2 8 0	0 2 0	(*b*) Do.	5
Finishing carding ..	2 12 0	0 2 0	(*b*) Do.	4·5
Selectors	8 8 0	0 8 0	—	6
Sirdar	5 8 9	0 8 0	(*b*) Bad supervision.	9
B—mill—Spinner	3 8 0	0 2 0	(*a*) For leaving tokens.	5
	3 8 9	0 2 0	(*c*) For being late.	5

With respect to any of the above fines, in no case does it exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages where monthly wages is taken and in no case investigated does it appear that an employee has been fined more than once in a month, and all fines are imposed by European supervisors. In the case of A mill, the aggregate of fines per week amounted to Rs. 50, the majority of which were imposed on weavers and the balance on the remaining classes of time workers for breaches of discipline, time keeping, etc., the total wages bill for the week being Rs. 14,000. The registers of workers of another mill showed a wages bill of Rs. 4,200 and fines aggregating Rs. 6-2 annas per week. In the case of B mill the aggregate of fines per week was Rs. 300, Rs. 200 being imposed on weavers for bad work and the remainder on the time workers for breaches of discipline and infractions of the Factories Act : the total pay bill in this case approximated, Rs. 15,000.

In so far as smaller factories are concerned it would be difficult to obtain authentic information. It is said that rice mill owners impose no fines ; that is reasonable since skill scarcely arises and there is no question of bad work. Punctuality and discipline does not enter into the question by the very nature of the process.

That there can possibly be no attempt at recovering losses due to bad workmanship on the part of employees may be appreciated from the fact that when a weaver is fined 4 annas the loss to the company in the shape of bad material is from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20, and further, bad material consistently turned out by a mill means possible relegation of the mill to a lower grade by the buyers. In one case recently this has resulted in a loss of Rs. 3,000 per month until the time of regrading 12 months hence, so that if bad work is being done, the only remedy, after the first fine is imposed, is dismissal of the employee responsible—a course which can only be adopted when labour is plentiful.

It has been found that it is not so much the amount of the fine as the generality of its imposition which proves effective.

Some managers try suspension in the case of old employees for breach of discipline or bad work as it is a question of pride. It may be said that abuses creep in by means of transfer of fine to subordinates if a sirdar is fined for bad supervision. This is impossible to detect but, in some mills where managers have encouraged employees to state their grievances, such abuses would be somewhat minimized.

Cotton mills impose similar fines and in approximately the same proportion to wages ; warnings are given before they are imposed, and when an employee is found to be doing better work the fines are returned to him in the shape of a bonus.

Information shows in the case of engineering concerns that in no case does the fine exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages and the aggregate of fines is negligible compared with the total wages bill. Such fines are generally inflicted for breaches of discipline, arriving late, etc., and injury to tools supplied by the employers. The fines suggest, bearing in mind the value of damaged material, that no effort is made to recover the loss, but the fines are inflicted to prevent re-occurrence of the loss. With several engineering concerns such fines are credited to funds devoted to the benefit of the workers. This practice appears to agree with the law already in force in some countries.

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Generally, I am of the opinion that in so far as the bigger factories are concerned, and in which practically 80 per cent. of the labour is concentrated, there is little or no abuse of the fining system, that the fines imposed are fair and reasonable, having regard to the circumstances, and that the workmen personally are made aware of the system before they enter employment. The system, as at present carried on, falls naturally within the chief provisions of the English and other Truck Acts and the recommendations of the English Truck Committee of 1906–08, in that fines are rarely imposed on children (15 years of age) and that fines do not exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages (averaged monthly) and that in some cases fines are credited to a fund for the sole benefit of the workers. Further, the fear of strike or loss of labour where only skilled labour is acceptable, is a sufficient deterrent to abuses. As regards smaller concerns, whether or not such abuses exist, it is difficult to discover, but as such concerns only represent a small percentage of the total labour employed, expensive legislation for their special control in this respect would not be justified.

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107. *Periods of wage-payment.*—(iii) Information has reached the department on one or two occasions respecting workers being unpaid as the result of failure of the concerns to which the workers belonged, the amounts due covering several months of wages. In such cases, therefore, some legislation seems called for to minimize the workers' loss by restricting the delay in payment of wages as a matter of ocurse.

Further, the possibility of abuses by contractors in the payment of their men can be readily imagined when there is no influence and control by the principal. It is quite possible that labour dissatisfaction, on occasions, has had its origin in the machinations of contractors or sirdars in the matter of wages : the contractor or sirdar effectively passing on responsibility to the shoulders of the employers.

The maintenance of wages registers by a contractor, however, the establishment of rates of pay and the recording of hours worked, etc., would probably be necessary for the elimination of such abuses, but would be a matter of considerable difficulty and general harassment in present circumstances.

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XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

115. (i) There has been no controversy with concerns other than jute mills on the question of restriction or modification of hours which would bring to the fore the problem of the effect of working hours on production. It is recognized of course by all reasonable employers that there is a limit to the advantage of over employment and that there is a tendency towards loss and not gain during hours worked beyond those that they have found reasonable by experience. The voluntary payment of overtime money for work beyond prescribed hours is a recognition of the fact that the worker must be stimulated in some way to maintain the efficiency he usually gives during the prescribed day. The voluntary establishment of a working day by the majority of employers, less than the limit allowed by law, together with a simultaneous rest for all workers, is tantamount to a declaration of what is reasonable and efficient in India, both from the point of view of the employer and the worker.

As indicated above, however, a certain group of jute mills using the multiple shift system is otherwise disposed towards this problem of a standard day and limits for their respective workers.

The matter has arisen in consequence of the abortive attempts of the department to enforce the legal limits of employment in such mills, and in order to ensure the survival of the law and the protection of workers, it has been proposed to declare the multiple shift illegal and promote the simple employment (single shift) established in other industries. The employers concerned maintain that the change to the latter system would involve a loss of production, but from information gathered from managers who have had experience of both systems, it is certain that there is a gain in production and all round efficiency.

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116. The efficiency of the worker is a function of his health and contentment, and since the proposals and recommendations contained in Appendix " M " have for their object the improvement of the latter, increased efficiency is bound to result from their establishment. It may be said, however, that the abolishment of the multiple shift system would be a definite step towards greater efficiency. It affects a large portion of the industrial population of Bengal, and hence, apart from its capacity to promote frustration of the law, the adoption of such recommendations should have prime consideration.

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XVII.—Administration.

138. Taking workers as a whole in Bengal, it cannot be said that they are acquainted with factory legislation. The Bengali workers, who perhaps are more literate, and workers engaged in the more skilled or engineering trades, have perhaps some distorted notion of the purpose of the Act, but even that knowledge does not appear to be any help to the administration. Textile workers are, however, almost entirely illiterate and, therefore, posting of abstracts in the vernacular, which is an epitome of the chief requirements of the Act, fails in its object, and that is to acquaint the workers with the protection which is legally due to them. Whatever knowledge they possess of such legislation must come by hearsay, the interpretation by sirdars and perhaps interested agitators, both with ulterior motives. Children in jute mills are afraid of the inspector instead of looking upon him as their protector, which attitude is really a reflection on the understanding and ignorance of their parents and the influence of sirdars who control both.

Complaints do certainly reach the department purporting to come from workers pointing out breaches of the Act, which might indicate to a casual observer a superficial knowledge of the Act, or, at any rate, an understanding of its purpose and a desire for its rigorous enforcement, but generally there is some ulterior motive underlying the complaints, more or less unconnected with Factory Act matters, and suggesting sirdar or clerk influence for purposes of their own. It is the general experience of the department that there is no real anxiety on the part of the workers for the precise enforcement of the provisions of the Act, and that as long as their pay is not interfered with by employers and that they get extra pay for extra time worked, they are not much interested in Factory Act requirements for the purpose of their protection.

It may still be said therefore that a worker is completely occupied in the business of keeping his job ; he works for himself and has little mind for anything which involves self-sacrifice or collective help.

139. (i). Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors of Factories, Bengal, are recruited entirely from men well qualified and experienced in both the theoretical and practical sides of the engineering profession. Assistant Inspectors work conjointly and directly under the supervision of Inspectors. Appointments as " Inspector " are open to both Europeans and Indians in equal competition but up to the present the one Indian Inspector on the staff graduated through the Assistant Inspector class. Appointments as " Assistant Inspector " are reserved for Indians. Full-time Certifying Surgeons of Factories, attached to the department for the purpose of certifying the ages of children and their fitness for employment, are recruited from the Indian Medical Department.

Prior to the War, the staff of the department consisted of the chief inspector and two inspectors, but as the result of the changes brought about by International Conventions and the rapid developments in labour legislation, gradual increases in the number of inspectors were necessary, until in 1927 when the last new post was created, the staff reached its present strength. The personnel of the department now consists of (*a*) chief inspector; (*b*) 6 inspectors (5 Europeans and 1 Indian) ; (*c*) 3 assistant inspectors (Indians) ; and (*d*) 2 full-time certifying surgeons of factories.

The staff, prior to 1927, was inadequate for the effective administration of the Act. Three hundred and fifteen factories remained uninspected in 1924, 291 in 1925, 243 in 1926, and 160 in 1927. In 1928, 3 inspectors were absent during the greater part of the year on home leave, but in spite of this depletion in staff, the number of uninspected factories fell to 21, the reason being found in the opening of a branch office and the permanent posting of an inspector in the tea districts. The consequent dearth of inspectors at the head office during the year was a serious handicap to efficient inspection work in the Calcutta industrial area. The number of factories on the register at the close of the year 1928 was 1,384 and the number of visits made throughout the year, including special enquiry or investigatory work, totalled 2,478. Two hundred and thirty-three factories were visited twice, 86 three times and 121 more than three times. In addition, 103 visits were paid for various purposes, to small concerns not on the register.

The ratio of the number of inspectors to the number of factories, however, is only one factor of any basis on which an opinion on the adequacy or otherwise of the staff may be formed. Consideration must be given to the regular loss of the services of Inspectors absent on home leave, to the measure of support accorded by the courts in prosecution cases, and to the volume of investigatory and advisory work in connection with matters appertaining to labour and labour legislation, which now devolves on the department.

Under ordinary circumstances, inspectors are granted from 6 to 8 months' home leave every 3 or 3½ years and therefore, as an approximate average, the services of at least one inspector may at all times be discounted. The inadequacy of the penalties imposed by the majority of trying magistrates in cases of infringement of the factories Act is a serious handicap in the effective administration of the Act. Deterrent fines would result in a considerable reduction in the work of the department and the number of inspections necessary would be reduced.

From the experience of past years, it is considered that, under the present circumstances, the creation of additional posts (say one inspector and one assistant inspector) sufficient to cover the absence of inspectors on leave, would render the staff adequate for the efficient administration of the Act, provided that steps are taken to assure reasonable support from the courts. In the event of a decision to bring factories employing 10 persons or more within the scope of the Act, still further augmentation of the staff would be necessary.

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(iv) The results of prosecution cases, on the whole, have been inequitable. Many more cases than should be necessary have had to be instituted, a considerable amount of the work of the inspectors has been stultified and the principles of the Act, to some extent, jeopardised. It is often more effective to rely on the fear of punishment than to demonstrate the weakness of the penal sections by prosecution proceedings in court. Small fines are met with indifference and very often have the reverse from the desired effect. Particularly in the case of illegal employment of labour, the financial gain which accrues at the expense of a small fine, is a direct encouragement to continued deliberate infringement.

In factories, other than jute mills, the number of prosecutions under the various chapters of the Act, viz., Health, Sanitation, Safety, Illegal employment, Submission of returns, etc., have been fairly evenly distributed, but in jute mills it is interesting to note that approximately 94 per cent. of the cases concerned the illegal employment of labour. Out of the total of 270 cases shown in the statement, a total of 253 were on account of labour infractions. One hundred and twenty-six were for the illegal employment of adults, 104 for the illegal employment of children and 23 for default in the maintenance of the Employment Register. The multiple shift system of working which is still in force in about 50 per cent. of jute mills is primarily responsible for the large number of infractions of the employment provisions of the Act. The working hours of these mills spread over a 13½ hours day and with the system of overlapping shifts which readily lends itself to collusion on the part of time-babus, sirdars and the labour itself, it is impossible for either managers or inspectors to check even approximately, the total infractions which daily occur. It is seldom possible for the inspector to take the names of more than a few people discovered working illegally as when it becomes known that he is in the mill, large numbers of children and adults speedily make their exit, or are driven out by the babus and sirdars. Further, in many cases, where illegal employment is evident, the various means resorted to by time-babus and sirdars to confound the inspector, makes it exceedingly difficult and often impossible to obtain evidence sufficient to support a prosecution.

Due to the large number of prosecutions now being instituted, managers and their lawyers have gained considerable experience in taking advantage of any little technical defect in the law and it is now customary to engage an experienced lawyer to conduct the proceedings on behalf of the Crown. A few cases have been unduly protracted and the fines insufficient to cover the expense incurred by Government. Particulars and comments on typical cases are given in recent Annual Reports on the administration of the Act.

Speaking generally, adequate fines when imposed, together with the natural reluctance of most managers to appear in court in answer to a charge of violation of the Act, have had the effect of obtaining for labour a fair measure of protection, but if the penal sections of the Act are to be really effective and irregularities kept within reasonable limits, fines commensurate with the offence must be imposed in all cases, and shift systems must be subject to some form of Government control.

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APPENDIX C (1) (abridged).

Statement showing the Statistics of Accidents in Bengal during the years 1919–1928.

Year.	Fatal.	Serious.	Minor.	Total.
1919	49	432	657	1,138
1920	71	598	772	1,441
1921	60	534	824	1,418
1922	60	606	943	1,609
1923	76	627	967	1,670
1924	49	731	1,442	2,222
1925	79	909	1,692	2,680
1926	76	1,123	1,811	3,010
1927	66	1,165	2,320	3,551
1928	79	1,204	2,374	3,657

APPENDIX M.

The Indian Factories Act, 1911 (*Act XII of* 1911).

As modified up to 1st June, 1926.

Defects and Proposed Amendments.

1. The Act in essence is an English instrument, English in conception and principles, and has been founded on the main provisions of the equivalent English legislation.

2. In order, therefore, to appreciate the object of the various provisions of the Indian Act, their scope and efficacy as ascertained by experience, it is necessary to analyse the English Act as regards extent of application, and so bring into proper relief the fact that the final form of the latter is the product of evolution which all interests have helped to shape, and that as far as the Act in India is concerned, there is still much to be provided in principle, if and when conditions are found to favour the establishment of such provisions. In brief, therefore, the English Act applies to (*a*) Factories, (*b*) Workshops, and, in general, under the Indian Factories Act (*a*) is covered by Section 2 (3) (*a*) of the Act and (*b*) by Section 2 (3) (*b*). Practically speaking, the English Act differentiates between textile factories and non-textile factories, and as the conditions of employment in the former type from the health point of view of the workers are considered more harmful, the provisions applicable are much more stringent. Under the Indian Factories Act there is no such differentiation; all factories of all industries being treated alike with perhaps the possible exception of factories using lead compounds in their processes, but conditions are such in India that even that extra protection may be considered more theoretical than practical.

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3. In the evolution of the provisions of the English Factories Act, a just distinction has been made between adult males and all other classes of worker. Quite rightly, men are supposed to be able to look after themselves. English industrial history proves that; generally speaking, therefore, the only parts of the Act which apply to them relate to health and safety, cleanliness, fencing of machinery, means of escape in the event of fire, and dangerous trades. Of the other classes of worker, viz., females, young persons and children; women and children receive the protection of the general provisions as to health and safety, together with a great number of special regulations designed for the same end. Their working hours are exactly defined, meal times stipulated and holidays legally provided for, and stringent conditions regarding overtime employment imposed. With children, naturally the same protection is given as to the other classes but their hours are shorter and the health and safety provisions are more stringent. Since the Act of 1920, however, children below the age of 14 years are forbidden to work in factories or workshops altogether. The difficulties of administration of the Indian Factories Act, which is an adaptation of the English Act, can be clearly appreciated when it is observed that the English Act is an outgrowth of the protection given to children in the textile trades, and that, since the first enactment, other industries and classes of worker have come up for protection, all with their special peculiarities and difficulties and each covered by a separate enactment. These various enactments have been consolidated from time to time, but in the consolidation the special protection to the

various industries and classes of worker have been steadfastly maintained. The Indian Factories Act attempts to commence where the English Act ends, by embracing all industries and conditions, social and otherwise, far worse than those obtaining in England at the time of the original enactment. By a series of simply phrased provisions, the Indian Act endeavours to establish practically perfection of conditions of employment at the onset of India's industrial era; the provisions are applicable to all classes of factories and workers in general, with an attempt to accommodate particular classes of workers and processes by inclusion of exemption provisions, with local powers to frame conditions and provisos. The Indian Factories Act has not been evolved. The peculiarities of Indian conditions and labour have not been allowed to make themselves properly felt during the process of law-making and have, therefore, not helped in shaping provisions to which all interests are amenable The Act, foreign in form, has been imposed on workers and establishments not parties to its evolution, and so the present position resolves itself into an attempt at enforcing something in advance of Indian industrial conditions.

4. In the consolidated English Factories Act, all interests have been properly and progressively represented, the conditions which have been imposed are not so rigid as to hinder industrial progress, and accommodation is provided for such further improvements as may be dictated by experience and progress. The provisions are abreast of the times and no further, and have been so framed that they do not presuppose an ultra efficient administration, in advance of the capacity of the administration to supply. They simply record a compromise of what the various interests desire. In India, however, the provisions have been thrust on the workers in their almost finally pruned form, against their will, instead of being wrested from employers progressively in accordance with the workers' own estimate and conception of protection. This has a tremendous bearing on their real necessity. The result is that the principles of the Act have been established in Bengal not so much by enforcement of the letter of the law, but by the wisdom and accommodation of inspectors, and the prosperity of the dominant industries. In fact, in India, the letter of the factory law is its own frustration; its brevity and lack of accommodation cannot withstand the test of the courts. The ensuing proposals, therefore, are based on the idea of greater accommodation to all industries, so that legislation may become truly progressive and may be fostered along lines as natural as the English provisions, and so that protection to workers may be true in fact, relying on the power of the courts, and not so much on the power of inspectors to interpret to what extent the Act can reasonably be enforced.

5. *Chapter I—Definition of "Employed."*—Accidents have been reported to the department occurring in places remote from the factory premises to which the workers belong, or otherwise outside the precincts of the factory. Engineering works and shipbuilding yards, to a large extent, come under this category, and it appears that, as the Act stands, there can be no control over such workers either from the point of view of accident prevention or overwork. Further, such workers appear to be inadmissible for the purpose of computation of the 20 persons' stipulation of Section 2 (3) (*a*) of the Act. This seems to be inequitous, for undoubtedly there is a considerable amount of outside labour of this description needing protection from long hours; hence the Act should be made applicable in certain respects. Obviously the whole Act cannot be applied as a manager has no control and little influence over conditions outside his factory, but the inspector should be in a position to eliminate hazard at the place of work, whether the latter is within the precincts of the factory or without, and the names of such workers should be recorded in a register accessible to the inspector. The same observation applies to workers of a building company engaged in repairing or extending the premises of a factory already registered. Their work at present is not embraced by the term "manufacturing process" of the registered factory, so that those workers receive no protection. The definition of "employed" in Section 2 should be amended, therefore, to embrace the above classes of workers.

6. *Section* 2 (3) (*a*).—*Definition of "Factory"*.—In consequence of the above suggestion, the definition of factory should be amended so as to include concerns specializing in outside work of the above nature, which at present fall short of the 20 persons' stipulation within their own works. This addition might take the form of an extra sub-section 2 (3) (*c*), so that, by an addition to section 53, by which the Governor-General in Council is vested with special powers, only particular portions of the Act may apply to such concerns. At the present moment, wharves, jetties, docks, railway sidings, warehouses, quays and buildings under construction, do not come under the Factories Act, although in such places the most dangerous hazards recorded, *viz.*, falling weights, persons falling, rolling stock, etc., exist. Under the English Factories Act such workmen are given protection, although limited, and it seems necessary, therefore, that similar protection should be given to Indian workers. The present definition of factory, or main definition, restricts application

of protection to workers engaged in manufacturing processes, and hence there should be an additional sub-section which, together with the additional provision mentioned above, would allow certain sections of the Act to be applied to them.

7. *Section* 2 (4) *Definition of* " *Occupier.*"—The term " managing agents " has a special meaning in India, and it is not clear whether it was the intention of the legislature that " managing agents," in the Indian sense, should be rendered liable for offences. It is known that managers have restricted powers of improvement and alteration of conditions within the factory, and that they simply have to carry out the policy and systems of control as arranged and laid down by managing agents. In fact, the manager is liable to become penalized for offences for which he is not responsible, and outside his powers of elimination. In other words, the managing agents usurp the functions of the manager in many ways, and, in particular, wherever enforcement of the provisions of the Act interferes with the exigencies of the business. It should, therefore, be made clear that managing agents may become liable for infractions, without the manager having to jeopardize his position by proving in court due diligence to the full extent of the powers that the agents have conferred upon him. The Act provides that the name of the manager shall be furnished, and in the same manner, it should also provide that the name of the responsible director in the managing agency firm be furnished.

8. *Chapter III.*—*Section* 9.—At present there are four clauses to this section designed with the object of ensuring a pure and suitable atmosphere in factories, but there is one condition which appears to have been entirely overlooked by the framers and which indicates a too strict adherence to European conditions. This is connected with temperature. There is nothing in the Act which enables an inspector to order structural alterations necessary for the reduction of temperature to ensure reasonable working conditions. This lacuna in the Act has been felt by inspectors in administering the health provisions of Chapter III, and it was the subject of comment and suggestions in Mr. Parsons' Report on Humidification in Cotton Mills. It is admitted that a standard of temperature can never be a criterion of comfort; the standard to be followed must embrace the factors of temperature, air movement, and relative humidity. It is recognized also that different factories and different industries must require, by reasons of peculiarities of process, different standards. These standards can only be properly obtained after prolonged investigations by authorities competent to handle such matters, but in the meantime relief to factory workers can be secured by including in the Act a provision empowering the Chief Inspector or Inspector to enforce simple structural alterations, or other simple improvements in factories where the temperature is obviously excessive and remediable by simple means. Such a proposal has for its aim a stricter control over smaller establishments in the structural designing of which, as shown particularly by the low position and material of roofs, the health of workers has not been taken into consideration. The larger and well constructed factories of the principal industries would rarely be affected by these additional powers. Temperature control should be included in an additional clause to section 9 of Chapter III.

9. There is one other matter which has exercised the minds of those responsible for the administration of the Act. Whatever powers have been conferred on Inspectors under this chapter to improve the health and safety of workers, have been frustrated, in the case of smaller factories, by their obvious inability to withstand the expense involved in those improvements. The adequate establishment of such provisions would, in the majority of cases, precipitate failure or liquidation.

It is recognized, of course, that enterprise should have full scope, but it is equally axiomatic in industry that there is mutual obligation between employers and workers, and that the latter should not be compelled to forego the fundamentals of protection as provided in the Act, in the hope of a future benefit in which they will never probably participate. The solution to the problem of the health of workers in small factories, as provided in this chapter, is the application of authority before the granting of licences to build or occupy premises for manufacturing purposes. It is undesirable that the Factories Department should develop into a department of consulting architects, but there should be some provision in the Act which compels intending manufacturers to give consideration to the health requirements of workers, and to the suitability of the site of their concerns, without the administering authority relying on the drastic use of its powers of remedy after establishment. The perpetuation of old godowns and structures is an evil, from the view-point both of workers' welfare and town planning, and the real remedy lies before the factory is started, not after. Although there is no provision in the equivalent acts of European countries compelling such prior consultation, yet prior consultations take place as a matter of course. In India, most of the evils arising from unsuitable structures could be prevented by the inclusion of a provision in municipal acts to the effect that

the site and structure of a factory must conform to the requirements of the Indian Factories Act, or chief inspector of factories, before a license to occupy a site or commence manufacture can be granted.

10. *Chapter IV.—Section* 21 (1) (*a*) (*ii*).—In framing this sub-section it was the intention of the legislature to provide rest time for workers in agreement with the habits of the workers concerned. It was the intention to permit the division of the hour's rest of (1) (*a*) (*i*) into two portions of half hour each, with a limiting period of continuous work between, of five hours, those rests being distributed throughout the working day in the most convenient way to meet the worker's requirements, provided the five hours' continuous working period was not exceeded. As the section stands, however, it appears that both half-hour rests must be given before the seventh hour of work commences. This is wide of the intention of the legislature. The sub-section, therefore, should be amended to restore the original intention, as its present form has given rise to administrative difficulties. The following amended sub-section is therefore suggested :—

"At the request of the employees concerned, periods of rest at intervals not exceeding five hours, of not less than half-hour each, the aggregate of rest each day not being less than at the rate of one hour for every completed six hours of work, rest being an idle period preceded and succeeded by work."

This would maintain the principle that a proportionate amount of rest is required for a proportionate amount of work done.

11. *Section* 21 (1) (*b*).—It is provided in this sub-section that a child may be employed continuously for five and a half hours without harm. A recommendation, is made below, on section 23 of the Act, that the working day of children should be restricted to five hours only. If adopted, sub-section (*b*) will become redundant.

12. *Section* 23 (*b*).—These limits were determined mainly by considerations arising from the conditions of child employment in textile factories, the principal users of child labour. Their conditions of employment have been further influenced by the conditions of employment of parents. The limiting hours of employment of the latter are determined by the restriction on females, so that in actual practice, and in so far as it concerns jute mill employment in Bengal, many children, although protected by a short working day, have to leave their homes at about 4.30 to 5 in the morning in the dark, and return in the evening, about 7.30 to 8 also in the dark, in order to satisfy the employers' requirements of a continuous output from their machinery during the extreme hours prescribed by law. A reduction in the limits to 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. for children would be a step in the proper direction and, by its influence on adult employment, would tend towards the establishment of a shorter day.

13. *Section* 23 (*c*).—This section is closely connected with the hours provisions for females. It is proposed below to reduce the working day for women to 10 hours, and it is considered that children's working hours should be an exact sub-multiple of that figure. Such an arrangement would tend towards the abolition of overlapping and complicated systems of shifts for children. A working day for children of five hours only, therefore, is proposed, and this arrangement can be easily fitted in with a system of compulsory primary education. A longer day, with wide limits of application, tends to encourage a system of overlapping shifts, and, in view of its abuses, the latter cannot easily be associated with an education system on a part-time basis.

14. *Section* 24.—One of the first things which occurs to anyone studying the conditions of female employment in jute mills, is the lack of wholesomely regulated family life outside working hours. It is obvious that, for greater contentment, economy in living, and family association, the meal times for women and children should not be distributed throughout the day, but should take place simultaneously. This principle has been recognized in England, and embodied in the English Factories Act, and a similar provision ought to be applied to India.

15. The need for greater restriction on female employment has also been brought to the fore on account of jute mills employing women to the extreme morning and evening limits permitted by law to women. The present limits, viz., 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., are a breach of article 3 of the Geneva Convention on the night rest of women, and, as in the case of children, many leave their homes about 5 a.m. and do not return until about 7.30 p.m. For these reasons the extreme hours should be reduced to 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Also, the present 11 hours working day for women should be reduced to 10, and a lengthy mid-day rest period should be assured. Eleven hours each day, the present extreme limiting hours, the distributed meal times, and the evils which these three factors can cause when in operation simultaneously, obviously require reviewing.

16. The shorter day and associated restrictions would promote a simultaneous rest of adequate duration for women and children during the hottest part of the day, a condition of industrial employment which is established by law in Great Britain,

where the principle that the system of employment will not interfere with the habits of the workers, is maintained. At the same time the suggested restrictions would have the effect, in an indirect way, of promoting the abolition of the multiple shift system in jute mills; a method of progress which the Labour Commission of 1908 strongly favoured.

17. *Section* 26.—The aim of this section is to protect employees from overwork by requiring certain information to be given to those responsible for the enforcement of the restricted working day. The assumption is that workers in India are not able to look after themselves, thus necessitating a departure from the English Act in which there is no equivalent provision, at any rate, in so far as adult male employees are concerned. The object of the section has been rendered nugatory to a very large extent by the manifold possibilities of exemption under section 30. In other words, the existence of section 30 demonstrates the general futility of section 26. India is not industrialized to the extent that she has a large number of long established businesses which can anticipate, rely on, and arrange for, orders and work with precision, hence flexibility of accommodation in fluctuating markets must, as far as possible, be allowed. The present arrangement of declaration of specified hours with immediate notification of any change in the latter, together with the consequential rest re-arrangements, is not conducive to industrial progress, and, in actual fact, cannot be enforced. Practically any industry may obtain indirect relief from it under section 30. This position has arisen through the failure to treat each industry separately from the point of view of labour protection and according to its own special progress. India has reversed the evolutionary process of labour protection; it has attempted to apply a series of strict conditions to all industries, and has assumed that the conditions of English employment are available to aid their enforcement. Legislation in advance of public opinion can never be effectively administered, and to bring factory law, as it stands, more in line with current events and understanding, section 26, in so far as it applies to adult male workers, should be abolished. There is evidence that workers are now able, to some extent, to look after themselves, and are in a position to defend and retain by collective support, privileges which they have long enjoyed. The general regulation making powers proposed to be conferred on the Governor-General in Council, in a new section, will embrace any necessary application of section 26 to adult males employed in certain arduous trades, or those subject to complicated shift systems. In any such application of that provision, however, to adult workers of any industry, the points of view of all interests should be obtained by means of advisory bodies to the Governor-General, consisting of representatives of all the interests concerned. This innovation will be enlarged upon later in considering the exemption section of the Act. Jute mills, for instance, should have their shifts regulated whenever it is found that the arrangement of the hours of employment promotes abuses of other provisions, and interferes with the general administration of the Act for protected workers. Therefore, the original powers of the Inspector to approve of a system of shifts should be revived, and should either take the shape of a new sub-clause to this section, for general application, or find expression amongst those series of suggested regulations applicable to the jute mill industry. In addition to this, and for general application, there should be a positive declaration against the multiple, overlapping, or relay system of shift working. The toleration of that system has actually negatived the shortened day as envisaged by the Labour Commission of 1908. Indirect control has failed in Bengal in so far as this particular is concerned, and it has also failed apparently in England; which fact evidently induced that country to use more direct methods (see the amendment to the 10 hours Act of 1895).

18. Section 26 should still of course apply to women and children, a condition which is provided also in the English Factories Act.

19. *Section* 27.—The abolition of section 26, as applied to adult males, would give industries flexibility to meet fluctuations of work. It is also proposed to withdraw the daily limit section 28, and this will further remove irksome restrictions. The weekly limit should be reduced to 55 hours; this implies a ten hour day for five days and a half-day on Saturday, a holiday long enjoyed by workers thus becoming indirectly enforced. In that limit, when jute mill conditions are borne in mind, article 3 of the Geneva Convention regarding women and night employment, is preserved indirectly; also there is an indirect encouragement towards a shorter day for adult males, and simultaneous mid-day rest for women and children. Further, the weekly limit provides, automatically, a proportionate compensatory rest for workers who elect to work, or are compelled to work, a shorter week than five and a half days with a longer and more intensive day; a principle which has as far as circumstances permitted, been strictly adhered to in Bengal in framing the conditions respecting exemptions from the present maximum day.

20. *Section* 28.—As indicated above there should be no restriction on the daily employment of adult males. If industries are to become properly established and

consolidated as understood in Europe, they must arrive at that state through the adult workers. Protection cannot be divorced from self-help, and the latter is an associate of skill and education. Apart therefore from the requirements of manufacturers to be able to meet fluctuations in work from day to day, a condition which always arises where industries are not consolidated or are comparatively new, the adult worker also requires full scope to react to changing circumstances and, by experience, to help himself to select, decide and express collectively, the type and extent of control he requires.

21. Without such support no legislative control can be made absolutely effective. Most industries feel the need sometime or other of working their male employees beyond the eleven hours a day, and as Section 30 (2) is too sluggish in action to give the requisite immediate relief and flexibility, the Act should be amended to eliminate Section 28.

22. *Chapter V, Section* 30.—This section is a recognition of the fact that the main provisions of the Act are too stringent or too inelastic for general application, and that different industries have peculiarities which must be legally provided for. In this section an attempt has been made to provide elasticity by cataloguing processes according to their academic merits of continuity, intermittency, etc. This attempt at generalizing, however, in a few clauses has resulted in lack of precision, with the attendant evil that all industries may, by a wide interpretation of the section, institute complete or partial claims for relief from Chapter IV of the Act. The total nullification of the provisions of that chapter is prevented, however, by the fact that any claim must be to the satisfaction of the local Government. In actual fact, sanction or disapproval of a claim rests on the recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Factories, whose work should not be to pronounce on the intricacies of this or that factory or industry, but to carry into effect what the various industries have found they can answer for under present conditions and circumstances. In carrying into effect this section the chief inspector is really being asked to replace by thought and reasoning, what has been the product of many minds in Great Britain over generations of industrial controversy, resulting in separate enactments, subsequently consolidated. To repeat the introductory paragraph to this note, the English Act is an evolutionary effort by which all industries are completely or partially protected according to their need for and amenability to protection. In all such Acts, however, the difficulties of industries have been properly and effectively presented. Failing separate enactments, therefore, on all matters which might be the subject of claims for relief under Section 30, arrangements should be made so that the views of all interests may be brought to bear on all exemption claims. This obviously is an All-India matter, and should be brought into effect by powers conferred on the Governor-General in Council to make regulations appertaining to any industry. The framing of these separate regulations should be the work of bodies representative of the various industries throughout India. Regulations so framed would have a fair chance of being enforced with precision, and would eliminate the chaos of provisos, conditions and interpretations as between province and province.

23. *Section* 32A.—The subject of this section concerns particular industries and special classes of workers in any industry, and should be dealt with specially by regulations. The section, therefore, should be deleted, and be included in the treatment applicable to the subject matter of Section 30.

24. *Chapter VI, Section* 34.—The subject of accidents, their classification and recording, should be dealt with on an All-India basis for the purpose of inter-provincial as well as international comparison. As the Act stands, provinces have powers to make their own arrangements as to notification, recording and classification, so that there can be no reasonable analyses, from an All-India or international viewpoint, of the totals, severity and causes of accidents, statistics of which are presented annually to the Government of India by all provinces.

25. The position now is that a worker permanently losing the use of a limb or suffering permanent disablement, is classified in the same degree as a worker temporarily disabled to the extent of being absent from duty for more than twenty days and ultimately recovering full capacity for work. Similarly, a factory employing three thousand workers daily throughout the year and sustaining one fatal accident during a year is bracketed as being just as hazardous as a small concern employing twenty-five persons also sustaining one fatal accident during the same period. The same consideration applies to " serious " and " slight " accidents. Further, a factory working eleven hours per day and sustaining a certain number of accidents appears just as dangerous from the point of view of present statistics as another factory with the same number of accidents but working fewer hours per day, week or year. The degree of danger in different industries, factories, trades or occupations, or methods of employment, is not made apparent under the present system of compilation of statistics, so that devices and general measures for accident prevention cannot be

justified statistically. Furthermore, the effect of fencing and the general administration of the Act in accident prevention year after year, are not made evident in present statistics, on account of the nullifying effect of bringing new factories and newly discovered factories on the register.

26. Accidents should be classified according to the recommendations of the Conference of Labour statisticians at Geneva in 1924, viz., (*a*) according to industries, (*b*) according to causes, (*c*) location of injury, (*d*) nature of injury, (*e*) degree of disability, and (*f*) responsibility. " Degree of disability " should be further divided into (1) fatal, and (2) non-fatal, and the latter again into " temporary " and " permanent " disability.

27. " Temporary " disability should be estimated according to an " absence from work " schedule, and " permanent " by a schedule of percentages agreeing with the Workmen's Compensation Act schedules. Accidents thus classified according to " absence from employment," permanent and fatal being weighted in that respect by an arbitrary schedule, should then be reduced to a common basis of time exposure to risk. The two most influencing factors, viz., number of employees and hours of labour, are thus properly included in the latter expression. Accidents so classified would bring into proper relief all the matters outlined above, which are hidden in present statistics. As the result of a conference with the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay, a common classification as to " cause " has already been made, but the adoption of the remaining divisions of the proposed classification must be decided by the Central Government.

28. *Section* 35 (*Register of Workers*).—The difficulty of enforcing the maintenance of this register in jute mills has raised a doubt whether the register as at present prescribed in the rules meets the intention of the legislature. Provincial Governments have interpreted the section as referring to an " attendance register," wherein not only are the workers' names, occupations and specified hours of employment given but also their daily attendance, although the latter item has not been specifically included in the wording of the section. This use of the register of workers has arisen from the daily and weekly restrictions on hours of employment in Chapter IV of the Act ; it was intended to be an instrument to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of that chapter. Apart from jute mills, the establishment of those provisions has given little anxiety where the rest intervals, working day, and limits are general throughout the factory, and applicable to all workers. As a matter of fact, in the latter case, the register in its extended form is redundant. The criterion of the form of register, and what it shall disclose, has been determined by the difficulties of the worst form of employment experienced, viz., jute mill employment. When the type of register for that class of industry was first considered, one of the first essentials put forward by the Factories Department was that there should be provided in the register columns showing the " entry " and " departure " of each person each day, to enable an inspector to check the actual hours worked by every employee against the prescribed hours of employment. This, however, was not accepted, and in consequence a type of register satisfying the views of employers but futile and inadequate for ensuring establishment of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act was adopted. The difficulties of enforcement of such a register have arisen in applying the Act only to those mills which have adopted the multiple, overlapping or " relay " system of working. In such concerns the law permits a thirteen and a-half hour's working day for the machinery, and this, with a prescribed maximum day of eleven hours for adults and six for children, together with the enforced rest periods interspersed, and batches of adult males having different prescribed hours, and batches of adult females also having different prescribed hours, has produced chaos in so far as Chapter IV of the Act is concerned. No manager and no inspector with all the goodwill in the world and the maximum of co-operation can guarantee the provisions of the above chapter being established under such conditions. With the reliance on a defective instrument—the register—the position becomes more impossible. Experience has proved that an attendance register in any form is absolutely useless for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the employment provisions of the Act in jute mills. There is no doubt that the only way in which the working hours of jute mill employees can be controlled is by controlling the working hours of the mill. If the multiple or overlapping system of shifts is declared illegal or made impossible, either directly or indirectly, by either of the proposed methods suggested previously, the register difficulty for the majority of workers will be eliminated. It is obvious from the construction of Section 35 that a " register of workers," and not an " attendance register " was contemplated, as the legislature anticipated that the restriction on the employment of women and children would have the indirect effect of establishing a standard and simultaneous working day for all adult jute mill workers. Experience, however, has shown that it has not been effective in preventing a continuance of the complicated " relay " system in which machinery is maintained in continuous operation for the whole thirteen and a-half hours.

29. In the framing of Section 35 the equivalent section of the English Act has been a guide, but the English General Register for the latter only requires the following :—

Part 1.—(*a*) Name of occupier ; (*b*) Address ; (*c*) Nature of work ; (*d*) Special exceptions ; (*e*) Other miscellaneous matters.

Part 2.—(*a*) Names and addresses of young persons ; (*b*) Certificates of fitness.

Part 3.—(*a*) Particulars of accidents.

Part 4.—(*a*) Particulars of poisoning or disease.

Part 5.—(*a*) Particulars of limewashing of factory, etc.

Part 6.—(*a*) Particulars of extra employment of women and young persons in a shop, outside their hours of employment in a factory or workshop.

Part 7.—(*a*) Particulars of boilers.

30. Nowhere in the above register is anything in the nature of an attendance register required for adult males, whatever the employment ; there is nothing required for women and young persons wherever their hours of employment are normal, but whenever there is a departure from the normal with respect to the latter two classes as regards hours of employment, then a record of extra time is required. The principle is that whenever there is a departure from normal employment, a kind of attendance record is required, but even then only when the conditions of employment are reasonable and amenable to control, for under English conditions the control of adult males is not undertaken, the " relay " system has been made illegal by Act of Parliament by the simultaneous meal-time for women and children and the enforced adoption of the split-set system for the latter class.

31. In general, every factory should be made to maintain a register of workers as laid down in Section 35 of the Act and containing the following particulars, i.e., the original intention of the legislature :—(*a*) Names of all workers employed, with separate parts for men, women and children. (*b*) A declaration of the normal hours of employment for each of the above classes. (*c*) The occupation of each of the above classes.

There should, however, be a proviso to the section granting powers to the Governor General in Council to exempt a manager from maintaining such a register with respect to any factory or class of worker. Such exemptions might be considered at the time of framing regulations for different industries.

32. Further, wherever there is a departure from the normal working hours of any person in any industry or class of work, the manager should be made to maintain an overtime register in which any departure from the normal hours worked is recorded. This arrangement would serve as a check on the weekly limit of 55 hours which has been suggested, at the same time giving the benefit of elasticity accruing from an unlimited working day. The above remarks assume an effective abolition of the " relay " or overlapping system of shifts in jute mills.

33. *Chapter VII, Section* 37.—The proposed regulation making powers of the Governor-General in Council applicable to separate industries will have some effect on the rule-making powers of the local government since all industries throughout India will be treated alike with respect to certain matters. It is possible, therefore, that certain clauses in this section will become wholly or in part redundant.

34. *Chapter VIII, Section* 41.—The disparity of fines imposed by various magistrates for the same offences almost under identical conditions suggests that this section of the Act should include not only a maximum fine but a minimum. The difficulties of this proposal are admitted, for an effective minimum fine for a jute mill or large engineering concern would undoubtedly be too severe for a small concern committing the same offence.

35. *Section* 42.—This section is practically a reproduction of Section 141 of the English Factories Act, and has for its object the protection of the employer from culpability when some other person is responsible for the offence. English conditions of employment are so well understood by the court, and the workers as a class are so powerful, that such a provision can be applied with little doubt that the guilty person will be punished. In applying the same provision to India, however, the above conditions do not exist. The court procedure is English in form, the provision is English in principle, but the sustaining conditions mentioned above are absent. Employer and worker are not equal in the court, and when the protection of Section 42 is sought by the former the worker is in actual fact defenceless. Employers do not require any protection of this nature at present, and as interpreted under present conditions, it may be used to defeat the ends of justice. More rigidity in enforcing the provisions of the Act in future will no doubt lead employers to seek shelter to a greater extent under this section. The procedure of the court in proceedings in which the above section is involved resolves itself to this. The manager accuses the

assistant, the assistant the clerk, the clerk the sirdar, and the latter, not having anyone on whom to shift responsibility and depending on the manager for his livelihood, must needs plead guilty. Once the manager, therefore, has sought protection under this section, the trial becomes a farce, for the subordinate cannot oppose his master for fear of losing his job. The practice of applying Section 42 under present conditions is, therefore, inequitable, if not vicious, and should be abolished. It is a provision English in sentiment, and in advance of local conditions. The magistrate and the inspector are powerless to maintain equality of treatment within the court as between manager and subordinate, and powerless to convict the former within the limits of court procedure when the offence is the result of a system of employment only modifiable or alterable by the manager or his employer. The cause is too remote from the actual facts of infraction to be admissible as evidence against the manager or employer. The section should be abolished or modified so as to preserve the weight of the inspector's evidence as to where the guilt lies, i.e., evidence which is the result of very careful investigation of the infraction and conditions associated with it. As the matter now stands, once the offence has been proved, there is bound to be a conviction against the subordinate whether he is guilty or not. In other words there is a great possibility of miscarriage of justice, on the side of conviction, but if the section is abolished and reliance placed on the opinion of the inspector as regards the guilty person, the miscarriage of justice, if any, will be on the side of acquittal, which is a much more desirable result when evidence is considered insufficient or circumstances misunderstood by the court.

36. The following is a summary of the recommendations now proposed, all of which have been commented on above :—

(1) Widening of the definitions of " factory " and " employed " to give limited protection to workers at present outside the scope of the Act, and a declaration of the meaning of " managing agent."

(2) Granting of additional powers to the inspector to reduce excessive temperature, and the inclusion in municipal legislation of a provision to compel intending factory owners to observe certain structural rules.

(3) Amendment of the Act to restore the original intention of the legislature as regards the divided hours of rest for workers.

(4) A reduction in the working day for women and children together with an extra provision enforcing a simultaneous rest period for those two classes of workers.

(5) A reduction in the total weekly hours for adults.

(6) Abolition of the restricted working day for adult males.

(7) Restoration of the powers of the inspector to approve of a system of shifts, or a declaration in the Act that the multiple or overlapping shift-system of working is illegal.

(8) Substitution of the exemption section of the Act by powers conferred on the Governor-General in Council to frame sets of regulations to suit the conditions, processes and requirements of different industries or groups of industries or classes of workers.

(9) A declaration of the meaning of register of workers and what it shall contain when applied to (*a*) Factories generally ; (*b*) Textile factories if item (7) above is not included in the Act ; (*c*) Workers when employed beyond normal working hours.

(10) Withdrawal of the power of the manager to transfer guilt to a subordinate .

37. The above recommendations, if adopted, will have some effect on the remaining sections of the Act not commented upon, perhaps annulling some and necessitating modification of others. Proposal (8) particularly will have the effect of centralizing matters hitherto dealt with provincially in the rules, or covered by exemption notifications issued by local governments.

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CAPTAIN W. O'CONNOR, I.M.D., SENIOR CERTIFYING SURGEON OF FACTORIES, BARRACKPORE DISTRICT.

I.—Recruitment.

7. *Unemployment.*—(ii) (*a*) Although children in the particular work for which they are employed in jute mills, are admitted to be 25 per cent. more efficient than adults, in spite of this a number of mills have discharged all their children, and employ only adult labour, much to the detriment of the working class. The underlying reason undoubtedly, is to avoid the trouble associated with the employment of children and the risk of prosecution if any are found illegally employed. This is all very well,

but if children are not employed by mills till they attain adult age it means an extra burden on their parents to feed and clothe them, which they cannot afford to do, and the natural result will probably be that very soon parents will demand extra wages and labour in general is likely to become discontented and cause trouble, and hence it is an important duty of employers of labour and all those in connection with labour to help in every possible way to keep them contented and happy and thus encourage recruitment and smooth working in our large industrial concerns in India.

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(*c*) Match factories also have considerably reduced the number of children employees owing to the introduction of new machinery in the match industry.

III.—Housing.

16. (i) Most of the large jute and cotton mills provide housing for their employees, other smaller factories provide no accommodation of any kind, principally as they cannot afford to do so, a few who desire to provide accommodation cannot acquire land adjoining their factories for the purpose.

18. (ii and iii) The accommodation provided for workmen by the large jute and cotton mills from health point of view is very good. The lines are sanitary, rooms freely ventilated, lighting, conservancy, and plenty of water for drinking and ablution purposes is provided, overcrowding of rooms is strictly prohibited.

19. Workers gladly accept all available accommodation in company coolie lines.

22. The morality of workers living in company coolie lines is much better than those living in bazaars and bustees, from force of circumstances, but worse than those in their own country villages; the reason for this is in coolie lines social ties and rigidity of customs is not observed.

IV.—Health.

23. (v) There is an improvement in the physique of children, but at the same time it is unlikely that there will be any marked difference until parents are educated in and practise domestic hygiene and dietary, children are trained in and take part in sports and athletics, and the law in respect of the employment of children is amended in such a manner that the proper enforcement of the six hours per day limit is possible.

(viii) Comparing the health of children in their home village and those living in company coolie lines I have noticed that Madrassi and Bilaspuri children when they first arrive to take up employment, are usually emaciated and of poor physique, but within a short time they improve in general health. On the other hand up-country Muhammadan and Hindu children are healthier on first arrival, but, due principally to climatic conditions in Bengal, their general health and physique often deteriorates.

Comparing the health of children living in company coolie lines of the large jute and cotton mills, and those living in bazaars and bustees, from force of circumstances, the latter are a poorer lot as regards health, physique and stamina, as they live in congested and badly ventilated rooms, and are exposed to the dangers of epidemics of all kinds, whereas the former undoubtedly keep better health and improve generally because they are accommodated in sanitary lines with freely ventilated rooms and have plenty of water for drinking and ablution purposes, and the advantages of preventive measures such as vaccination and other prophylactic inoculations to protect them from epidemic diseases.

24. (i) All jute and cotton mills and a few smaller factories employ qualified doctors for the grant of general medical certificates as required by Section 23 of the Indian Factories Act, and for the care and treatment of their workmen.

(iv) At present there are no qualified lady doctors, trained midwives or dais, to attend to the medical requirements of women employees. They are in my opinion very necessary, and I strongly recommend that in areas where there are a large number of jute and cotton mills grouped together, the mills might be persuaded to appoint lady doctors as lady health visitors, and midwives and dais in proportion to the requirements of the areas. In the event of their refusal, municipalities or district boards might be asked to appoint them, and I feel confident that the mills would contribute liberally towards their salary.

25. (i) Most of the large jute and cotton mills provide good dispensaries fully equipped and liberally supplied with drugs for free treatment of their employees, who also have the advantages and facilities for preventive treatment such as vaccination and other prophylactic inoculations to protect them from epidemic diseases. These dispensaries being in charge of qualified doctors, they take advantage of every opportunity of advising workmen medically. The advice given by mill doctors of

several mills has had the beneficial effect, where previously there was not only apathy and indifference but hostility to anti-cholera and other protective inoculations, there is now in many cases a demand for this protection.

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(ii) Women as a rule do not consult mill doctors except for very trivial complaints, and cannot be persuaded to do so. In mills where there is a baby clinic in charge of a qualified midwife, women seek advice and treatment for other than ante-natal and post-natal complaints, which cannot be given to them, hence the necessity arises for lady doctors.

26. (i) All the large jute and cotton mills provide septic tank latrines in the mills and coolie lines. In several mills the latrines not being convenient to workers in all departments for urinating purposes, several have put up urinals to prevent pollution of mill grounds and many are contemplating doing the same.

(ii) All jute and cotton mills supply sufficient good drinking water in both mills and coolie lines, some of them also supply drinking water to smaller factories adjoining them. In other factories in Calcutta and the suburbs, drinking water is supplied either by hydrants which draw water from the main Calcutta supply or by tube-wells.

(iii) All jute and cotton mills supply plenty of water in their coolie lines for bathing and washing purposes.

27 (iii) In my opinion young persons between the ages of 15 and 17 years employed in textile factories need official supervision and some degree of protection. The practice at present is that as soon as a half-time worker reaches the age of 15 years reckoned from his general medical certificate he is immediately put on to full-time work, regardless of whether he is physically fit or otherwise to undertake the extra hours of labour. This sudden change from 6 hours to 11 hours per day is a danger to the health of young persons who are not particularly robust.

As this class of persons, as a general rule, is not checked by the factory inspection staff, the evil is gradually on the increase of employing persons who are fairly big but under 15 years of age, as adult workers. I have observed a large number of young persons very obviously unfit for full-time work actually working, but I am unable to prevent it having no power to interfere in matters of this kind. Rule 55 of the Bengal Factories Rules empowers the inspector of factories to have young persons brought before the Certifying Surgeon to establish if he or she is of sufficient age and otherwise physically fit for full-time employment, but in the event of a young person of 15 years of age or over, being found to be physically unfit for full-time employment, the inspector has now no power to prevent such employment. I would therefore, suggest that the rule be amended in such a manner that the inspector would be empowered to have any young person between the ages of 15 and 17 years, regarding whom he is doubtful as to his or her physical fitness, brought before the certifying surgeon for examination, and if found physically unfit for full-time employment, to prohibit full-time employment until passed as fit. Certificates of fitness need not be in the form of the general medical certificate applicable to children. A register of all persons between 15 and 17 years of age could be maintained by the mill, and would be sufficient to meet the case. The mill doctor could examine all young persons of the above ages and if found to be physically fit, enter their names on the register which may be called a "full-time register for young persons," and order them to be produced before the certifying surgeon on his next visit. The certifying surgeon, if he concurs with the opinion of the mill doctor, should sign and date the register after each person's name, but, if he is of an opinion that any one of these persons are unfit, he should note " refused " against the name, assigning a reason for same. Registers of this kind are already in use in a number of jute mills. Managers are enforcing its maintenance as they realize that it is a safeguard against the employment of children as full-time workers.

In other industrial areas, particularly in the match industry, I have observed factories employing a large number of men, women and children of 7 and 8 years of age working unlimited hours. This they are able to do not being a registered factory. They are not registered under the Indian Factories Act as no steam or electric power is used to work the factory. In the interest of health of the labouring class, in general and in fairness to similar factories registered under the Indian Factories Act, I am of an opinion that all factories whether using power or not employing a certain number of persons should be registered in order to bring them under the control of the Factory Inspection Department.

29. (i) and (ii) The health statistics* attached show no indication of any prevalence of industrial diseases among workers living in company coolie lines, beyond textile dermatitis and also give no proof of any marked prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm or other tropical diseases.

31. (i) As far as I am aware there is no organized maternity benefit scheme in my jurisdiction. Kelvin Jute Mill some years ago sanctioned the grant of leave

* Not printed.

with full wages for 2 weeks before and 3 weeks after child-birth, as a maternity benefit, which is still being continued, although it is known to the mill authorities that this privilege in many cases is abused to the extent that women take up employment in an adjoining mill, hence some sort of a check is necessary.

Kankinarrah Jute Mills since January, 1927, have been granting women workers of over 12 months' service leave of absence from their work on full pay for 4 weeks before the birth of their child and for 4 weeks after as a maternity benefit.

According to mill records up to last month, 340 women have received this benefit.

The procedure adopted is as follows :—

Women about to become mothers are sent from their departments to their welfare centre where the lady worker in charge enters their names in a case book and decides the time for them to stop work. They are then given a printed form on which the compulsory bi-weekly attendances are recorded and signed. This form has to be produced before a pay ticket is issued in their favour.

I consider this scheme a good one. As it not only checks women taking up employment in an adjoining mill when on maternity leave and pay, but also affords an opportunity of instructing them in mother craft, sewing, etc., and I recommend its adoption in all mills granting maternity benefits.

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37. Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.— I recommend the grant of a pension or gratuity to deserving workers for old age and premature retirement.

VI.—Education.

40. (i and ii) Owing to apathy and indifference of mill authorities and operatives no progress has been made for the education of factory children employed and not employed.

42. The establishment and gradual spread of education to both adults and children would lead to the working classes being educated to understand the benefits of harder work, thrift, and the dangers of acquiring the habit for alcohol and other intoxicant drugs, *ganja*, *charas* and *bhang*.

48. Most of the smaller factories have no provision for first aid and medical relief. I recommend that all registered factories be compelled by law to maintain a prescribed set of equipment for this purpose, and be required to summon the nearest qualified doctor in the event of a serious accident within the precincts of the factory or in cases of emergency, if the patient cannot immediately be removed to the closest hospital.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81. Since the amendment of the Indian Factories Act in 1922, which raised the minimum age of employment of children from 9 years to 12 years, and reduced the working day from 7 hours to 6 hours, the general health of child operatives has definitely improved; the improvement would probably have been better if the daily limit of 6 hours had been strictly observed.

84. Regarding the certification of children, my experience is that a large number obtain three or more general medical certificates. As stated under (85), false names and particulars are given, and therefore the grant of additional certificates cannot be avoided. A medical certificate is actually the property of the child to whom it is granted, but the present practice is that all certificates are retained by the mill authorities, the reason being that if a child leaves the mill and returns again at a later date there is no necessity for re-certification. Certificates are filed in mill dispensaries for easy reference. On leaving a mill children never ask for their medical certificates because (1) it is not the practice of mill authorities to hand over certificates; (2) children are not aware that it is their own property, and that they can demand it; (3) they can easily procure a fresh one in the mill to which they are going. It is quite usual, therefore, for a child to have a certificate in each of a number of mills in a district. The principal reason why children migrate from mill to mill is, that they are forcibly turned out by sirdars for pecuniary gain. This is done systematically. Sirdars arrange among themselves for interchange of children, their purpose being to obtain the *baksheesh* which each child must pay to the sirdars before employment is obtained. It is practically impossible to stop this abuse as children, for fear of being beaten, will not and cannot be forced to make complaints to mill managers of the ways in which they are victimised. In my opinion, the only way to stop re-certification, migration from mill to mill, and the general exploitation of child labour by time-babus and sirdars, is for children to be allowed to retain their certificates in their possession and for the various firms to offer inducements to long service. If children carried their certificates while at work, suspended round the neck in a tin receptacle provided by

the mill, instead of being retained in the mill dispensary, they could be identified by the factory inspection staff with ease and certainty, and, also, the certificates could be used as a passport for employment in any mill. If by chance a child happens to lose the certificate the certifying surgeon of factories may be empowered to authorise the mill that originally granted the certificate to issue a duplicate. A charge of one rupee could be made for each duplicate certificate, and the fees thus collected credited to the fund which most mills maintain from fines, etc., and which is distributed to workmen in need of pecuniary asistance. It is a fact (although I cannot bring direct evidence to prove my statements) that children have paid as much as Rs. 8 for employment as a " full-time worker " and it is a common practice for a child between the ages of 12 and 13 years to pay Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 for employment as " half-time worker." The charge of Re. 1, therefore, for the replacement of a lost certificate, could not be considered an injustice or a hardship; its one purpose would be to train children to be careful of their certificates.

The following inducements to long service may be worthy of consideration :— (i) The payment of an increment on wages after each year's continuous service—the increment might take the form of a bonus of 3 annas per week after one year and 6 annas per week after two years. Increased expenditure to a company on this account would probably work out at from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 per week per 100 children employed. There would be no need for mills to maintain separate records for this purpose ; the medical certificate shows the original date of employment : in the case of a child leaving one mill to take up employment in another all that is necessary is for the mill to which he goes to enter on the reverse of the certificate the name of the mill and the date the child started work. (2) The introduction of a provident fund in respect of which a deduction of, say, one anna per rupee could be made from wages, and interest paid under Provident Fund Rules. (iii) The grant of a fixed period of leave every year on full or half wages.

I next desire to draw attention to rule 47 of the Bengal Factories Rules. This rule requires that the certifying surgeons shall forward to the inspector of factories the names, certificate numbers, and a notice of the action taken in respect of all children granted provisional certificates since his previous visit who are not produced at the time of his visit. My experience is that this rule serves no purpose. A child whose certificate is cancelled for not being produced can easily be re-certified under another name, and as detection by an Inspector of Factories is impossible, I recommend that the rule be deleted.

In place of the above rule I suggest the introduction of a rule to provide for the maintenance of a register of children rejected as under age and children, provisionally certified by the mill doctor but not produced before the certifying surgeon. I consider that a register of this nature would be very useful as, from the percentage of children rejected or not produced, it would give the inspector of factories a fair idea whether the provisions of the Act were being observed or otherwise.

85. *Double employment of Children* (i.e., *in more than one establishment on one day*).—The system of shifts in multiple-shift mills offer every opportunity for employment beyond legal limits and in some mills children are actually working as many as 11 and 12 hours per day. In single-shift mills, where two or more are adjoining, children have the opportunity of working the morning shift in one mill and the afternoon shift in another. Generally speaking, it may be stated that in my opinion approximately 25 per cent. of the children employed in jute mills work longer hours than the law permits, thereby affecting and jeopardizing their general health and physique.

Detection of double employment, without an informant, is exceedingly difficult as children give false names and particulars to obtain more than one medical certificate. Even if cases are detected prosecution would be futile as it is practically impossible to prove the consent or connivance of anyone concerned as it is a common practice for parents to disown their children, and children their parents, if they have the slightest suspicion that trouble may arise from the admission. Also sirdars and babus often boldly state that, so far as they are aware, the children serving under them do not work in the mill on another shift on the same day or in an adjoining mill on the same day.

The only solution to the problem appears to be the provision of elementary schools within the lines for half-time workers. Attendance to be compulsory and the hours of attendance to be not more than two hours and so arranged that it would not be possible for any child to work on two different shifts in the one mill or in two different mills on the same day. To ensure regular attendance of children at school, a school attendance register is necessary which must be correctly and regularly maintained and against each child's name, the medical certificate number and the number in mill attendance roll must be shown to facilitate check. It is advisable for this school attendance register to be checked at least once a week by the mill

manager and signed by him with the remark " Checked with mill attendance roll and found correct." If a child is found by the manager to be present on any one day on the mill attendance roll but absent on the school register and no reasonable excuse can be given for absence the child to forfeit his day's pay. The school attendance register must be open to check by the factory inspection staff and ruled to be one of their duties. This proposal I think would appeal to both employers and employees as it offers an additional educational training to the children of the industrial classes. If the above proposal does not meet with approval I recommend as an alternative the working hours of children be reduced from 6 hours to 5½ hours to conform to the working hours of single-shift mills, and the numerous shifts in multiple-shift mills be reduced to 4 shifts. I do not wish in any way to make the conditions of employment of children harder than it is at present, for fear of them being thrown out of employment altogether by the large jute and cotton mills, but at the same time I feel in their interest something must be done to check the abuses now prevalent.

88. The single-shift system as compared with double-shift, as far as children are concerned in particular, is undoubtedly better, in point of view of health, as in single-shift mills children are more nervous to work in 2 shifts in the one mill or in an adjoining mill for fear of detection by the factory inspection staff, therefore the greater majority work the authorized legal hours and consequently are in better health.

XVII.—Administration.

139 (iv) Certifying surgeons deal entirely with the certification of children; they naturally know better than anyone else the various ways and means adopted to evade the Factories Act, and often in the performance of their duties, without looking for fault, they have clear evidence of irregular employment of children, but can say or do nothing beyond making a note and reporting to the inspector. The note-taking is spotted by those who could be held responsible for the infringement of the Act and these persons immediately arrange to put their departments in order in such a way that at a later date no charge can be brought against them. This, in my opinion, is not satisfactory. It would be in the interest of the health of child operatives and of the Factory Inspection Department, if whole-time certifying surgeons of factories were given the powers of an inspector in so far as child labour alone is concerned. They would be of very much greater assistance in helping in the stamping out and prevention of irregular employment of children. Irregularities found by certifying surgeons to be reported to the Chief Inspector of Factories, who, if he thinks a prosecution is necessary, will order the inspector of factories of the jurisdiction in which the irregularity was found, to institute prosecution proceedings entirely on their evidence.

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Dr. CHAS. A. BENTLEY, C.I.E., M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. AND H., DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL.

Housing.

Extent to which housing is provided by employers.—In the case of the most important industries of the province, such as coal, tea and the manufacture of jute, respectively, employers provide housing accommodation for a large proportion of their labour. In the case of collieries and tea gardens, practically all workers who reside on the premises are housed. In the case of 53 jute mills, for which data have been collected, about 131,069 operatives are housed in approximately 40,685 dwellings provided by employers.

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Approximately 42·5 per cent. of the working population are provided with dwellings by the employers, three operatives on a rough average being accommodated in each house.

2. *Nature of accommodation provided.*—Most of the houses are in rows of one-roomed back-to-back tenements, each provided with a verandah in which cooking and washing is done. In some cases, the lines are arranged in two storeys. Most of the houses are built of brick with cement flooring and tiled or masonry roofs. In a few cases, corrugated iron roofs are provided and in some sets of lines the floors are " kutcha." In the better lines, the space between the houses is paved with brick-on-edge and pucca drains are usually provided, with in many instances arrangements

for flushing. In addition to the doorways opening into the verandahs, window spaces are often provided but the occupants generally close them up. Roof ventilation may be seen in some types of houses but the back-to-back type of tenement does not permit of arrangements for through ventilation. Artificial lighting of the compounds is generally the rule. The statement below gives some particulars of the floor space of the tenements attached to 31 mills, which mostly varies for single roomed quarters from 64 square feet to 120 square feet with an additional verandah space of from about 30 to 60 square feet. In a few mills some larger houses each consisting of two or more rooms are available.

Statement showing the average floor space in certain mill tenements.

Mills.	Floor space per house.	Floor space per worker.	Area of verandah.	Area of house and verandah.	Average total area available per worker.
	Sq. ft.	Sq. ft.	Sq. ft.	Sq. ft.	Sq. ft.
Orient	108	43	48	156	62
Albion	108	30	60	168	47
Lothian	108	22	48	156	31
Budge-Budge	120	30	84	204	51
Caledonian	108	36	48	156	52
Baranagore	100	29	45	145	42
Khardah	90	30	—	—	—
Titagarh (1)	75	28	45	120	45
Titagarh (2)	87	36	49	136	57
	79	33	46	125	52
Standard	67	18	—	—	—
Shamnagar	95	31	44	139	45
Alexandria	89	39	—	—	—
	80	35	—	—	—
Reliance	90	20	—	—	—
Nuddea	100	25	45	145	36
	110	28	42	152	38
	100	25	50	150	38
Gourepore	106	27	50	156	39
Lawrence	100	36	—	—	—
Ganges	100	25	—	—	—
New Central	83	42	37	120	60
Bally	77	18	41	138	32
	80	19	43	123	29
	81	19	40	121	28
Hastings	100	39	—	—	—
Wellington	80	29	36	116	41
Champdani	64	49	39	103	79
Gondalpara	90	32	—	—	—
Bansbaria	100	39	45	145	56
	92	35	33	125	48
	90	35	41	131	50
India	102	26	36	138	34
	80	20	35	115	29
National	90	26	—	—	—
	81	23	—	—	—
	100	29	—	—	—
	120	34	—	—	—
Belvedere	83	28	62	145	48
	87	29	62	149	49
Birla	100	22	50	150	36
Megna	80	30	30	110	41
North Union	92	22	29	121	29
Dalhousie	100	29	50	150	43
	83	24	35	118	34
	74	21	38	112	32

3. *Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.*—As already mentioned, mill compounds, including the vicinity of the operatives' tenements, are usually lighted with electric lights. In almost every instance septic tank latrines are provided for all mill workers and also in the lines. Altogether nearly 200 septic tank latrines are now in operation. All septic tank latrines attached to factories are periodically inspected and reported on by an inspector employed under the Director of Public Health for this special purpose. Any defect found in any installation or its method of working, including the condition of the effluent, is duly reported to the Chief Inspector of Factories, who takes necessary action. Comparison of these septic tank latrines with latrines of the hand service type will serve to show the immense sanitary improvement effected by the introduction of the former system into general use in mill compounds. There is no doubt that mill operatives housed by their employers are generally provided with much superior conservancy arrangements than the general population and enjoy greater advantages in this respect than workers in tea gardens and collieries respectively, where latrines are as yet rarely employed. Water-supplies provided by the jute mills in Bengal are also usually of a very high degree of excellence.

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A large proportion of the mills provide for the chlorination as well as the sedimentation and filtration of their water supplies. Of the above mentioned 55 mills, no less than 50 have made special arrangements with the Director of Public Health for the chemical and bacteriological examination of their water supplies at monthly intervals. This arrangement has proved particularly fruitful in securing the efficient working of their installations thus providing that a very large aggregate industrial population is always in the enjoyment of abundant water possessing a high degree of purity. Arrangements are made by the mills for distributing water both for drinking and other domestic purposes throughout their lines by means of stand-pipes at frequent intervals. In the case of many of the mills also the supply of water is not confined to the mill compounds and quarters, but a considerable amount is also provided for the use of the people residing in the adjacent municipality. It will be readily grasped from what has just been stated that far more elaborate arrangements are made by the jute mill industry in Bengal for the supply of pure water for their employees than are as yet generally available for workers in the collieries and tea gardens of the province. Before closing this section relating to conservancy and water supply, I wish to incorporate with my evidence a brief note kindly supplied by Mr. F. C. Griffin, Chief Engineer to the Public Health Department of Bengal, on certain matters with which I have not had time to deal.

NOTE BY Mr. F. C. GRIFFIN, A.M.I.C.E., CHIEF ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, BENGAL.

In Bengal, as in other parts of India, the practice is followed of making grants to local bodies for specific sanitary works as well as loans which, it is believed, are alone given in the United Kingdom. The following are the principal sanitary works of which details will be found below carried on in the industrial areas in the vicinity of Calcutta with or without assistance from Government either by way of grant or loan :—(1) Tittaghar sewerage works ; (2) Bhatpara Improvement Scheme ; (3) Budge-Budge surface drainage ; (4) Naihati water supply ; (5) Raniganj water supply ; (6) Asansol water supply.

(1) *Tittaghar sewerage works.*—The construction of these works was commenced in December, 1922, and was completed in August, 1927. A network of sewers has been laid in the town connecting to a pumping station where the sewage is lifted by centrifugal pumps driven by oil engines and is discharged to a treatment works situated on the east of the railway line. The effluent water of the various septic tanks in the mills is taken into the sewers and crude sewage passes into them through special flushing dumping depots, and through water carriage public latrines. The treatment works consisted at first of settlement tanks and an irrigation area of 40 acres. This method of disposal was, however, found inadequate, and since 1927, a purification plant on the simplex system has been added. There is now no difficulty in disposing of the whole of the sewage.

The cost of the scheme was Rs. 12,25,000 as detailed below, out of which Government contributed Rs. 3,30,000.

	Rs.
Sewers	2,80,000
Pumping station	2,16,000
Surface drain, depots and public latrines ..	98,000
Treatment works	4,00,000
Total including land, etc.	12,25,000

A certain number of private house connections have been made and connected to the sewers. The latter form the main framework to which further branch sewers can be connected and to which more connections from private and public latrines can be made.

An extension scheme is about to be taken up, which includes further sewers, surface drains, and road improvements and an extension of the purification plant. The irrigation area presents a fine opportunity for intensive cultivation and production of fodder crops—an opportunity which up till now has not been fully utilised.

2. *Bhatpara improvement scheme.*—This is a comprehensive scheme estimated at Rs. 22 lakhs, comprising a complete sewerage scheme with purification works, town water supply, new road construction, provision of parks, surface drains, etc. A grant of Rs. 7 lakhs has been promised by Government towards the cost of the scheme.

Up to date, the laying of new water mains on the existing roads only has been carried out, and acquisition of land for new roads, sewage, pumping station and outfall works, etc., is in progress. The construction of sewers will commence before the end of the year.

These sewerage schemes will produce a great improvement in health, in the abolition of hookworm and other diseases. It is expected that, in time, the labourers will get accustomed to the use of public latrines and water closets, and will give up the habit of open air defaecation with a consequent improvement in the sanitary condition of the bastis.

3. *Budge-Budge surface drainage.*—This scheme was carried out in 1925 at a cost of Rs. 52,000 and much improved the surface drainage of the municipal area.

In 1927, a bathing ghat and landing stage was constructed at the north end of the town at a cost of Rs. 11,000.

4. *Naihati water supply.*—A water supply extension scheme was carried out by the municipality under the general supervision of the Public Health Department in 1927–28. The cost was Rs. 1,60,000. A grant of Rs. 37,645 was made towards the cost of the scheme.

II.—Coal Mining Areas.

5. *Raniganj water supply.*—This scheme was completed in 1927, the total cost being Rs. 3,19,000 out of which Government contributed Rs. 1,17,500 in two instalments. Water is pumped from a large filtration well in the Damodar river at the rate of 12,500 gallons per hour through rising main 15,800 ft. long or about 3 miles. It falls into a reservoir of 1,50,000 gallons capacity, built at the highest part of the town, from whence it gravitates through the distribution system to street taps and private house connections. The commencement of supply was followed by a great improvement in the general health of the people.

6. *Asansol water supply.*—This scheme is estimated at Rs. 4,50,000, and construction is in progress. Government have promised a total grant of Rs. 1,50,000 towards the cost of the scheme out of which Rs. 75,000 has already been paid. It is proposed to pay another Rs. 25,000 this year and to provide the balance of Rs. 50,000 in the next year's budget. Water will be pumped from the river Damodar at the rate of 22,000 gallons per hour by pumps driven electrically with current supplied from the works of the Indian Iron and Steel Company. The rising main is 16,803 ft. or 3·18 miles long, and there will be an elevated reservoir and complete distribution system, etc.

III.—Other Areas.

Many other schemes have been carried out by the department in various towns in Bengal to all of which Government has contributed at least one-third of the cost, sometimes more. Among these may be mentioned Suri waterworks, Rs. 2,32,000, Comilla waterworks, Rs. 3,94,500, Midnapore waterworks, Rs. 5,63,900, Faridpur waterworks, Rs. 1,53,500, Krishnagar waterworks, Rs. 4,07,500, Hooghly-Chinsura waterworks, Rs. 6,20,500, Uttarpara waterworks, Rs. 1,91,559, Dacca waterworks extension, Rs. 4,80,000. At Dacca a complete sewerage scheme has been carried out by the department at a cost of Rs. 25 lakhs, the whole of which amount was given by Government.

Legal Powers for the Control of Housing.

In Bengal legal powers controlling housing are provided for in the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884, the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, 1885, and the Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919. The Calcutta Municipal Act gives the following definitions :—

(7) " building " includes a house, outhouse, stable, privy, urinal shed, hut, wall (other than a boundary wall not exceeding 10 feet in height) and any other such structure whether of masonry, bricks, wood, mud, metal or any other material whatsoever, but does not include a *hogla* or other similar kind of temporary shed erected on ceremonial festive occasions ;

(10) " basti " means an area containing land occupied by, or for the purposes of, any collection of huts :—(*a*) standing on a plot of land not less than ten cottahs in area and bearing one number in the assessment book, or (*b*) standing on two or more plots of land which are adjacent to one another and exceed in the aggregate one bigha in area.

(27) " dwelling house " means a masonry building constructed, used or adapted to be used wholly or principally for human habitation.

(32) " habitable room " means a room constructed or adapted for human habitation.

(35) " house gully " means a passage or strip of land constructed, set apart or utilized for the purpose of serving as a drain or of affording access to a privy, urinal, cesspool or other receptacle for filthy or polluted matter to municipal servants or to persons employed in the cleansing thereof or in the removal of such matter therefrom, and includes the air space above such passage or land.

(36) " hut " means any building, no substantial part of which excluding the walls up to a height of eighteen inches above the floor or floor level, is constructed of masonry, steel, iron or other metal.

(37) " inhabited room " means a room in which some person passes the night, or which is used as a living room, and includes a room with respect to which there is a reasonable presumption (until the contrary is shown) that some person passes the night therein or that is used as a living room.

The Bengal Municipal Act gives the following definitions :—

(4) " house " includes any hut, shop, warehouse or building. The Act does not define either a hut or a bustee, but sections 245-248 relate to sanitary measures with regard to blocks of huts.

Chapters XXI (including sections 319 to 334) and XXII (including sections 335 to 362) of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, relate to buildings and bastis respectively. Under section 478 of the Act, powers are given to make by-laws and rules regarding the erection, alterations and addition to buildings. Schedule XVII of the Act contains rules as to buildings including dwelling houses and huts, etc.

Outside Calcutta, Howrah and Darjeeling, the powers vested in local authorities in connection with the regulation and control of buildings and dwellings are as follows : Section 241 of the Bengal Municipal Act gives power to the Municipal Commissioners to make rules regulating the erection of houses. But in clause 4 of this section it is expressly laid down that this section shall not take effect in a municipality until it has been specially extended thereto by the local Government at the request of the Commissioners at a meeting. In municipalities to which Part VI of the Act has been applied every person intending to erect a house, not being a hut, is requested under section 237 to give notice in writing to the Commissioners with a general description of the building he intends to erect and of the provision he intends to make in respect of drainage and latrine accommodation ; and if required to do so by any rule he must also forward a plan and specification of the house, not being a hut, which he intends to erect or re-erect. Section 238, clause (*1*), empowers the Commissioners to take action in case anyone commences building without giving notice or waiting six weeks for sanction : but clause (2) provides that if the Commissioners neglect for six weeks after receipt of a notice to serve any objection " they shall be deemed to have sanctioned the proposed house absolutely."

Section 242 gives power to the Municipal Commissioners to prohibit the letting of a house for occupation if it is unstable or if the drainage or latrine accommodation is defective.

Section 243 imposes the duty of giving one month's notice to the Commissioners by anyone wishing to erect a hut or range or block of huts and the Commissioners may require such huts or sheds to be built in regular lines with a free passage

between for ventilation and scavengering, and with such means of drainage and such number of privies as to them may seem necessary, and at such a level as will admit of such drainage and with a plinth at least 2 feet above the level of the nearest street.

Section 244 empowers the Commissioners to take action in cases where huts are built without due notice, themselves removing the offending huts, if necessary.

Sections 245 to 248 of the Act give special powers for dealing with insanitary blocks of huts and read as follows :—

Section 245.—Whenever the Commissioners at a meeting are satisfied, from inspection, or by report of competent persons, that any existing block of huts within the municipality is, by reason of the manner in which the huts are constructed or crowded together, or of the want of drainage and the impracticability of scavengering, attended with risk of disease to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, they may cause the locality to be inspected by two medical officers, who shall make a report in writing on the sanitary condition of the said block of huts ; and shall specify, if necessary, in the said report, the huts which should be removed, the roads, drains, and sewers which should be constructed, and the low lands which should be filled up with a view to the removal of the said risk of disease.

Section 246.—On receipt of the said report the Commissioners at a meeting may require the owners or occupiers of the huts, or at the option of the Commissioners, the owner of the land on which such huts are built, to carry out and execute within a reasonable time, to be fixed by the Commissioners for such purpose, all or any of the works specified in the aforesaid report or any portion thereof respectively, and if such owner, owners, or occupiers shall fail to comply with such requisition, the Commissioners themselves may execute all or any of such works.

Section 247.—The Commissioners at a meeting may order that any expenses payable in respect of any work done by them in consequence of the failure of the owners or occupiers to execute such work when required to do so under the last preceding section, shall be recovered by instalments from the person liable to pay the same ; or if it should appear to them that the said person is unable by reason of poverty to pay the same, or any portion thereof, to be paid out of the Municipal Fund.

Section 248.—If any of the said huts be pulled down, the Commissioners shall cause the materials of each hut to be sold separately, if such sale can be effected, and the proceeds shall be paid to the owner of the hut, or, if the owner be unknown or the title disputed, shall be held in deposit by the Commissioners until the person interested therein shall obtain the order of a civil court of competent jurisdiction for the payment of the same.

Limited powers for controlling housing are provided under the Local Self-Government Act in sections 116 and 118, and in the Village Self-Government Act in sections 27 and 29, respectively.

Health.

General Health Conditions of Workers:—(i) *Figures of Mortality*. (ii) *Birthrates and Infant Mortality*.—I have provided printed statements giving data for 10 years relating to recorded deathrates, birthrates, infantile mortality and causes of death in (1) the province as a whole ; (2) towns ; (3) rural areas, together with similar figures for the individual districts, in which certain important industries, such as tea gardens, collieries and jute mills are situated. I have given similar data for each of what may be termed the industrial towns of the province. I have submitted graphs showing the deathrate, birthrate, infantile mortality and cholera deathrate of each district for a period of 20 years. These data give some indication of the health conditions of the province which industrial workers to a great extent share with the general population among whom they live.

The figures I give may be used to supplement the similar data relating particularly to the colliery and tea garden areas, respectively, which, I believe, has already been placed before the Royal Commission. Caution must be used, however, in making comparisons between the data for various communities, because the record of vital occurrences is probably nowhere wholly accurate and especially in many municipal areas is subject to gross error owing to the large number of omissions. There is, moreover, considerable variation in the amount of these errors in different places.

Decennial average of recorded Birth and Deathrates.

	Calcutta.	Total towns.	Rural areas.	Province.	Mill towns.	Asansol Mining Settlement.	Duars Tea gardens.
Deathrate ..	33·5	25·6	27·8	27·6	20·6	23·7	28·0
Birthrate ..	18·4	19·1	29·3	28·7	16·9	26·7	40·2
Infantile mortality	318·0	223·0	182·0	193·0	173·0	146·0	96·0
Cholera ..	1·9	1·8	1·6	1·6	2·2	1·3	0·9
Smallpox ..	1·4	0·9	0·5	0·5	0·7	0·1	0·1
Plague ..	0·09	0·02	0·0	0·002	0·01	0·0	0·0
Malaria ..	1·4	2·3	11·6	11·0	2·3	Not available.	—
Enteric ..	0·6	0·3	0·1	0·1	0·2		Not available.
Kala-azar ..	0·5	0·4	0·2	0·2	0·2		0·1
Measles ..	0·2	0·1	0·02	0·03	0·05		Not available.
Total fevers	4·9	7·2	21·2	20·3	7·3	3·1	7·5
Dysentery and Diarrhœa ..	3·3	2·7	0·4	0·5	2·8	1·1	3·5
Phthisis ..	2·3	1·1	0·07	0·1	0·4	Not available.	0·9
Total respiratory diseases	9·9	5·3	0·3	0·6	2·9	4·4	5·3
Injuries ..	0·7	0·5	0·4	0·4	0·3	Not available.	0·2

Methods of Registration of Vital Statistics.—Every district in Bengal (with the exception of Darjeeling) is divided into a number of "registration districts." Each municipality is considered as a separate registration district for the purpose of registering births and deaths occurring within its area. In the rural areas, where the duty of registering vital occurrences has been transferred from the police to the union boards or chaukidari unions, each such union constitutes a district for registration purposes. In other rural areas, each thana or police-station forms a registration district. The railway areas lying outside the municipal towns are similarly constituted into different registration districts according to their respective limits.

Registrars are appointed for each such registration district. In large cities like Calcutta these registrars are whole-time salaried officers. But in most municipalities the work is usually entrusted to a clerk, who gets some allowance for it. In the union boards or chaukidari unions, the president of the union is the registrar; in thanas, it is the officer in charge, while in the railway areas the station masters perform this duty for their respective jurisdictions.

In municipalities it is compulsory under the law on the head of the family to report every occurrence of birth or death in his house within eight days after every such occurrence to the municipal registrar, and failure to do this may involve the defaulter in prosecution and a fine. The details of each reported vital occurrence

are recorded by the registrar in the daily register maintained by him, and after the close of every month, a monthly return of births and deaths is now furnished by all the municipalities to the health officer of the district for incorporation in the latter's district return. In addition to the monthly return, the municipalities having a population of 10,000 and over are required to submit a weekly summary of births and deaths direct to the Public Health Department.

In Union Board areas it is the duty of the village chaukidars to report all births and deaths occurring within their respective beats to the president of the union board, who is the registrar for these areas. For this purpose, each chaukidar is provided with a note book (birth hath chitta and death hath chitta). The registrar enters the details reported by the chaukidars in his daily register and submits a monthly summary for his union within a fixed time to the sub-divisional officer. The sub-divisional officer consolidates all the returns so received, and submits his consolidated return to the district health officer.

In thana areas, where there are no union boards, the vital occurrences are reported by the village chaukidars on the occasion of their periodical visits to the thana officer who enters the information in the daily registers, from which he prepares a monthly return for submission to the health officer of the district.

In railway areas within the municipal limits, procedure is practically the same as in the municipal area proper, except that the station masters act as registrars and furnish a weekly and monthly summary to the chairman of the municipality, who includes the figures in his monthly returns. In the railway areas outside municipal limits, the reporting agency is the chaukidar and the registering agency the station master. The monthly return is submitted to the subdivisional officer.

In the Asansol Mining Settlement and the Duars Tea Gardens, special systems of registration are in operation, and in the latter area a special Act is in force—the Jalpaiguri Labour Act.

Dietary.—I have had some particulars collected in regard to the dietary of 724 workers in jute and cotton mills, 73 office peons and 86 sweepers. The jute mill workers include 211 Bengalis, 114 Hindustanis and 8 Oriyas. The cotton mill workers include 78 Bengalis, 167 Hindustanis, 98 Oriyas and 48 Madrasis. The particulars collected have been summarised in a brief statement giving average figures for the sake of clearness.

Physique of workers.—I have no data in regard to the physique of workers generally.

Diet Survey of Industrial Labour in Bengal.

Average Quantity per head.

Foodstuffs.	Bengalis.		Hindusthanis.		Oriyas.		Madrasis.	Office peons (73). (Hindusthanis).	Corporation sweepers (86). (Hindusthanis).
	Jute mills (211).	Cotton mills (78).	Jute mills (114).	Cotton mills (167).	Jute mills (8).	Cotton mills (98).	Cotton mills (48).		
	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.	Chataks.
Rice	9	9⅜	8	4½	11½	11	11	3	5⅘
Atta	⅛	1⅔	2⅕	3⅕	nil.	nil.	nil.	3⅕	5⅖
Dal	⅔	1⅕	2	1	1½	1	⅜	2⅗	3
Fish	⅖	1⅓	⅕	½	1⅐	1	⅛	nil.	nil.
Meat	1	¼	⅕	1	⅛	⅓	⅛	nil.	nil.
Eggs	nil.	⅛	⅛	nil.	nil.	mil.	⅛	nil.	nil.
Potatoes	1½	1½	nil.	1	2⅓	2	1	⅖	2
Other vegetables	2	2	1⅕	½	2⅕	2½	2	⅖	2⅕
Oil	1½	½	1⅖	½	⅔	½	½	¼	1
Ghee	⅕	20	⅛	⅐	⅛	nil.	⅐	¼	½
Sugar	¼	½	⅐	⅓	⅛	¼	½	1	2
Muri	⅛	1	nil.	nil.	nil.	1	nil.	nil.	nil.
Milk	2	1	⅗	1	1	1	1	½	2⅛
Protein	66 gm. 10 per cent.	82 gm.	76 gm. 10 per cent.	68 gm. 12 per cent.	74 gm. 8 per cent.	68 gm. 8 per cent.	60 gm. 8 per cent.	74 g.m 13 per cent.	111 gm. 12 per cent.
Fat	41 g.m. 14 per cent.	53 gm.	39 gm. 12 per cent.	45 gm. 18 per cent.	55 gm. 13 per cent.	42 gm. 11 per cent.	46 gm. 14 per cent.	29 gm. 11 per cent.	87 gm. 20 per cent.
Carbohydrate	526 gm. 76 per cent.	663 gm.	558 gm. 78 per cent.	401 gm. 70 per cent.	714 gm. 79 per cent.	652 gm. 81 per cent.	595 gm. 78 per cent.	428 gm. 76 per cent.	749 gm. 78 per cent.
Calories	2,752	3,526	2,963	2,340	3,868	3,352	3,111	2,322	4,286*
Average income per head per month (Rs).	9 10 11	12 7 3	11 3 2	21 4 0	12 14 0	22 7 9	17 14 7	Not known.	
Average expenditure on food per head per month (Rs).	7 14 0	8 11 7	8 6 4	9 4 3	9 0 0	10 4 5	9 5 11	Not known.	

* 2 chataks of soaked gram is also taken in the morning.

Effects of disturbance of Sex Ratio in industrial cities.—In industrial towns the disproportion between the sexes is very great as may be seen from the figures quoted below :—

Towns.	Males.	Females.	Proportion of males to 1,000 females.	Proportion of females to 1,000 males.
Calcutta	617,590	290,261	2,128	470
Howrah..	128,472	66,829	1,922	520
Bhatpara	45,723	19,886	2,299	435
Titagarh	36,533	15,918	2,295	436
Serampur	20,210	12,987	1,556	642
Baranagar	19,989	12,095	1,653	605
Budge-Budge	17,883	7,840	2,281	438
Champdani	17,193	7,459	2,305	434
Naihati	15,464	7,822	1,977	506
Bally	15,264	7,945	1,921	520
Rishra-Konnagar	15,030	8,229	1,826	547
Kamarhati	14,965	8,053	1,858	538
Bhadreswar	14,487	7,595	1,907	524
Baidyabati	9,174	7,297	1,257	795
Garulia	9,077	4,019	2,258	443
Kanchrapara	7,182	3,150	2,280	438
Panihati	6,148	4,013	1,532	652
Halisahar	4,654	2,664	1,747	572
Kotrung	4,330	2,516	1,721	581
Bansbaria	4,032	2,350	1,715	583
Khardah	3,112	2,374	1,311	763

The most obvious effect of this disturbance of the sex ratio is the abnormally low birthrate of industrial towns. But the recording of births in the majority of towns, industrial or otherwise, is very much neglected so that the birth rates of the two classes of towns do not show as great a difference as might ordinarily be expected. It might be anticipated that the abnormal proportion of the different sexes in industrial towns would also tend to increase the prevalence of venereal diseases in these areas above the general average but without special investigation on this point, data are not readily available to show whether this is so or not.

Relation between Housing and Mortality.—No exact data are available to show any special relation between housing and mortality in the several industrial areas of Bengal.

Extent of Medical facilities provided : (i) by Employers (ii) Government (iii) other agencies.—In the tea, coal and textile industries, it is customary for employers to provide medical attendance and medicines ; and dispensaries are usually to be found on each tea garden and colliery and attached to each mill where out-patients can secure treatment. Registered Indian medical graduates or licentiates are usually in charge of jute mill and colliery dispensaries. But unregistered practitioners are often employed on individual tea gardens working under the supervision of the European or highly qualified medical officers who hold charge of groups of gardens. Similar arrangements for securing specially skilled medical supervision of groups of mills and collieries are also customary. In recent years excellent hospital accommodation for in-patients is being provided on some Duars tea gardens. In addition to curative treatment, the medical staff of tea gardens and jute mills also usually carry out preventive measures against such epidemic diseases as small-pox and cholera by vaccination, cholera inoculation and disinfection. In some mill areas excellent public health work against malaria is carried on by a special staff engaged for this purpose.

In the Asansol Mining Settlement, the Mines Board of Health employs a considerable staff of sanitary inspectors and medical officers for safeguarding the public health of the colliery area. This staff is paid for by means of a special cess upon the collieries.

Railways, most of which are under State control, all possess their own medical staff, etc. Apart from this, Government does not provide medical facilities. On the other hand, it may be noted that in municipal areas municipal dispensaries exist, and in larger towns there are often hospitals of which many are either Government institutions or are under Government supervision. In a few areas there are excellent mission hospitals and dispensaries also.

IV.—Provision for Women Doctors, trained Midwives or Dais.

As far as I know, women doctors are not employed at present in industrial clinics in Bengal. But there are now a few trained nurses and women health workers to be found in connection with a small minority of jute mills. In the Asansol mining settlement three trained midwives are engaged under the Mines Board of Health. An increasing number of women doctors and trained midwives are now to be found in private practice in the larger towns in Bengal and a few municipalities employ workers of this type. In recent years Government have allotted funds for the establishment of local classes for the training of dais and several hundreds of dais have taken this training and secured certificates. Some of these classes have been held in industrial areas.

Sanitary arrangements at (a) Work Places (b) Home : (i) Latrines.—In the rural areas and smaller towns throughout Bengal all but the wealthiest and most cultured of the population are accustomed to attend calls of nature in the open fields or on patches of waste land screened with undergrowth. The sides of tanks and the banks of rivers also are specially resorted to because of the vicinity of water for ablution purposes. As a result, hookworm and other intestinal parasites are widely prevalent ; and enteric fever, dysentery and especially cholera frequently become widespread and give rise to severe epidemics. Only in the larger towns and a few specially enlightened village communities is any attempt made at conservancy, and sewerage systems are at present conspicuous by their absence, Calcutta, Dacca and Titagarh being the only municipal areas at present provided with a water carriage system of sewage disposal. In these circumstances, it is not surprising to find in colliery and tea garden areas where the workers are living under semi-rural conditions, that the attempt to introduce latrines has so far met with little response. In the industrial towns bordering on the Hooghly, however, great advances have been made in the use of latrines since the introduction of the septic tank latrines, which have become immensely popular with mill workers. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that less than one half of the mill operatives are housed by the employers and the latrine arrangements provided in the bastis and bazaars are of the old fashioned hand service type, are insufficient in number, and rarely worked or maintained efficiently. Thus, it comes about that any open piece of waste land and long stretches of the foreshores of the river Hooghly are always polluted with nightsoil and still remain as a serious menace to the health of the community. Under the bye-laws of many municipalities action can be taken against anyone committing this sort of nuisance, but as yet public opinion in regard to sanitary matters of this sort is not sufficiently aroused to enforce a high degree of community cleanliness, and these bye-laws remain largely a dead letter.

(ii) I have already dealt with the question of water-supply provided by jute mills. In the colliery areas and tea gardens, wells are the principal source of supply, supplemented by tanks in the former area and rivers in the latter. A certain number of tea gardens, however, have been able to secure excellent supplies of pure water from springs in the foot hills. In some cases water-supplies of this sort have been brought by means of pipe-lines for long distances and distributed by means of standpipes in the coolie lines. In other places tube wells have proved successful and are largely made use of. Here and there where tube wells are used as sources of supply, the water is pumped up and distributed through pipes. But, generally speaking, both in collieries and tea gardens, open deep wells are employed, although occasionally a common bucket and rope or chain is provided for raising the water. Both in colliery areas and tea gardens, it is the usual practice to provide for the periodical treatment of wells with permanganate of potash or bleaching powder.

(iii) Where there are no piped water-supplies sufficiently abundant to provide for washing and bathing, tanks and rivers are largely resorted to for these purposes. In fact the use of tanks or streams for bathing and washing is universal in all the riparian mill municipalities as well as in the colliery areas. In tea gardens, the nearest rivers are largely used and where there is none, well water is employed.

1. *Extent and nature of Official Supervision.—Work of Boards of Health in special areas.*—In Bengal there is only one special Board of Health, viz., the Asansol Mines Board of Health. This Board is a special ad hoc authority for the care of the public

health of the colliery area, and I understand a special report on its work has been submitted. The Board employs a chief sanitary officer and a fairly large executive staff—in fact no similar area in Bengal is so well provided with the means for carrying out public health work.

All other parts of the province are under the control from the health point of view of municipalities or district boards. In recent years a large number of Union Boards have also been established in rural areas and given certain powers in respect of local sanitary needs, such as drainage, water-supply, registration of vital occurrences, etc.

Public Health Administration in Bengal.

Provincial administration.—The provincial administration of public health in the Presidency of Bengal consists of two main divisions—central and local. Public health administration in general is included in the portfolio of the Minister-in-charge of Local Self-Government. The Local Self-Government Department controls the provincial Public Health Department and all business relating to general public health administration. The provincial Government is assisted by the Sanitary Board which advises on the various Sanitary Engineering schemes. The local administration of public health is in the hands of local statutory authorities—district boards and municipalities.

Central administration.—The various provincial sanitary departments created in India date from the year 1868, mainly modelled on the sanitary department created in England in consequence of the English Public Health Act of 1858. The Indian Sanitary Commissioners' duties closely resembled those originally prescribed for the Chief Medical Officer of Health of the Local Government Board of England, with this difference, that in Bengal beyond very limited responsibilities given in the rules issued under the Indian Factories Act the Director of Public Health has no statutory powers whatsoever. Statutory provisions for various aspects of public health were made by the Prevention of Inoculation Act (1867), Lodging House Act (1871), Registration of Births and Deaths (1873), Vaccination Act (1880), Municipal Act (1884) and Local Self-Government Act (1885). More recent provisions have been made in the Municipal Sanitary Officers' Act (1914), Village Self-Government Act (1919), Food Adulteration Act (1919) and Sanitary Improvement Act (1920). Under the reforms inaugurated by the Government of India Act (1919), public health was put in the category of transferred subjects and placed in charge of the Minister for Local Self-Government. The powers of Government under the various Acts mentioned above are mostly vested in District Magistrates and Divisional Commissioners.

Sanitary Board.—The provincial Sanitary Board was created in the year 1889 with the Sanitary Commissioner as its first secretary with whom was associated an expert in sanitary engineering science. After several changes in its constitution and function, the Sanitary Board is now under the control of the Minister for Local Self-Government. Its present constitution comprises the Local Self-Government Department Secretary as its President, the Surgeon-General as its Vice-President with four nominated official, and six nominated non-official members. The Director of Public Health and the Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, are joint secretaries in addition to being members.

Local administration.—In the year 1912 the Government of India inaugurated a far-reaching change of policy in regard to sanitary administration in India by the provision of qualified Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors, both for municipal and for rural areas. For this purpose, legislative provision was made by the enactment of the Municipal Sanitary Officers' Act (1914), making it obligatory on selected towns to employ a sanitary staff specifically prescribed by statutory order. For the most part, municipalities receive from the provincial Government half the cost of the health staff employed by them. The sanitation of rural areas was first definitely tackled by the appointment of qualified District Health Officers in the year 1920, followed by the gradual transformation of the vaccination Inspectors into Sanitary Inspectors. Only last year the Government of Bengal shouldered the heavy financial responsibility of providing the whole of rural Bengal with a regular health establishment. Every police-station has been provided with a uniform subordinate staff of an Assistant Health Officer or Sanitary Inspector, a health assistant and two servants. The province contains about 600 rural police-stations and the annual cost of the whole organization will amount to Rs. 12 lakhs. Public health in municipal and rural areas is administered by the respective local authorities (municipalities, district boards, local boards, union boards) in accordance with the provisions of the extant laws and rules. A few towns possess local public health laboratories maintained from local funds.

Health Staffs of Industrial Towns.

Municipalities.	Areas.	Populations.	Incomes.	Health Officers.	Sanitary Inspectors.
	Sq. miles.		Rs.		
Raniganj	1·9	14,536	53,357	Included in Asansol Mining Settlement.	1
Asansol	4·0	26,499	70,487		2
Hooghly-Chinsura ..	6·0	29,938	1,30,994	2nd class	2
Serampur	2·3	33,197	1,95,311	2nd class	2
Bansberia	5·5	6,382	17,405	—	1
Rishra-Konnagar ..	2·3	23,259	51,667	—	1
Uttarpara	1·0	8,657	33,909	—	1
Kotrung	2·0	6,846	15,470	—	—
Baidyabati	3·5	16,471	37,977	—	1
Bhadreswar	2·0	22,081	32,237	—	1
Champdani	2·5	24,652	41,108	—	1
Howrah	9·8	195,301	25,95,042	1st class	4*
Bally	3·1	23,209	73,067	—	1
South Suburban ..	11·9	33,345	78,115	2nd class	1
Tollygunge	6·2	21,637	75,543	—	1
Budge-Budge	3·0	25,723	81,437	—	1
Baranagar	3·5	32,084	1,12,494	2nd class	1
Kamarhati	2·8	23,018	36,006	—	1
North Dum Dum ..	5·7	8,224	7,139	—	—
South Dum Dum ..	4·9	14,030	36,712	—	1
Khardah	1·5	5,486	10,480	—	—
Barrackpur	3·8	22,460	19,770	—	1
North Barrackpur ..	5·3	15,433	26,652	—	1
Panihati	7·9	10,161	19,816	—	1
Titagarh	1·0	52,451	73,522	—	2
Garulia	0·8	13,096	25,520	—	1
Naihati	2·3	23,286	57,213	—	1
Halisahar	5·0	7,318	24,147	—	1
Bhatpara	3·3	65,609	1,00,161	1st class	2
Kanchrapara	3·0	10,332	13,234	—	1

* In addition there are 2 Medical Inspectors, 1 Food Inspector and 3 Midwives.

The above statement gives particulars of the special health staffs employed by the town in industrial areas of Bengal, outside Calcutta. In addition to the above-mentioned towns 13 other towns employ health officers and all but the very small towns employ sanitary inspectors. The Asansol Mines Board of Health employ a chief sanitary officer, 7 sanitary inspectors, several medical men and three passed midwives.

The statement below gives particulars regarding the health staffs of local authorities (district board) in rural areas.

Districts.	Populations.	Areas in square miles.	Incomes.	District Health Officers.	Sanitary Inspectors.
			Rs.		
Burdwan	1,438,926	2,703	8,73,341	1	16
Birkbhum	847,570	1,753	2,68,664	1	14
Bankura	1,019,941	2,625	3,25,363	1	19
Midnapur	2,666,660	5,186	9,72,938	1	33
Hooghly	1,080,142	1,188	3,81,307	1	14
Howrah	997,403	530	3,37,141	1	10
24-Parganas	2,628,205	4,856	9,73,729	1	37
Nadia	1,487,572	2,778	4,55,912	1	25
Murshidabad	1,262,514	2,121	3,72,126	1	20
Jessore	1,722,219	2,904	5,45,561	1	24
Khulna	1,453,034	4,730	4,26,746	1	22
Rajshahi	1,489,675	2,620	5,47,505	1	24
Dinajpur	1,705,353	3,946	4,75,886	1	30
Jalpaiguri	936,269	2,931	4,41,183	1	17
Darjeeling	282,748	1,164	1,84,608	—	—
Rangpur	2,507,854	3,496	6,79,474	1	30
Bogra	1,048,606	1,379	2,70,234	1	12
Pabna	1,389,494	1,678	3,07,233	1	17
Malda	985,665	1,833	3,50,469	1	15
Dacca	3,125,967	2,723	5,81,578	1	32
Mymensingh	4,837,730	6,238	11,46,138	1	51
Faridpur	2,249,858	2,371	4,09,685	1	25
Barkarganj	2,623,756	3,490	7,99,224	1	33
Chittagong	1,611,422	2,497	4,59,374	1	20
Noakhali	1,472,786	1,515	4,22,350	1	14
Tippera	2,743,073	2,560	6,16,056	1	20

Disease.—(i) *Prevalence of industrial diseases.*—There is little or no data available to indicate the prevalence of industrial diseases. Very few investigations have as yet been undertaken into this question, and this sort of work cannot ordinarily be undertaken without special staff. Eight years ago the appointment of an Assistant Director of Public Health specially for work in connection with industrial hygiene was sanctioned, but six months later, owing to financial stringency, the post was retrenched. Had this not occurred much more data regarding the various aspect of industrial hygiene, including industrial diseases would have now been available.

(ii) *Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm and other tropical diseases.*—The detailed statements relating to the principal causes of death in the province generally and in various special areas in particular, give information regarding the prevalence of cholera, malaria and certain other tropical diseases.

Note.—The Government of Bengal publications, "Hookworm Disease: its Cause, Treatment and Prevention" and "Dynamics of Public Health," both by Dr. Chas. A. Bentley, were submitted with the above memorandum.

Sir CHARLES STUART WILLIAMS, Kt., CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PORT OF CALCUTTA.

Report on Dock Labour.

Port of Calcutta.

The questionnaire received is headed "Seamen and Dock Labourers," and this has been interpreted to mean that particulars are required under the various heads mentioned in respect of (1) marine staff employed in the port and port approaches, on the Port Commissioners' vessels and in their docks, (2) their workshop staff, and (3) their unskilled labour force. These three sections of the staff include the greater part of the Port Commissioners' employees who earn their living by some description

of manual labour, but they exclude the staff employed on railway or transportation work. This latter, the Port Commissioners' railway staff, is in most cases paid and treated on the same lines as those of the broad gauge railways in the Calcutta district, and it may be taken as a general principle that the replies received from these railways will cover the Port Commissioners' staff of similar grades.

As regards the three sections of the Port Commissioners' staff regarding which particulars are furnished, they have been divided into two groups, namely, (*a*) seamen and workshop labour, and (*b*) unskilled labour. This arrangement is convenient in itself and follows a more or less definite line of demarcation in that the seamen and workshop staff are skilled, or partially skilled men who have learned a definite trade, while the labour force dealt with under (*b*) is more of the nature of casual labour, not requiring any high degree of skill.

Two memoranda, marked "A.—Seamen and Workshop Labour," and "B.—Unskilled Labour" are attached, in which endeavour has been made to furnish the required particulars under all main heads.

A statement headed "Port of Chittagong—Seamen and Dock Labourers," is also attached giving the information required in respect of the labour condition under the Port Commissioners, Chittagong.

Port of Calcutta.

A.—*Seamen and Workshop Labour.*

I.—Recruitment.

Seamen.—When vacancies occur the serangs, or other headmen, usually bring forward applicants for the post, who in most cases are relatives or friends of the men already in service. The actual appointment is made by the officer in charge. Light vessel crews were formerly engaged through the medium of a shipping broker, but the Port Commissioners have discontinued this practice and now recruit men direct. The Port Commissioners employ about 1,700 men afloat on different vessels and 300 ashore at the docks, or about 2,000 altogether of the seamen type. Workshop labour follows the same principle of direct application and selection, and this appears to be the most satisfactory method that could be employed. The strength of the workshop staff was 3,160 and 3,044 for the months of April and May, 1929, respectively, and the permanent strength may be taken in round figures at 3,000.

II.—Organization of Managing Staff.

In both the Deputy Conservator's Department and the workshops, competent men have every facility for promotion, and the every-day execution of work gives enough scope for practical training, especially as it is carried out under the supervision and guidance of qualified men. Where regulations require a certain qualification in the holder of a post, men without this qualification are, of course, debarred from the promotion. The relations between officers and men are good, and the personal touch accounts largely for the satisfactory manner in which work is performed.

III.—Housing.

The river staff of the Deputy Conservator's Department are all accommodated on board the various craft on which they work. The Dock Master's men have quarters at No. 13 and No. 24 berth, Kidderpore Docks—two large well-built, well-ventilated brick buildings. No rent is charged. It is possible that there are always a few outsiders in the quarters, but there are a serang and a tindal in charge to keep the number within limits. The workshop men do not get quarters but find their own accommodation.

IV.—Health.

The nature of the work and the open-air life keep the Deputy Conservator's staff in good health. The production of a medical certificate does not entitle a man to any more leave than is ordinarily allowed, (viz., above the grade of lascar, one month per year, cumulative to extent of three months; lascars, fourteen days per year, cumulative to extent of forty-two days), so that no records have been kept, but there is every reason to believe that beyond minor ailments the men keep excellent health. The workshop staff are not eligible for leave. The returns show 74 men absent in April, 1929, owing to illness, and 58 in May. Applications from relatives of deceased staff show that 9 of the Deputy Conservator's staff died during the period January to June, 1929, while the corresponding figures for the workshop were 21. Birth-rate and infant mortality cannot be ascertained.

Medical facilities are provided for all the staff. Each vessel carries a stock of medicines, and if a man should get seriously ill down the river every effort is made to place him under qualified medical attention. At the docks the Commissioners' dispensary attends to any cases needing assistance, while the various public hospitals treat those who find it more convenient to attend them. Some of the Dock Master's staff seem to prefer the Kidderpore Municipal Dispensary, but on the whole the dock dispensary is well patronised by all sections of the staff.

V.—Welfare.

Both sections of the staff are eligible for the provident fund (which, as a contributory fund, dates from April, 1924), and the fund seems to be growing in popularity, as many of the Deputy Conservator's staff, who previously held aloof from it, are now anxious to join. Senior ratings in the Deputy Conservator's Department drawing Rs. 45 per month or more are eligible for the Co-operative Credit Society. Workshop staff are debarred from the society but are eligible for the fund after three three years' continuous service.

VII.—Safety.

On board the various vessels the staff are protected from accidents by stringent Board of Trade regulations, which require definite precautions to be taken for the safety of staff. Similarly, the Factories and Electricity Acts look after the safety of workshop labourers. Where these statutory regulations do not apply it is constantly impressed on serangs and others in charge that all necessary precautions must be taken. Departmental enquiries which are held in all serious cases and their consequences also help to make the supervising staff more careful. As a result there were only 44 accident cases at the workshops from February to April, 1929, while the Deputy Conservator's Department report only one case in April, 1928, and two in April, 1929. The causes of accidents are almost invariably carelessness or clumsiness in the handling of tools and gear. First-aid appliances are kept on all the vessels at Tukta Ghat, in the Dock Master's office, and at the workshops, and any further treatment necessary is readily obtainable at the Dock Dispensary or the nearest hospital.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

As remarked in connection with the jetty labour, the Port Commissioners are more generous than the Workmen's Compensation Act. The staff under review are all eligible for injury leave on full pay as well as for compensation in cases of death or permanent disability.

IX.—Hours.

As regards the workshop the number of hours and days worked is watched by the Factories Act. Working hours are limited to a fixed maximum and a man who works on a Sunday must get a day off in lieu within three days of the Sunday. The normal working hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break from noon to 1 p.m., and, except for special urgent work, the labour are not detained on duty after closing time. As reports must be made to the Inspector of Factories, showing the hours that the men are worked, it can be understood that too much cannot be demanded of the labour. Once away from the workshops the men are free and the very fact that they live where they choose renders it almost impossible to call them up out of working hours.

The Deputy Conservator's staff fall roughly into three main sections, (*a*) Dock Master's staff, (*b*) Harbour Master's staff, (*c*) staff working mainly on the lower reaches of the river. The duties and hours of the first two classes were fully reviewed in the beginning of 1928. The position may be summed up by saying that where it was found that the duties to be performed occasionally entailed long spells of arduous work, falling at abnormal hours, the staff were compensated by increases in pay and the grant of special allowances. The third class working down the river are usually on duty from daylight to dark, or on day and night ebb-tides. To this may be added the preliminaries occurring before the commencement of work and the various odd jobs to be done after work stops, while as a set-off men are given time off for meals and sleep as can be arranged. The net result would be about 12 to 14 hours' nominal duty a day for deck crew; engine-room crew work in watches. On Sundays practically half a day's work only is done, and when the vessel is in port the duties are necessarily much easier. As compensation the port approaches' men receive provisions or provision allowance while the dredging staff draw an overtime allowance of 25 per cent. of pay besides. Tides and the special conditions of shipping work make it difficult to regulate the hours of duty and prevent its being continuous.

X.—Women, young adults and children are not employed.

XII.—Wages.

The statements attached (Appendices X and Y)* show in detail the salaries paid to the Deputy Conservator's staff and the workshop labour. In addition, overtime, Sunday and holiday allowances and bhatta allowances are paid as sanctioned by the Commissioners. Wages are more or less standard for each class of worker and variations can always be traced to special conditions attached to a post. It is believed that the rates paid by the Commissioners compare favourably with those of other employers, and this probably accounts for the readiness with which recruits are obtained. Fines are seldom imposed in the Deputy Conservator's department, but when inflicted are sufficient to impress the culprit. Offences are usually grave breaches of discipline or acts that might involve shipping in danger. The workshop staff are seldom fined more than a day's pay and the number of men fined monthly varies between 1 and 2 per cent. of the total strength. The only other deductions from salary are provident fund contributions and the repayment of loans to the Co-operative Credit Society (workshop staff cannot join the society). Fines all return to the staff in the shape of gratuities, mostly paid to the widows and children of deceased staff left with inadequate provision. The workshop staff bills are due for payment on the 7th of the month, and men draw pay for a period from the 22nd of one month to the 21st of the next. Payment of the Deputy Conservator's staff usually commences about the 4th, continuing till about the 16th, and the men are paid for the full previous calendar month. The scale of salaries is sufficient to enable staff to keep out of debt, especially as the cost of living has declined while wages have remained at peak level, and such cases of indebtedness that exist are usually due to special circumstances. Leave is taken by the Deputy Conservator's staff to the full extent allowed by the rules. On an average the staff must go to their homes at least every other year for about two months; senior ratings being allowed more leave, take longer spells at home. Workshop staff are not entitled to leave on pay, being classified as artisans under the Act.

XIII.—Efficiency.

Efficiency has not changed materially during recent years. Some authorities believe that the efficiency of the workshop labourer cannot advance far beyond the present stage, and this will probably be true until primary education at least is universal and free.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The marine labour started a body called the Calcutta Port Trust Marine Workers' Union, which applied for registration in December, 1927, but their application was not followed up and enquiries made do not show that it has been registered up to date. It is understood that membership was considerably reduced after the strike of the harbour and dock men in 1927. No registered union, therefore, exists among the labour, the only registered body being the Calcutta Port Trust Employees' Association, which represents the clerical staff.

XV.—Strikes and Lock-outs.

The Harbour Master's and Dock Master's men went on strike at the end of 1927 for 22 days over grievances which eventually centred round a demand for more pay. Resolution 270 (Appendix Z)* of the 1995th meeting records the full history of the affair, and the terms of settlement were reached after the men had represented their case in full before two senior officers selected by the chairman. Workers have every opportunity to lay their grievances before the administration and disputes are always settled direct without any reference to outside parties. The workshop staff have worked smoothly for the past few years.

. . . . . .

B.—*Unskilled Labour.*

At the outset it may be mentioned that beyond a small fraction of the labour at the coal berths and the coolie labour at the tea warehouse, the labour employed at both the Kidderpore and King George's Docks is contract labour supplied by Messrs. Bird & Co., and is not directly employed by the Port Commissioners. The largest body of coolies directly employed by the Commissioners is the day labour force of "monthly coolies," employed at the Calcutta jetties. The work which these men do is fundamentally the same as that done by the dock labour, but somewhat more difficult, as some imports are more varied in shape, heavier and more awkward than

* Not printed.

most exports. Both groups of labour belong to the same class of men, with the same habits of life and the same characteristics and come from the same areas. The jetty labour therefore offers the most convenient material for investigation, and the substance of this note relates to the Commissioners' coolies employed at the jetty transit sheds and warehouses.

I.—Recruitment.

At present the coolies offer themselves for employment, being generally either men who have worked previously with the Commissioners or men related to, or fellow-villagers of, those already in their service. The deputy jetty superintendent, an officer on pay on Rs. 1,000–50–1,350 per mensem, selects the recruits after personal inspection. It is doubtful whether this method can be improved upon. The number of applicants far exceeds the Commissioners' requirements. The labour strength is fixed at 1,844 posts for the current year, all permanent posts, but the average number of men in employ may be taken at 1,745. Employment agencies would not be an improvement on the present method of direct application and selection, and in practice the men in service are themselves employment agents for relatives or fellow villagers looking for work.

II.—Organization of Managing Staff.

Coolies with intelligence, ambition, and a desire for long service with the Commissioners do actually rise to the higher posts of leading hand, tindal and serang. There is, from the nature of the case, no training beyond the opportunities offered by the practical execution of work; when a man feels himself competent to fill a higher post he usually applies for promotion and the selection for vacancies is made by his superior officers after examination of the candidates. The relations between the labour and the supervising staff are quite good. Altercations are rare and no serious outbreak has occurred for years.

III.—Housing.

The housing accommodation provided for this labour force consists of one type, viz., single-storied blocks with brick walls and corrugated iron roofs. Each block contains 12 rooms, each room measuring 11 ft. by 9 ft., being intended to house three men. As 114 rooms have been allotted to the jetty coolies, accommodation on this scale is provided for 342 men, but the actual number now in occupation is 284. There are no rent charges. Those who do not live in the coolie lines receive a house allowance of Re. 1-8 per mensem for coolies and Rs. 2 per month for serangs, tindals and leading hands. Outsiders sometimes find their way into the quarters, but the line durwans bring these cases to notice and the intruders are evicted without any difficulty.

IV.—Health.

The assistant surgeon, Kidderpore Docks, describes the health of the jetty coolies as "fair." Judged by Calcutta standards there is reason to describe the average health of these men as good; taking the number of leave applications supported by medical certificate, it is found that in September, 1928 (August-September is the fever season) there were 61 and in May, 1929, only 23. Reliable figures of mortality are not available, but the assistant surgeon estimates the number of deaths in the coolie lines among the jetty men as not more than six to eight annually. In 1928, 19 applications for wages due were received from the relatives of deceased coolies and 12 up to the end of June, 1929. Figures of birth-rate and infant mortality cannot be given as the men generally leave their families in their native villages. The Dock Dispensary provides medical aid for the labour staff, and there is also a branch dispensary in the coolie lines for cases that cannot conveniently attend the dock dispensary. The labour take full advantage of the medical facilities provided.

V.—Welfare.

Beyond the arrangements for housing, leave and medical attendance, there is little which can be described under this head. There are coolie sports held once every year with suitable prizes.

VII.—Safety.

A copy of Jetty Order No. 17 of 22nd May, 1923, is attached. The standing orders laid down therein have had the effect of keeping down accidents; thus, in September, 1928, there were only 25 injury leave cases and 13 in May, 1929. The

causes of accidents are mainly the careless handling of awkward or heavy cargo by the coolies themselves and even the constant vigilance of the supervising staff cannot entirely counteract the want of a " safety sense " among the coolies. Men who are injured are sent to the nearest hospital (two of which, viz., the Mayo Hospital in the north and the Sambhu Nath Pandit Hospital in the south receive subscriptions from the Commissioners), or to the Dock Dispensary, and are granted full pay for the period of incapacity. First-aid appliances are kept handly in the assistant superintendent's office.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

Compensation is granted to disabled men. In fact, the Commissioners allow their staff greater concessions than are provided for in the Workmen's Compensation Act, e.g., injury leave is paid at full pay instead of half pay, and in four cases, affecting other sections of the staff, the Commissioners have paid larger compensation under Section 31 (i) (*h*) than they need have done under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Compensation has been paid in the cases of five jetty coolies since the Act was passed.

IX.—Hours.

The labour work to the same hours as the shipping, viz., 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with two intervals of half an hour each at 9 a.m. and 1 p m. It is very seldom that the staff are required to work overtime, and once off duty they are never called up for work till the next day.

Two Sundays a month would about represent the average of Sunday working. Probably the coolie himself would be the first to resent any enforced stoppage on Sundays and holidays, as he would miss the extra allowances paid for work on those days.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

Except in the conservancy section, the Commissioners do not employ women. Young adults and children are also physically unsuitable for cargo work, and are not employed.

XII.—Wages.

The men are monthly rated, but are paid according to the number of days worked. The rates of wages are shown below :—

	1918.	1920.	1921 (current).
Serangs	20	25, 30, 35, 45	29, 34, 40, 51
Tindals	—	20	23, 29
Leading hands	15	20	23
Transit shed porters ..	13	15	18
Warehouse porters ..	12	14	17, 18

Serangs earn overtime at 3 annas an hour, and other classes at 2 annas an hour, while Sunday and holiday allowance is paid at Re. 1-4 a day for serangs, Re. 1 a day for tindals and leading hands, and 12 annas a day for porters (coolies). House allowance is paid at Re. 1-8 a month for porters and Rs. 2 a month for other classes, when men do not care to live in Commissioners' quarters. Wages are normally fixed to cover the cost of living and if the staff find that their wages do not cover expenses they are not slow to represent matters. The increases granted in recent years probably account for the large number of men seeking employment with the Commissioners. Fining is seldom resorted to, and when a fine has to be imposed it seldom exceeds 8 annas. The only other deduction from a man's pay is his contribution to the provident fund, and this only if he elects to join. All fines return to the staff in the shape of gratuities and other benefits. Wages are paid about the middle of a month for the previous calendar month. There are individual cases of indebtedness, but the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month, or 25 per cent. of his income. No bonus or profit-sharing scheme exists, but coolies are eligible to join the contributory provident fund.

The question of leave is a difficult one. A copy of the leave rules for labour (General Order No. 31, dated the 17th November, 1922) is attached. The amount of leave allowed is not sufficient for the average coolie who, when he goes home, seldom returns for a considerable period, and under departmental orders he is struck off if he fails to resume at the end of the term of leave applied for. Leave salary is billed for on a man's return on the due date. About 20 per cent. of the men leave

before rendering a year's service, the home ties or crop operations drawing them back to their villages, and during their service they do not avail themselves of the leave concessions unless they fall ill. Another 20 per cent. work into the second year usually without leave (except on medical certificate) and then go to their villages to stay away for months. Most of the remainder take all leave allowed by the rules.

XIII.—Efficiency.

The coolies are unskilled labour and the level of efficiency remains about the same.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The jetty labour do not seem to have any labour union or organization. They are too nomadic in their habits for any such movement.

XV.—Strikes and Lock-outs.

Strikes are few and far between, and are generally due to one cause, viz., wages and allowances. The last strike, at the end of 1927, lasted 25 days, the men returning to work after being granted certain concessions. Any hardships felt by the staff can be and are readily laid before the authorities, and all disputes are settled directly between the men and their employers.

XVII.—Administration.

The work is constantly under inspection by the senior officers of the department.

Jetty Order No. 17 *of* 22*nd May*, 1923.

Accidents resulting in injuries to coolies are becoming far too frequent at the jetties, and it is felt that these would be reduced to a minimum if more care was exercised by the supervising staff. It is the duty of supercargoes, serangs, and tindals to at all times anxiously watch the working of their men and teach them how to avoid sustaining injuries whilst handling goods. Shed masters and assistant shed masters will please assemble their serangs and tindals and see that the supercargo in charge makes these orders clear to them.

Accident reports should in future give the name of the serang or tindal who was supervising the work.

General Order No. 31 *of* 17*th November*, 1922.

1. *Leave Rules.*—The following leave may be granted to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department (designations noted in Appendix A) from 1st January, 1922, in any calendar year on the understanding that no additional expense is incurred by the appointment of substitutes.

Particulars of Staff.	Leave on Full Pay.	Leave on Half Pay.
Under Rs. 20 per mensem—		
Under one year's service ..	7 days on medical certificate.	Nil.
Over one year's service ..	14 days' casual leave and 7 days on medical certificate.	7 days on medical certificate.
Rs. 20 and over—		
Under one year's service..	7 days on medical certificate.	Nil.
Over one year's service ..	15 days' casual leave and 15 days on medical certificate.	15 days' casual leave and 15 days on medical certificate.

N.B.—(1) Medical certificates should be obtained from the Assistant Surgeon, K. P. Docks (in cases of menial staff working at Kidderpore Docks, labour staff, tea warehouse and jetties) and from the officers-in-charge of public hospitals (in cases of menial staff working in traffic manager's office, jetties, I. V. wharves, Petroleum Wharf and Moyapur Magazine) *or if obtained from private practitioners countersigned by these officers in all cases.*

(2) If not taken casual leave may be allowed to accumulate to the extent of one month on full pay after two years' approved service.

Full pay will be given to the above-mentioned staff injured *whilst on duty* for the period they are under medical treatment subject to the resolution passed by the

Commissioners at their meeting held on 9th March, 1903. Each case should be reported to this office separately, medical certificates in such cases should be obtained from or countersigned by the Commissioners' medical officer.

Grant of Holiday Allowance.—The following holiday allowances are sanctioned in favour of the menial and labour staff in the Traffic Department (designations noted in Appendix B) from 1st January, 1921 :—

Hindus.—Half a day's pay on "Hindu" holidays recognized by the Bengal, Chamber of Commerce.

Muhammadans.—Half a day's pay on "Muhammadan" gazetted holidays.

Port of Chittagong.

Seamen and Dock Labourers.—As the deep-water jetties and sheds at Chittagong are under the administration of the Assam-Bengal Railway Company, the Chittagong Port Trust has no dock labourers in the ordinary meaning of the term in its employ.

For the purposes of the questionnaire the term "dock labourers" is taken as embracing manual workers employed on land which almost wholly consist of the port workshops' staff, who number about 120.

The term "seamen" is taken to apply to all employees engaged afloat, as on dredgers, launches, heave-up boats, etc., and who number about 300.

I.—Recruitment.

As all "seamen" employed by the Port Trust are included in the schedule of permanent staff the number of the establishment is fixed, and very little recruitment is necessary. Such vacancies as arise from time to time are advertised by word of mouth, which method usually produces sufficient applicants from which to select a suitable candidate. The vacancies generally occur in the lower grades, as, if a higher grade appointment becomes vacant promotion is made from amongst the employees and newcomers have to commence duties in the lower grades.

A similar method to above is employed for recruitment of workshops' staff, and as it appears fully to answer the purpose the question of improvement has not been considered.

The workshop employees number about 120, of which only about 12 are on the schedule of permanent staff, the remainder being engaged on daily wages. The number of the daily paid staff, however, remains sensibly constant, though occasionally a sudden access of work may necessitate an extra 20 men being temporarily engaged.

The supply of labour being at all times equal to the small demands of the Port Trust the establishment of employment agencies is not considered necessary as far as the Port Trust is concerned.

II.—Organization of Managing Staff.

It is the aim of the Port Trust to train and promote men on their staff rather than to bring in qualified outsiders and to this end facilities are given to enable suitable men on lower grades to become qualified for promotion. Deck hands in the "Afloat" establishment are able to qualify as seacunnies, serangs, and in some cases first-class inland masters. Coal-trimmers and firemen are able to rise by stages of greasers, tindals, etc., to qualified engine-drivers.

In the workshops selected boys are taken on and given a five years' apprenticeship course, at the satisfactory termination of which they are either retained on the tradesmen's scale of pay or given certificates testifying that they are qualified as tradesmen.

From the workshops' unskilled staff of labourers are recruited the semi-skilled workers such as rivetters, hammermen, etc.

As the total number of the "Afloat" establishment is only about 300, and inspection of work in all its phases regularly maintained by the departmental heads there is a great deal of personal contact with the workers whereby relations are well maintained.

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VII.—Workmen's Compensation.

This has had no application in Port Trust. The Port Commissioners have recently recommended that their "Afloat" establishment be brought within the scope of Workmen's Compensation Act.

Workshop employees come within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

IX.—Hours.

Dredgers.	Launches, etc.	Boats in attendance on shipping, viz., Heave-up and Hawser Boats.	Workshops.
Eight hours per day constitutes normal day's work. Hours worked in excess of this are reckoned as over-time.	200 duty hours per month constitutes the normal working month, hours in excess of this amount being treated as over-time.	Regular hours on duty are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.	46 hours worked per week 8 hours per day for 5 days and 6 hour on Saturdays.
Actual time worked varies from 8–10 hours per day, the average hours worked being about 9 hours per day.	Total working hours per month average about 280, which includes 80 hours overtime.	Practically no overtime work, i.e., work performed outside the above period, is worked.	Approximately 10 hours overtime is worked per week.
Dredging is carried out as tides permit any time during daylight hours.	The working of launches is normally confined to daylight hours.	The heave-up boats, etc., are liable to be called on for duty at any time day or night.	No spread over.
Six days worked per week.	Six days worked per week normally. One or two launches kept under steam during week-ends in case of urgent requisition.	Are liable for service on all days of the week.	Six days per week normally worked. A small proportion of men have to work occasionally on Sundays on urgent repair work.

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The general Port Work, depending as it does on tides, renders the regulation of hours a difficult matter.

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XII.—Wages.

The prevailing rates of wages of permanent staff are given in Appendices I and II to this note.*

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Deductions on account of fines may be taken as negligible.

No other deductions from pay are made, though when the new Provident Fund comes into force, a deduction of one-twelfth will be made from wages from all employees in receipt of Rs. 30 per mensem and over.

Fines are not utilized for any particular purpose, but are returned to the Port Fund.

Wages in all cases are paid monthly. Payment is made during the first week of the month to all except the daily paid staff of the workshops, whose wages for the month are paid on the 15th of the following month.

No information is to hand regarding the amount of indebtedness existing amongst the employees.

A retiring bonus scheme has recently been sanctioned whereby all employees on schedule of permanent staff eligible for the provident fund are entitled after 15 years' serviee to draw half a month's pay for each year of service.

Employees on the schedule of permanent staff who are in receipt of more than Rs. 20 per mensem are eligible for leave on pay in accordance with the Fundamental Rules of Government. Those drawing Rs. 20 per mensem and less can only have leave with pay if arrangements can be made to carry on their work without extra expenditure, i.e., without having to appoint a substitute, otherwise leave without pay granted.

The daily paid staff of the workshops are not paid for any leave they may take.

Leave is freely availed of by the employees.

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* Not printed.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

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2. The Royal Commission has not issued a questionnaire, but instead there has been published a schedule of the subjects falling within the terms of reference which appear to the Commission likely to engage their attention in the course of the enquiry. The schedule has been examined by important representative interests connected with the Chamber, and Memoranda with reference to it have been submitted in respect of the following bodies or interests, namely: The Indian Tea Association, the Indian Jute Mills Association, the Indian Mining Association, Inland Steamers, Ocean Steamers, Gas, Electric Supply and Tramways undertakings, the Engineering Industry, Jute Presses, and Workmen's Compensation. In these circumstances, and as the headings in the schedule issued by the Commission call for information that can more suitably be furnished in respect of individual industries, there is perhaps no necessity for the Chamber to submit a Note to the Commission. As, indeed, the ground has been fully covered by the interests mentioned, it would be superfluous for them to add a Memorandum dealing with the different headings, but it may possibly be of service if the Chamber endeavours to call attention in a very general way to a few important matters relating to labour conditions in this country, and particularly in the province of Bengal. This Note is accordingly submitted by way of a general preface to the detailed memoranda furnished on behalf of specific industries, and endeavours to set out the point of view of the European employer, as represented by the Chamber.

3. The European visiting India for the first time is often surprised on first acquaintance with various aspects in the lives of the people, and there have been many enthusiasts who have set to work to better conditions from the European point of view. In many cases, however, they have found that what seems to the European eye suggestive of poverty and distress is only the result of natural adaptation to the necessities of the climate and the country, and these reformers have realized that, without going gently and taking infinite pains to show full consideration for the habits and customs of many generations, more harm than good may be done by antagonizing where their anxiety is to help.

4. To make a proper comparison between Indian labour and labour in Western countries it is necessary first to make full allowance for the independence of the Indian labourer and the easy conditions under which he insists on working. If he wants to take a day off he takes it. If he wants a holiday he practically insists on getting it in his own time, no matter how inconvenient his absence may be to his employer. In a factory a man may sit down for a rest beside his loom or machine, and no one thinks anything of it, even although the machine has to stop working while he is resting. As compared with the home labourer, who probably lives in the same house and works in the same factory all his life with a week or two's holiday every year, the labourer in this country in many cases lives practically rent free in a house provided for him of a far better quality than people of his class can have in their own villages. He gets free water and light in the urban districts. On the tea gardens he gets free fuel, land to cultivate and time to cultivate it, free doctoring and medicine, and in the case of most enlightened employers the shopkeepers who supply his daily wants in the way of food, etc., are under control to see that they do not profiteer unduly. In the majority of cases the labourer still owns land in his own village which is probably cultivated by other members of his family, and the industrious and thrifty worker can usually afford to take a holiday of a month or so on his own land every year and retire to it in his old age with the knowledge that his savings have purchased him sufficient cattle and land to support him in his closing years.

5. Perhaps the most important feature of Indian labour is that it is primarily agricultural, and industrial only, as it were, by adoption. To a certain extent this may be said of every country in the early stages of its industrial development, and no doubt it is because India is industrially such a young country that the feature is so noticeable here. It is a striking fact that, according to the Government of India's publication, "Large Industrial Establishments in India, 1927," the number of persons employed during that year in such establishments in the whole of India, including Indian States, totalled only 1,680,702 or ·5 per cent. of the total population; and of this number nearly two-thirds was accounted for by cotton mills and factories (including ginning and baling), jute mills, and railway and tramway workshops. These figures refer, as is stated, to industrial establishments and do not include, for example, employees on the railways other than those employed in the workshops, employees on tea plantations other than those employed in the factories, labour employed in the coal mines, and so on, but they are indicative of the small proportion of India's vast population that depends on employment in large industries. In Great Britain the number of persons employed in factories alone amounts to over 5,000,000, out of a total population of less than 50,000,000 persons, that is to say, 10 per cent. And, as has already been stated, unlike the factory worker in England,

those who are employed in industry in this country still remain, whenever they can, primarily agriculturists. They retain their interest in and their connection with the land. They work in industry for the greater portion of the year, but they return regularly to their country.

6. This feature is, of course, more noticeable in some industries than it is in others, and as an industry develops the tendency is, as is natural, for the workers in it to become more and more industrialized. This is the case with the labour in the jute mills of Calcutta and its vicinity, where the development is in the direction of the formation of a community whose main interest is in the industry. On the other hand, the Indian Mining Association explains that apart from the skilled labour employed at the collieries there is little settled labour, and the Association estimates that the miner stays on the collieries on the average for only about eight months out of the twelve; for the rest of the time he is on his land. Labour employed on the tea gardens is different from both jute mill and colliery labour. The work is agricultural in its nature, and the tea garden labourer in most cases has a plot of his own to cultivate. The Indian Tea Association points out that a fairly large percentage of their labour has permanently settled on the tea gardens and more or less lost touch with their country; particularly in Assam, many thousands of labourers have voluntarily settled permanently on Government land, and large areas of the province have been opened out entirely by labourers originally recruited for work on the tea gardens who have now become prosperous yeomen farmers. The point is that industrial labour in India is agricultural in its origin, and subject to the qualification stated at the beginning of this paragraph, to a large extent remains so in its character. It will be noted by the Commission with interest that this condition applies even in the case of Indian seamen, and the memorandum that has been submitted with reference to Ocean Steamer Labour explains that even the lascar remains primarily an agriculturist.

7. It will be of interest also to note, when considering this feature, the particulars which have been given in respect of a number of industries in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, regarding the province of origin of the bulk of the labour force. It is a striking fact that such a large proportion of the labour comes from outside the province of Bengal. In the case of the jute mills, the Indian Jute Mills Association puts the proportion of its labour originating outside Bengal as 83 per cent.; the agent of the Calcutta Tramways Co., Ltd., estimates that considerably less than half his labour comes from Bengal, while only about 25 per cent. belongs to Calcutta and its immediate vicinity. Of the labour employed by the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation only about 17 per cent., the agent estimates, comes from Bengal; and the general manager of the Oriental Gas Co., Ltd., puts the percentage of his labour force originating in Bengal at a little less than 25. These figures afford convincing proof of the statement that industrial labour is essentially agricultural in its origin and character.

8. The Chamber has no doubt that the Royal Commission will keep this important consideration in view, and will give due regard, when examining the conditions in the industrial areas, to the conditions in the areas from which the labour comes. If a right perspective is to be arrived at it is essential, in the opinion of the Chamber, that the matter concerning, for instance, the standard of living in industrial areas should be viewed from the standpoint of the conditions in the workers' own villages rather than from the standpoint of the conditions prevailing in highly industrialized countries. This statement should not be misunderstood. The Chamber is most certainly not suggesting that there is no reason to advance the standard, that conditions in industry are universally perfect. But they do think that possibly comparisons may be made on the wrong level, and that this possibility should be kept in view. To compare a money wage in India with a money wage at home without taking anything else into consideration would be entirely misleading. On the other side of the account, efficiency, as tested by the out-turn per unit, is on a much lower scale, and speaking broadly it is hardly possible that things can be otherwise in view of the climatic conditions; for these must always be a brake on the rapidity with which industries in a tropical country can expect to accommodate themselves to world conditions of output. On the other side of the account, it is the exception for the industrialist's earnings to be limited to a money payment. Whether or no the tea garden labourer can be regarded as an industrialist does not for the moment matter, because he is definitely included in the terms of reference to the Commission; so far as he is concerned, he is invariably supplied with housing accommodation. In the case of jute mills and collieries, a considerable proportion of the employees are similarly furnished with quarters, and the Indian Jute Mills Association explains that the labourer not uncommonly prefers to live in the *bustee* rather than in the sanitary pucca house provided by the mill. Such industries as engineering, gas, electric supply, and tranway undertakings, and similar industries are, so far as Calcutta is concerned, at the other end of the line from the tea industry; being purely city industries, housing accommodation is not provided other than in

exceptional cases. It should be said, too, that there are other additions to money wages besides housing. The Chamber is able to speak mainly with reference to European managed industries, and speaking generally with regard to these it is, as has already been stated, the practice to provide free medical attendance and free medicines, and there is a gradual development in the direction of schemes of welfare work. The Indian Jute Mills Association has explained the endeavours that have been made in this direction by some of the jute mills, and what they have to say shows that progress can be made only gradually.

9. Housing conditions, wages, welfare work, they are all factors in the problem. And that it is a problem has been brought home many a time to employers who have endeavoured to improve the conditions for their employees. The endeavour to persuade the labourer to adopt more hygienic and sanitary systems of living according to western ideas is a continuous one, but it is necessary to proceed slowly, and age-old beliefs and susceptibilities are inclined to be opposed to progress, so that it is frequently found that some new improvement that has been installed at considerable cost for the benefit of the labourer is looked upon by the labourer with distrust and dislike; for the natural conservatism of the Indian worker and his family is not easy to overcome, and is a factor that must be taken into account. One has only to examine the houses provided by up-to-date employers who appreciate the advantage of sufficient access for air and light to see how the labourer, once he gets in possession of the house, prefers to shut out the air and light that have been provided for him. There is an instance of a planter who provided large and airy pucca built houses for his coolies in place of the low thatched houses they had been occupying, and who found that his labour refused to move into these new houses because the height of the roof over their heads provided room for evil spirits to congregate above. And a number of years ago a member of one of the legislative councils had something to say about the conditions in which the miners lived on the collieries, instancing the case of dhowras which did not possess anything in the way of a door. To the suggestion that the colliery owners did not provide the dwellings with doors, another member of the council replied that experience had shown it to be impossible to prevent the labour from using the doors for firewood. The instance is typical. When wages were increased in the collieries some years ago the immediate result was, not that the miner did the same amount of work as before and improved his standard of living, but that he worked shorter periods and was content with the same amount as he had been able to make previously. This is quite a usual experience and employers have not found it easy to meet the attitude, an attitude which confronts them in other directions as well.

10. It is a curious anomaly that, conservative as he is in many ways, the Indian worker is easily impressionable; his conservatism relates to his habits and his prejudices, but he is easily impressed—too frequently imposed on—by those who put themselves forward to lead him. The Chamber has only to point to the disastrous strikes that have been features of recent industrial history in Bombay and in Calcutta. Speaking for the jute mill strike in Calcutta, it is true that the strike was settled on a basis which provided for adjustments of wages, but it is notorious that the strike was largely instigated by, and kept going by, political agitators with no real interest either in the industry or in the welfare of the worker. It may be remarked that most employers would be glad to encourage the formation of registered trade unions controlled by and composed of workers. Unfortunately, so far most of the so-called unions that employers have had to deal with have sprung up at the time of a strike, and are controlled very largely by people other than the workers, whose interests are frequently not those of the labourer. It is a most frequent occurrence to find, when a strike occurs, that the labourers themselves when they can be interrogated are unaware of the reason for which they are supposed to be striking; indeed, a large majority usually express the desire to return to work, but confess that they are afraid to do so because of the threats that have been made as to what will happen to their houses and families while they are away at their employment. And in addition to the political agitator who stirs up labour trouble for his own ends, there is another influence affecting the striker which is peculiar to Bengal, namely, the speculator in the Calcutta jute and gunny markets who will finance strike leaders and even provide the strikers with funds to keep the strike going until he can make his profits out of the market fluctuations caused by the strike. When this aim is achieved he removes his support from the strikers, and is totally indifferent to what then happens to these people. A readiness to listen to the political demagogue or the selfish speculator may be deplored, but it is an unfortunate fact that should not be overlooked. The remedy is, of course, the better education of the worker so that he may be in a fitter position to reason things out for himself and to appreciate when he is being used as a pawn in someone else's game. General experience has shown that there is as yet no very strong desire to benefit from the educational facilities provided by employers, but the process must necessarily be a slow one, and it would be a pity to force the pace unduly.

11. The Chamber's object, in this short note, is to show that the improvement of conditions for the industrial employee—and in this category for the purpose of the Royal Commission the worker on the plantation is included—must be a slow matter, and that it will not be accomplished by the application of any universal panacea. Progress must be not only slow, but it must be regulated and controlled if it is to be on the right lines. There is a noticeable tendency within recent years to endeavour to apply to conditions in India conditions which work well enough in industrially developed countries. The International Labour Conference has done work that it may well be proud of, and that has been of lasting good to India and other countries. But the Conference wisely appreciates that it is necessary to proceed with caution. Conventions and recommendations regarding schemes of sickness insurance—the subject has recently been before the Chamber—are as yet in advance of possible achievement in this country; the time has not yet arrived when the Indian worker would take kindly to an enforced deduction from his pay for the purpose of a benefit, the need for which might never materialize. The instance is noteworthy, because the attitude it reflects is typical of the different point of view from which it is possible to regard such matters in this country as compared, say, with England.

Mr. F. B. MAITLAND AND Mr. G. EUTHYMOPULO.

We have been nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to give to the Royal Commission on Labour in India evidence regarding the jute pressing industry in Calcutta and beg to append certain observations of a general character on the subject in question as well as a series of replies to the questionnaire of the schedule submitted.

As a general rule, press houses are rented out by owners to jute balers who pay the owners a fixed rate per bale exported. This rate covers all rents for godowns in which loose jute may be stored and assorted, and all charges for pressing into bales and export. Press house owners are usually only responsible for the working of the presses and maintain them as well as all godowns in good order and condition.

There are, however, several large balers in Calcutta who work in their own press houses.

Labour employed is practically entirely for the purpose of carrying jute from one point to another except when jute is assorted into qualities and when the actual pressing operation is in hand.

Labour is thus divided into three distinct classes as follows:—(1) The assorters for whom the balers are responsible; (2) The labour who carry from one point to another and for whom press house owners employ a contractor; (3) The labour to run the presses and maintain press house precincts in good order and repair, who are usually on the press house establishment and on fixed monthly wages.

For each class skilled labour is required to carry out the work efficiently.

Our replies to the questionnaire include and refer to all three classes.

Although in the strict sense of the word the major portion of the press house labour should be termed " casual labour " because of the nature of their employment, we have not treated them as such in our replies. The reason for this is that in actual fact they all have permanent steady work if they wish, except for a number who are employed for a period of about three months per annum during rush periods. These are female and unskilled workers and amount to about 10 per cent. of the total employees and the only ones treated as " casual labour."

We have given in our replies what we consider a correct estimate of extent of leave taken by workers to proceed to their homes. It is, however, very difficult to gauge this correctly because the labour come and go as they please although they usually adhere to the dates we have given. There is no question of their obtaining leave from press house owners or contractors.

CONDITION IN CALCUTTA JUTE PRESS HOUSES.

I.—Recruitment.

1. *Origin of Labour*—(i) *Extent of migration.*—About 90 per cent. migrate from Orissa, Behar, and the Punjab.

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of migration.*—The lack of employment at home, attractive wages and amenities obtainable in Calcutta are the main causes.

(iii) *Changes in recent years.*—We do not consider there has been any radical change.

2. *Contact with Villages*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return.*—Labour returns at least once in three years for a period of two to three months.

(ii) Sixty per cent. in the press house 40 per cent. away on leave.

3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—(i) Present labour recruits fresh labour.

(ii) Present method very satisfactory.

(iii) Are considered most undesirable, as present method tends naturally to produce the most suitable types and classes. Employment agencies would entail expense and undoubtedly become a centre of bribery and corruption.

7. *Unemployment.*—There is no unemployment in the usual sense of the word. In our busy season there is always a shortage of labour. In the slack season labour naturally returns to plough and sow fresh crops.

8. *Labour " Turnover."*—(i) Two years before taking leave.

(ii) Ten per cent. of total employees for about three months September–November chiefly women and unskilled men.

(iii) Press houses are at times seriously affected by labour returning to their homes when sowing of crops overlaps the jute season, and also slightly absentees in case of sickness.

There is no loss of wages in the usual sense of the word. (See reply question 7.)

II.—Staff Organization.

10. Jute is imported into the press house godowns by cart, boat or railway wagon in kutcha bales or drums or bundles and assorted according to quality by the balers. The assorted loose jute is then brought to the presses and screwed into pucca bales. These bales are then exported or else taken to the storing godowns and exported later.

Balers, who are actually tenants, are responsible for qualities and quantities of all imports including the labour for this work until assorted and ready to be taken to the press house. Labour for carrying out the import of jute from cart, boat or railway wagon is given out by the balers to a contractor who is paid according to the number of bales handled. The contractor in turn employs sirdars who have their own gangs usually from their own country village or district. The sirdars are paid a fixed sum per day according to the number of men in the gang. A separate sirdar is employed for weighing jute but the same organizations hold. The assorters now take charge of the jute to be assorted in accordance with instructions received from the baler's head-office. The balers have one general manager who gives direct instructions to the workers at the press house. Under him we have several systems of working, the usual one is as follows :—

Each set of godowns has a supervisor, under him are sirdars to each godown and each gang of five to ten men have their own head-man. The head-men are chosen for their skill and experience in classifying qualities of jute. Their work is to carry the jute from storage for assorting into bundles according to quality. A man from each gang is at the press house when his jute is being baled and the jute assorted by his gang is piled in one place near the press. When completed the baler's representative signs the gangman's book confirming the number of bales packed *ex* the jute brought by him. The head gangman is paid according to the number of bales packed.

The press house owners are responsible for the labour to bring the assorted jute from the godowns to the press, pressing into bales, storing and/or exporting by boat or rail.

The labour is given to a contractor who is paid at a fixed rate per bale exported. The same system is adopted in this case as in importing, the men being paid a daily wage by the contractor. The actual working of the presses is carried out by the press house owners' own labour, who are on the establishment and receive a monthly wage.

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13. (i) The relations between the staff, European and Indian, and the rank and file of the workers are harmonious without being intimate.

(iii) We have no works committees and from experience of these committees in similar circumstances we consider they would be a hindrance to the welfare of our labour through consequent agitation and the moral surety of bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head. The hard worker does not trouble his head over committees but only the slackers and agitators who see a possibility of personal gain without work.

(iv) In our opinion the same remarks apply as to the last para.

14. (*a*) *Baler's Labour.*—(i) Piece-work register kept by jasildar and signed regularly by baler's manager at the press house.

(ii) Vouchers are given for work done and cashed at any time from cashier on the spot.

(*b*) *Contractor's Labour.*—(i) A timekeeper with register is responsible to contractor for checking daily attendance.

(ii) Head-man or sirdar advances cash to workers daily or when required and settles with the contractor fortnightly.

(*c*) *Press House Staff.*—(i) Press house establishment attendance register kept by manager.

(ii) Wages paid monthly.

15. This has been fully replied to under paras 10–13. In our opinion the contractors as intermediaries are essential and most beneficial to workers.

Generally.—All replies under the heading " staff organization " only aim at giving a general outline, as conditions may vary in the case of different press houses.

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IX.—Hours.

55. Hours worked per week from 40 to 60; per day (i) normal, 6 to 8; (ii) actual, 8 to 11. The regulations set by the Factory Act are always observed.

56. Five to six days per week, sometimes seven days.

57. In some cases it is appreciated. In piece work it is not.

59. We cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which would curtail present working hours and it is to be hoped that no action is this connection will be taken at the present time.

60. Workmen get one or more hours after working from three to five hours. Never work more than five hours between meals. Holidays given on Sundays when opportunity offers and on all Mohammedan holidays.

61. At times we have to work on Sundays during the busy season, but the workers get one day off at least every fortnight. During the busy months it is necessary at times to work every Sunday to deal with urgent work or business.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average wage Rs. 19 to Rs. 150 per month.

97. Wages increased 60 per cent. since the war due to higher cost of living.

99. No payments made in kind.

100. Seventy-five per cent. of workers are paid through contractors.

101. Wages paid according to skill at fixed rates for the class.

102. Overtime is paid for by the quarter-day or part of the quarter-day: more than $\frac{1}{4}$ but less than $\frac{1}{2}=\frac{1}{2}$ day; more than $\frac{1}{2}$ but less than $\frac{3}{4}=\frac{3}{4}$day, Sunday $1\frac{1}{4}$ days.

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Captain R. LIDDLE, MARINE SUPERINTENDENT, BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

Ocean Steamer Labour.

Recruitment.

The employment bureau for the recruitment of seamen was started in December, 1924, with the intention of abolishing the system of recruitment by brokers, ghat serangs, and ghat butlers, and was the outcome of the many recommendations embodied in the draft convention of the Labour Conference held at Genoa in 1920. Although it was not until December, 1924, that an officer was actually appointed as shipping master and officer in charge, seamens' recruitment bureau, any delay by the Government in making an appointment was due to the difficulty of obtaining the services of an officer with the necessary experience, as it was felt that unless the officer who was appointed was conversant with the conditions existing amongst Indian seamen and also with local conditions generally, more harm than good would be the outcome. The opinion amongst the Indian seafaring community during the first few months after the employment bureau was started was that the Government were about to embark on a scheme that would find employment for all. During 1924, 8,605 persons were granted continuous discharge certificates, with the result than an unnecessary supply of seamen was created. When it was made clear that the employment bureau could not find employment for all, there was a noticeable falling away of applicants for first issue certificates, and I have been given to understand that in 1925 there were only 6,000 new certificates granted.

I think it can be safely estimated that only about 50 per cent. of the men who obtain first issue continuous discharges can hope to find employment. There are probably about 100,000 lascar seamen available, and of these, probably about 50,000 circulate in employment. The employment bureau has since its inception, done much to further the interests of the seamen and the officer in charge of the bureau has worked sympathetically with shipowners, ships' officers, and men, but the organization in India cannot be compared with a similar organization in the United Kingdom. The Indian seaman cannot be viewed in the same light as the European sailor, who is a seaman pure and simple and has no other means of livelihood beyond the sea. The Indian seaman in addition to following the sea for a livelihood, is an agriculturist, and this naturally means that a big proportion periodically leave the sea-ports and go up-country to look after their crops; any figures giving the number of men out of employment must therefore be misleading.

I think any Government organization in India controlling the recruitment and supply of seamen will be faced with great difficulty because it is a proved fact that the village system is the only one which is really acceptable to the men themselves. Amongst the European seamen this does not exist, and crews can be appointed on a roster system, but in India this is almost impossible, and when tried, has proved disastrous from a disciplinary point of view, as the men are not amenable to control by their serangs, unless they come from the same district; and the serangs have truly stated that unless they can bring their own men they cannot guarantee them.

I think the introduction of the employment bureau was a mistake, and it is doubtful to my mind whether it will ever succeed. It is impossible to introduce amongst Eastern seamen the methods adopted in European countries. The men themselves do not want it, and the only interest which pressed for the bureau to be formed was the Indian Seamen's Union, who are not in any way representative of the men. The serangs and tindals are the only people who can get effective crews together, and the serangs alone can bridge the gaps and complete the formation of of a workable crew which a State organization has utterly failed to accomplish. It has been argued by the unions that the brokers and ghat serangs accept bribes and generally exploit the men, but this is not the case, and most of the accusations which have been made have broken down under investigation and proved to be the outcome of a lively imagination on the part of the professional letter writer.

The system which is adopted by the B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd., who employ about 50 per cent of the total crews sailing from Calcutta is as follows :—

When a crew is required for a vessel all serangs (meaning the company's serangs available) out of employment are mustered, and a suitable serang for the particular class of ship is chosen.

In this respect the actual time a man has been out of employment has a distinctive bearing on the choice, but the company are at times forced also to consider the applicant and type of vessel to which he will be appointed, as the mail and passenger steamers must have men in every way suitable for that employment; for the well running of these vessels, besides being a company's affair, is also of very great importance from the point of view of the travelling public. Should any one be in doubt regarding this, they have only to watch the arrival and departure of such a steamer, when it will immediately be obvious to them that any men, otherwise than those specialized in this class of vessel, would mean utter confusion to all concerned.

On the serang being chosen, he is told to bring suitable men to the office, where the deputy marine superintendent examines their discharges. Preference is given to the men longest out of employment for cargo vessels, but for the mail and passenger steamers, although this is a consideration never forgotten, the company are for the reasons given forced also to consider the suitability of the men. After final selection, the men are medically examined by the company's doctor and, if passed as fit, are sent to the vessel to which they are to be appointed.

Seacunnies are chosen separately, and in their cases the selection is made entirely by the deputy marine superintendent, the serang having no voice in the matter.

All selections are done in consultation with the captains where such is possible.

The ghat serangs have no influence in the matter of choice, and in no way interfere with selections.

The object is to work as near the roster system as possible, and, to alleviate unemployment as far as possible amongst the men, instructions have been given that, where crews have been for some considerable period in a cargo ship, they should, all things being equal, be signed off and a crew who have been for a long period out of employment signed on in their places. It is hoped by this method that unemployment will be reduced.

The only part ghat serangs, who are not brokers but company's servants, take, is to see the men on board, arrange for payment of advances, and supply men at the last moment should desertion take place.

This system has been proved to be a perfectly fair method of selecting men and has given satisfaction both to owners, commanders of steamers, and the men themselves. The Government of Bengal sanctioned this system in March, 1929, as it did not require the use of licensed brokers owing to the recruitment being effected through the owner or master of the ship or by persons who are *bona fide* the servants and in the constant employment of the owner.

Another method adopted in the Port of Calcutta is by selection at an open muster in the shipping office. The second method has been devised to meet the convenience of shipowners or agents who for various reasons may not find it possible to make the internal arrangements required by the first method.

Wages.

The wages of seamen sailing from the Port of Calcutta are under two headings—(*a*) *Home line voyages* and (*b*) *Coasting voyages.*

(*a*) *Home line voyages.*

Deck Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Serang	60	Winchman	28
Seacunnie	55	Lascar	18–25
Tindal	37	Bhandary	25
Second Tindal	30	Topas	22
Cassab	30		

Engine Room Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Serang	60	Ice Freezer	31
First Tindal	35	Hydraulicman	31
Second Tindal	30	Oilman	26
Third Tindal	28	Fireman	23
Cassab	28	Trimmer	18
Donkeyman	28	Bhandary	25
Lampman	26	Topas	22

Saloon Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Butler in charge	80	Officer's boy	30
Butler under steward	75	Marconi boy	10
Baker	70	Messroom boy	33
Baker's mate	30	Messroom mate	16
Chief Cook	70	Butcher	45–50
Second Cook	40	Butcher's mate	25
Third Cook	25	Scullion	24
Fourth Cook	20	Topas	22
Chief Cook and Baker	75	Pantry first class	40
Saloon boy	30	Pantry second class	35
Half Saloon boy	15	Pantryman mate	20
Captain's boy	30	Second class Butler	50
Chief Engineer's boy	30		

(*b*) *Coasting voyages.*

Deck Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Serang	50	Seacunnie	45
First Tindal	35	Bhandary	22
Second Tindal	27	Bhandary mate	10
Cassab	25	Lascar	22
Winchman	24	Topas	18

Engine Room Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Serang	50	Lampman	26
First Tindal	32	Fireman	23
Second Tindal	30	Coal Trimmer	17
Third Tindal	27	Bhandary	24
Cassab	28	Bhandary mate	10
Donkeyman	27		

(*b*) *Coasting Voyages*—contd.

Saloon Crew.

	Rs.		Rs.
Butler	75	Saloon boy	25
Baker	60	Captain's boy	25
Chief Cook	60	Chief Engineer's boy	25
Second Cook	35	Messroom boy	28
Third Cook	23	Marconi Operator's boy ..	8
Pantryman	30	Topas	20
Pantryman mate	18	Butcher	45

The men have from time to time claimed increases of wages on the grounds that their pay is too low in comparison to the wages earned by European seamen, but I do not think this is a fair comparison. The cost of living in India is very much lower than in the United Kingdom, and vessels have to carry much bigger crews when manned by Indians. In 1919, there was a strike amongst the seamen of Bengal, and it was claimed that the rise in price of all the necessaries of life combined with the low rate of wages was causing widespread discontent in the ranks of the men. On representations being made to the shipping companies, the matter was closely investigated and substantial increases were made. The increases which were given represented from 60 per cent. to 80 per cent. rises in pay. The cost of living in India since 1914 has not gone up in proportion, and to-day an Indian can live quite easily on 8 annas per day. That this figure is a correct one is proved by the fact that the commissioner for workmen's compensation recently summoned a meeting of shipping representatives with a view to discussing the question as to the amount that should be allowed as the cash value of the lascars board and lodging. After carefully investigating the matter the commissioner agreed to fix the allowance for coast vessels at Rs. 13-8annas per month, which is equivalent to rather less than 7 annas 3 pies per day.

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General.

Deck crews are also paid a bonus of 4 annas per ton when employed shifting coal from holds to bunkers. In port, in order to give employment most of the companies employ extra lascars to assist in scaling and painting. These men are paid at the rate of 10 annas per day, and are also supplied with food on the same scale as the ship's lascars. It is an invariable rule in all companies carrying lascar seamen, that during winter months in home waters the men work during hours of daylight only. The relations between the shipowner and the lascar seamen are of the best, and the proof of this lies in the fact that most of the men remain with the companies all their lives. The directors of the B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd., have for many years paid pensions or gratuities to men who by reason of old age or failing health, have been unable to work. It has to be admitted that employment and poverty amongst seamen are a serious matter, but the reason for so much unemployment is that these men are not seafaring men by habit, tradition, or taste, they become seamen only because they are not able to secure other employment. The maritime market in Calcutta has thus become congested, and the supply of labour has exceeded the demand. The poverty amongst the Indian seamen is largely the outcome of the usury which is practised by the boarding house keepers who advance money at an extortionate rate of interest, and also to the professional moneylenders who charge interest at rates sometimes as high as 150 per cent. Social customs in the shape of marriage dowries also play an important part in keeping the men in a state of indebtedness. The first step to remedy this state of affairs is for the Government to institute proceedings against anybody who imposes on the seamen on the lines of the legislation that was framed in the United Kingdom to protect the European seamen from imposition.

BENGAL NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

In forwarding to you the memorandum of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, with regard to the information required by the Commission, I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber to make the following statement :—

2. The Committee of the Chamber would mention at the outset, that they have every sympathy with the healthy growth and development of trade unions in India, and will support the Government in any measure they may adopt for the amelioration of the conditions of Indian labour. Their attitude towards the organization of abour has been actuated by the belief that the industrial progress of India, and for

the matter of that of any other country, depends on the most cordial co-operation between capital and labour, and that while capital must be assured of its legitimate earnings, before it can be diverted to industrial operations, from less enterprising investments, it is no less true that a discontented labour force cannot be impelled to strive hand in hand with the former in the attainment of what may be truly said to be the end of both.

3. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the factors which contribute to the discontent of labour in India. The chief complaints of labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wages and that they are overworked and ill housed. It is quite possible that in some cases these grievances may not be quite unfounded. But the methods so far adopted by them to redress these grievances are, in the opinion of the committee, very much detrimental to the interests of the particular industries concerned, and naturally to the employers and the employees as well. Strikes, have of late become a regular feature of the industrial life of the country, and, as has been recently said by His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, "a disturbing feature of these strikes in our midst was that they started before any definite or ostensible grievance had been put forward or any serious effort made to find a solution by negotiations."

4. The reason for such a procedure, the committee think, is the absence of a large number of well-organized trade unions and the domination of the few that are working by outsiders having no direct or indirect touch with the mass of labourers. The committee cannot over-rate the importance of having such unions of labourers for all industries; for, in their opinion, it is always convenient for the employers to understand the grievances of their employees, if they deal with organized and intelligent unions of a large number of disciplined labourers than with a body of disaffected individuals having no well formulated opinions and prone to succumb to outside influence.

While there have been a large number of trade unions in the country, most of them have been dominated by outsiders who, in the opinion of the committee, do not always guide the labourers along such path as may lead to their genuine welfare. The latter have, so far, produced a very small number of leaders from amongst themselves, and have consequently, failed to control the policy of the unions, effectively.

5. The committee of the Chamber are definitely of opinion that this anomalous situation has been due to the deplorable illiteracy of the labourers, which is also at the root of so many other troubles at the present moment. It is but natural that a group of illiterate and ignorant labourers will depend solely on the initiative and guidance of more enlightened persons and the result has been that these so-called labour leaders, wholly unconnected with labour and ignorant of actual labour conditions have been leading labour down a precipice and in some cases exploiting it for their own advantage, causing irreparable loss to the capitalist and immense suffering to labour.

While conceding that such outside control is but inevitable in the infant stage of the labour movement as in that of other movements, the Committee of the Chamber consider it necessary to express the view that a sufficient advancement of education among these people would have completely obviated its necessity. In this connection, the committee would painfully refer to the lukewarm response which the Government have so far made to the demands of the leaders of public opinion to introduce free and compulsory primary education in the country.

The illiteracy of the mass of workers has, besides making them an easy prey to the agitation and propaganda of their co-called leaders, been at the root of many other troubles. Labour in India has no sufficient knowledge of its rights and responsibilities and it is idle to expect this from it unless education is made available to every one of the workers free of charge. Then again, there is no denying the fact that labour in this country can hardly be called skilled, but the committee hope that the commission will agree with them in their view that efficiency and skill are not a monopoly of any one nation, and that sufficient general education and technical training can make labourers in India as much skilled as in any other country. The committee would like the commission to realize that the inefficiency which, unfortunately, characterises Indian labour at the present moment, is not inherent in it and they would further like to impress on the commission, as well as on the Government, the vast potentialities of the expansion of education throughout the country in improving the efficiency of labour and consequently the condition of industry as well.

It may, however, be pointed out that illiteracy and ignorance are not synonymous and convertible terms, and a mere removal of illiteracy may, at best, be only the

first step towards making Indian labour more efficient and skilled. A proper scheme of education should aim at liberalising the general outlook of the masses, and imparting a sense of civic consciousness in them. The committee also realize that a scheme for a free compulsory primary education such as is under the consideration of the Bengal Legislative Council, at the present moment would take a very long time to consummate, and they are of opinion that better results would be obtained if such a scheme be supplemented by means of motion pictures, distribution of bulletins and literature, popular lectures and talks on various subjects of general interest to the labourers.

The Committee do not, of course, shirk their responsibility in this respect, but they emphatically state that the primary responsibility in the matter rests with the Government, who, the committee regret to say, have not so far made any attempt whatsoever to remove not only the illiteracy but the ignorance also of the mass of Indian population, from which the workers are recruited. The committee will refer at a later stage to the conditions under which it would be possible for the employers in India to share in such welfare schemes.

6. The next point which the committee would like to stress here relates to the lack of thrift and foresight and the prevalence of the drink evil among the workers in India. Whatever weight may be attached to the complaints of labour regarding inadequate wage, the evils of extravagance and drink habit are responsible, to no small extent, for the admittedly miserable condition of the working classes. Here again, one of the causes seems to be the appalling ignorance of the labourers. A complete eradication of these evils would require, in the opinion of the committee, a radical improvement of the vicious environment in which labour has got to live, besides the introduction of primary education as previously suggested. A visit to the *bustees* of Calcutta would at once convince one that in many cases poor labourers live like hogs in a sty. The *bustees* are not only full of filth and dirt but have also an atmosphere about them, which has a very baneful effect on the morals of the occupants.

The housing of labour in a congested city like Calcutta is a difficult problem which can be solved only by sympathetic treatment on the part of the Government and capital. The committee are aware what laudable endeavours have been, and are being made, by the Calcutta Improvement Trust, in providing more building sites. But transport facilities, hitherto available, have not been such as to encourage the creation of new colonies outside, but within easy reach of Calcutta. The congestion, therefore, has been continuing as before. Sporadic attempts have now and then been made by individuals and the trust to provide better housing facilities for labour, but they have not been able to touch even the fringe of the problem. A serious and systematic attempt should be made to provide better and cheaper houses for labourers, due consideration being paid to the special social conditions of Bengal. The *chowl* system of Bombay, where the *purdah* is non-existent, cannot be adopted in Bengal at the present time. The special social conditions prevalent in Bengal call for special treatment. Welfare activities, too, should be guided by this consideration.

The insanitary condition of the slums together with the fact that the workers often do not get proper nutrition, and are also ignorant of elementary hygiene have been responsible for the prevalence of various diseases in the rank and file of the workers. The industrial progress of a country is intimately connected with the existence of well-nourished, well-developed and disease-free workers, and the committee take this opportunity of assuring the commission of their cordial sympathy with any measure, calculated to improve the efficiency of labourers, which it may recommend.

7. But, here, the committee would like to draw the attention of the commission to the fact that the problem has not so far been approached by the Government from the proper angle of vision. Industrial progress of a country, involving as it does the apparently conflicting interests of both capital and labour, requires a bold and comprehensive policy, but the committee regret to point out that as in other respects, the attitude of the Government to this problem has been characterized by a lack of statesmanship and farsightedness.

The Government have all along been very much indifferent to the promotion of industries in the country, and their policy hitherto has not been such as to encourage the starting of new industrial enterprises. But while adopting a sort of *laissez-faire* policy towards industrial growth, the Government have, in recent times, been adopting various measures which are designed to benefit labour at the sacrifice of the interests of capital. The ratifications of the Convention of the International Labour Conference have not always been made with proper discrimination, and in

some cases these have very adversely affected the industries inasmuch as the consequent increased cost of production has handicapped the local industries as compared with their foreign rivals. While recognizing the necessity and desirability of adopting the conventions of the International Labour Conference, the committee are convinced that the burdens of these conventions should, in all fairness, be shared by the Government, and the community as well, so that it may not have any distinctive prejudicial effect on the Indian industries. While the national governments in other countries are adopting various measures to stimulate the progress of industries minimizing the burdens of the conventions, it is most unfair and unjust that the same should in this country be laid exclusively on the capitalists alone. The committee believe that they are voicing the opinion of the whole mercantile community of the country, when they say that they would most willingly contribute their quota if they are " protected " by the Government from the unequal and unfair fight of the foreign competitors, either bv means of a grant of subsidies or by the erection of sufficiently high tariff walls.

8. The committee would mention in this connection that the attitude of labour also as expressed through their unions and leaders has not been conducive to the best interests of capital, which, as the committee have already pointed out, are ultimately identical with those of labour as well. While recognizing that the condition of the labourers is capable of much improvement, the claims which have been and are being put forward by their leaders are in some cases, in the opinion of the Committee, extravagant. Industries in this country work under various limitations. The indifference of the Government, as mentioned before, has been partially responsible for the very unsatisfactory condition, and in some cases, even disappearance of indigenous industrial concerns. India, being a late-comer, finds almost all the fields of industrial activity very much overcrowded, and it is with much difficulty that Indian industries have managed to hold their own. There is no doubt that such difficulties are but inevitable in a country whose industries are not only young but also uncared for by the Government.

The Committee think that the cost of production which is already high in India will be higher still if all the extravagant claims of the workers have to be met by capital at the present state of its condition. The committee would, however, assure the labour leaders that as soon as capital in India be on a par with its foreign competitors, it will lose no time in meeting all the reasonable demands of labour, including higher wages, better housing and other welfare schemes. In the existing conditions there is admittedly a very limited scope for such provisions as may conduce to the welfare of labourers, except in the case of a few thriving industries, whose financial capacity may enable them to undertake such responsibilities. The committee would, however, agree to a scheme under which a certain percentage of the excess profits beyond a prescribed maximum may be compulsorily appropriated to a fund started for welfare works. But they would point out at the same time that such contribution will be conceded to by the employers only if the Government contribute their share to such a fund.

9. In concluding, the committee would refer to the settlement of disputes between capital and labour. The committee think that most of the grievances of labour are such as can be settled by means of negotiation as between the employers and the employees through their recognized trade unions and leaders. But they would refer to the tardiness with which Industrial Disputes Conciliation Panels have been taken advantage of. Strikes, sympathetic and otherwise, have at times seriously inconvenienced the public utility services. But these panels, specially formed to deal with such cases, have been practically ignored, their services being scarcely requisitioned. In such circumstances the committee would urge that a standing judicial machinery should be set up with powers to enforce arbitration before a strike or a lockout is actually declared.

MEMORANDUM.

I.—Recruitment.

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3. (i) *Jute.*—Workers are recruited by and employed under sirdars, who are generally of the same class as the labourers they supply.

Tea.—The planters have a special machinery for recruitment controlled by the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association. The actual recruitment is carried out by sirdars working under local agents. The system of recruitment by contractors was abolished by the Assam Labour and Emigration (Amendment) Act of 1919.

Coal.—Recruitment differs in the various collieries. Each colliery makes its special arrangement for the recruitment of labour. Recruiting sardars are sent out to likely places for recruiting miners to whom travelling expenses and costs to be incurred during the journey are paid in advance.

(ii) The sardari and contractor systems are fruitful sources of abuse. The only sure means of improvement is to educate and organize labour sufficiently to eliminate the recruiting agent. In the coal industry the establishment of direct relations between the collieries and villages would ensure a steadier flow of labour.

(iii) There can be no doubt that the establishment of public employment agencies would improve the conditions attendant on the recruitment of labour.

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7. (i) Jute workers have frequently suffered from unemployment, due to the restriction of working hours and the introduction of the single shift system. In the tea and coal industries there is practically no unemployment.

(ii) (*a*) (*b*) These causes have rarely been responsible for unemployment.

(iii) Unemployment is too irregular to call for permanent ameliorative measures.

(iv) Need for unemployment insurance is not imperative at present.

(*v*) The application of International Conventions would be premature at present.

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III.—Housing.

16. (i) One-third of the total number of workers in the jute mills are housed by their employers. Tea garden labour is entirely housed by its employers, generally in coolie lines. Some workers are provided with land and building materials to construct their own houses. Imported colliery labourers are provided with free quarters by their employers.

(ii) In some cases Government provide free quarters in their own factories. Improvement Trusts in Bombay and Calcutta have considered the question of providing quarters for labourers, but the results have not been satisfactory.

(iii) In the industrial areas round Calcutta, accommodation for labourers is generally found in single-storied huts in groups known as bustees ; constructed by private owners and let out to mill hands on reasonable terms.

(iv) The workers practically never provide housing facilities for themselves, since they have no capital and no co-operative facilities.

17. The signatories to the Industrial Commission's Report have referred to the fact that industries are considerably handicapped by difficulties in obtaining sites for factories and other industrial concerns and surface rights of mines in cases where mineral rights are not the property of the Government. In the absence of a more uniform interpretation of the expression in Section 40 (1) (*b*) of the Land Acquisition Act, which refers to the acquisition of land for a company whose " work is likely to prove useful to the public " this difficulty cannot be obviated. In the interest of industries a more generous interpretation is desirable. Moreover, when necessary, the benefit of acquisition should be made available to individual proprietors.

18. (i) Jute workers generally prefer to live in bustees, as this enables them to maintain a certain amount of privacy in their domestic lives. Tea labourers belonging to aboriginal tribes prefer to live in dwellings built by themselves. Colliery workers are generally housed in barracks belonging to the collieries. This has no relation to the workers' demands.

(ii) The bustee is the worst and most insanitary type of dwelling. Many mills possess " lines " of an antiquated type, the rooms being placed back to back in a line without any adequate provision for ventilation. A few are continuing to erect lines of this type, but on the whole newly built quarters are more satisfactory. The quarters provided by collieries are more satisfactory, sanitary conditions having considerably improved in recent years. In the Jharia Fields the Jharia Mines Board of Health provides detailed regulations regarding the construction of houses and has a staff to supervise housing conditions. Similar arrangements prevail in the Raneegunj fields. In the matter of quarters, the arrangements in the tea gardens are comparatively most satisfactory, heavy financial losses in previous years having taught the planters the value of providing their labour with sanitary and moderately comfortable quarters.

(iii) The supply of drinking water for jute, tea and colliery labourers is generally adequate. In the Jharia fields the previous deficiency in water supply has been removed by the Jharia Water Board. In the tea gardens water is obtained from wells sunk by the garden authorities or from hill streams.

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IV.—Health.

23. (i) The death-rate in collieries does not appear to be unduly high. In the Jharia Fields 1,346 persons died in 1927 out of a total population of 126,000.

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There is no adequate system of registering births and deaths.

(iii) Working conditions in the three industries are not always satisfactory or congenial.

(iv) The workers' diet in all cases is confined to what is considered to be the barest necessities, the choice of selection being generally left to themselves. It is entirely unscientific and possesses serious nutritional defects. The chemical elements in it are mostly carbohydrates and fats, the protein and other essential contents being low, and the vitamins lacking, unless secured by accident. The proper nutrition of Indian labour is one of the most serious problems before the country, and urgently calls for remedy by increasing the supplies and decreasing the costs of essential foods, such as fish and milk, and by simple health propaganda among the workers.

(v) The physique of labourers is often poor, largely on account of the reasons given above. Their physical condition is further aggravated by the attacks of such diseases as malaria, hookworm, kala-azar, cholera and influenza, to which they are very susceptible, not only on account of generally unsatisfactory sanitary conditions but also on account of their own ignorance,

(vi) In tea and colliery labour the sex ratio is fairly well balanced, but their moral conditions remain rather low on account of the primitive nature of the persons concerned. In the jute mills women form less than 20 per cent. of the labour population, a condition which has even greater effect on the morality of the workers. Drunkenness and illicit, and even unnatural, relations are consequently very prevalent.

(vii) Housing conditions must naturally have an indirect influence on the mortality rate in labour employed in these three industries.

24. (i) The tea gardens provide the best medical facilities for labour. Almost every garden is equipped with a dispensary, and employs a qualified medical staff. In the jute mills dispensaries are also usually provided, which are under the charge of a medical licentiate or graduate, usually the former. The provision for medical relief in the mills is often unsatisfactory. The collieries seem to provide adequate facilities for medical aid.

(iii) Practically no medical relief is provided by other agencies for labour employed in three industries.

(iv) There is little or no provision for women doctors and trained midwives or dhais, though in a few mines trained midwives have been appointed.

25. (i) Medical facilities are generally utilized to the full by the male workers, but there is room for much improvement both by providing more doctors, particularly more enthusiastic and sympathetic doctors, and by propaganda calculated to teach the workers to obey and carry out medical advice properly.

(ii) The inherent prejudices and ignorance of Indian labouring women prevents them from taking the fullest advantage of medical relief. Trust in quacks is consequently rampant among them. This attitude is accentuated by the absence of doctors and nurses of their own sex.

26. (i) Latrine arrangements in the tea-gardens are on the whole up-to-date. The arrangements vary in various gardens. In some, the limed bucket system or aqua privy is used; in others, trench latrines or septic tanks are employed. Easing themselves, in the open fields, is however, still persisted in by labourers, this fact being directly responsible for the high incidence of hookworm—one of the principal causes of anaemia among labourers.

(ii) Provision for drinking water, as already stated above, is on the whole satisfactory. The ignorance of the labourers, however, still causes them to drink from contaminated sources.

(iii) Bathing facilities of a sort are provided for labour in the three industries dealt with here, but they are by no means ideal. Privacy is not ensured, and common taps have to be used. What is known as "personal hygiene" is practically unknown among Indian labouring women, this being largely due to inadequate bathing arrangements. Hygienic propaganda on these matters is necessary.

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V.—Welfare.

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34. (i) The committee consider that urgent attention should be paid to the provision of proper refreshments, shelters and creches for the labourers in the three industries referred to. There is no doubt at all that special arrangements should be

made for the protection of infants, especially in the mills and collieries, but no arrangement in this direction has yet been made either by employers or other agencies. In the tea gardens the usual practice for women pluckers is to carry their children in a basket thrown over the shoulder. No serious consequences seem to have resulted from this practice, but it is not a habit which the committee can commend.

(ii) In the tea gardens the authorities are trying to encourage various athletic games, and sometimes engage touring theatrical parties and cinema shows to entertain the labourers. The committee have not heard of any facilities for physical culture and recreation being specially provided for their workers by the jute mills and collieries.

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36. In some tea gardens primary schools have been started. A few mill owners have also provided small schools, but as a rule they are not in favour of providing such facilities adequately as they conflict with the employment of half-timers. On the whole the provision of educational facilities by employers leaves much to be desired. Where schools have been provided, the workers have not shown any particular desire to give their children the benefit of primary education.

37. Provisions for old age pensions are not found in any of the three industries. A few tea gardens, however, grant small pensions to workers credited with long and faithful service. In the collieries the introduction of pensions is not considered feasible, as the miners generally serve more than one employer.

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39. In view of the depressed state of the industry at present it does not seem possible to start a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund.

VI.—Education.

40. The only facilities for general education open to children not in employment are afforded by the existing primary schools which are in every way inadequate. In the jute mill areas, the municipalities do not encourage expenditure on education, as this would increase taxes within their jurisdiction.

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VII.—Safety.

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49. The coal mines are under the strict supervision of the department of mines, but in the case of factories, especially in the tea gardens, a more frequent inspection should be enforced. The committee of the chamber understand that the problem of reducing the number of uninspected factories has been engaging the attention of the Government.

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VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) The benefits of workmen's compensation are becoming more widely known and workers are taking increasing advantage of them.

(ii) Under the Act, as it stands at present, the extent of possible claims cannot be estimated. The administrative defects of the Act have been engaging the attention of the Legislative Assembly recently.

(iii) It has made those in authority over labourers more careful, especially in the collieries.

(iv) The premiums being high such insurance facilities as exist have not been utilized except by a small section of the larger collieries.

(v) The introduction of compulsory insurance cannot be endorsed in all industries at present. This would unduly increase the responsibilities of the employers who are already hard pressed by such legislation as the Workmen's Compensation Act.

52. *Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers.*—This does not seem to be necessary at present, as lump sum payments are more usual than payment by instalments.

53. The provisions contained in the Act of 1923 are adequate. The committee opposed, on this ground, the provision of clause (4) of the Workmen's Compensation Amendment Bill of 1928, referring to the computation of wages of a workman in service of the employer during a continuous period of less than one month. The Act of 1923 has set up a competent administrative machinery for dealing with relevant cases.

54. *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers Liability Act,* 1880.—The committee do not think this desirable at present.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

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57 and 58. *Effect of 60 hours restriction. Effect of daily limit.*—It determines the number of workers to be employed. In the jute industry the effect has been beneficial rather than adverse.

59. The reduction in maxima is uncalled for in the case of the jute industry, and is not favoured by the tea planters.

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B.—*Mines.*

63. (i) The Indian Mines Act, 1923, restricts the maximum hours of work per week to 60 for surface labourers and 54 for underground labourers. At present the total hours of work vary in different mines, some having two shifts of 8 hours each, others one shift of 12 hours—the daily maximum fixed by the Indian Mines (Amendment) Act, 1928, for both surface and underground labourers.

(ii) Though the miners working underground remain there for 8 to 12 hours per day, the time during which they actually work does not usually extend beyond 4 or 5 hours. The surface labourers also do not actually work for more than about 6 hours per day.

65. *Effect of restriction of hours.*—The effect of restriction of hours is negligible either on the workers or the industry, as the actual number of working days has always been below the permissible limit.

66. Reduction of maxima seems to be desirable, particularly in view of the facts given in answer to (63 (ii)) but it cannot be effected without introducing a system of short shifts, which may be resented by the miners.

67. Section 3 of the Indian Mines (Amendment) Act, 1928, provides for the introduction of a system of shifts. It has been laid down in that section that a colliery cannot be worked more than 12 continuous hours unless a system of shifts be introduced in all the mines. The introduction of the scheme will not, however, prove a success until the employers are better organized to enforce uniformity of action. At present the labourers themselves would possibly resent the introduction of the scheme, as they are used to intermittent work spread over long hours.

68. *Possibility of introducing any effective daily limitation.*—It is difficult to express any definite opinion, as the attitude of indolent labourers regarding such measures is likely to be hostile.

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71. The existing provisions have proved quite satisfactory.

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X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

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88. In jute mills where women and children are irregularly employed, the needs of family life require the introduction of a single shift with fixed intervals.

B.—*Mines.*

91. (i) The Government's notification published in the "Calcutta Gazette," 21st March, 1929, announces that the number of female labourers in exempted coal mines (i.e., in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the C.P.) will have to be gradually reduced every year in such a manner that no women will remain employed in the exempted coal mines on 30th June, 1939.

(ii) This order may have an adverse effect on the industry, as it will raise the rate of wages to be paid by the industry, which is passing through a period of depression. What is more if sex parity is not maintained it will have an adverse effect on the morality of the worker leading to disruption of family life. It will also strike at the root of the economic independence of women of the working classes.

(iii) It will lower the total income of the family unit.

(iv) The speed of withdrawal will remain an unimportant factor till the decision remains unchanged.

XII.—Wages.

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97. Among the jute mills there have been some variations in the rate of wages in the upward direction, but such increase has not been remarkable. Between mills worked on the single and those on the multiple system of shifts, the former class of mills is worked at an appreciable monetary advantage to the workers. The wage movements are related to the cost of living; the profits earned in the industry

have hardly any bearing on them. The tea industry having attained prosperity for some years, wages have been enhanced and greater amenities of life have been provided for the labourers. In the coal industry wages were considerably increased during the boom years, commencing from 1919. The increases, however, were due, to some extent also, to the high cost of living. In recent years the industry has been passing through a depression and in 1927 the wages had to be brought down by 25 per cent.

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105. The fixation of minimum wages can be urged only in case of those industries which have attained sufficient solidarity and in which employers are thoroughly organized. Even with reference to these the success of any scheme relating to minimum wages in a poor country like India, will depend entirely upon the extent to which labour is organized. In the present condition of labour in India such fixation cannot be recommended.

106. The practice of imposing fines or making deductions in wages is not so prevalent in the Province of Bengal as to call for attention.

107. (i) As a rule, wages are paid on a weekly basis. The monthly system, however, is not unknown. In some cases even daily wages are paid.

(iii) The question of weekly payment of wages was the subject of a recent non-official Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly, evidently to check the habit of paying wages in arrears. But such legislation is unnecessary. A more frequent inspection and a better organization of labour will do away with the evil, if there be any.

(iv) "Unclaimed wages" are almost unheard of.

108. Indebtedness is prevalent among mill workers and colliery labourers, loans being generally obtained from Peshawaris at high rates of interest, usually 2 annas on the rupee per mensem. For this reason indebted labourers can seldom manage to free themselves from the hands of these moneylenders.

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XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. In all the three industries there has been a slight improvement in the efficiency of workers but the committee of the chamber do not think that the improvement has introduced any appreciable change in the position of the industries concerned.

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114. The periodical return of the workers to their homes may be said to have a restorative effect on their health. It does not impair their efficiency, except when the retirement is unduly prolonged. The type of machinery used as well as the nature of the plant, certainly exert some influence on the productive efficiency of the workers, and this is palpable in the coal industry, in which the use of coal cutting machinery is being increasingly appreciated. The sanitary requirements of factory establishments enforced by various Acts of Legislature and rules framed thereunder, have yielded positive results with regard to the health and physique of the workers. The management of factories and mines is also becoming alive to the responsibility of maintaining and developing the efficiency of workers. The various arrangements made in the three industries for medical help and recreation as well as the amenities voluntarily provided in some industries, especially tea, have already been referred to. But the facilities hitherto provided have not yielded any results commensurate with the expectations raised in the prevalent atmosphere of colossal ignorance and illiteracy. Having no education the workers have not bestirred themselves to do anything which may improve their economic position, and the propaganda hitherto carried to infuse in them a sense of enlightened self-interest has often been of no avail. Consequently, they have felt no urge to raise their standard of living, and if any monetary advantage is conferred on them they are not disposed to turn it to very good account. It often serves only to stimulate their extravagant habits and their miserable standard of living remains generally unaffected. The committee of the chamber have, therefore, definitely come to the conclusion that no measure for improving the condition of labour will prove so effective as the enforcement of a free elementary education among the rank and file of workers. The climatic conditions of the places in which the three industries have been localised do not seem to have a deteriorating effect on the labourers except that in Tea the efficiency has been considerably impaired by the ravages of kalazar and malaria.

115. The changes in working hours in jute mills and coal mines have not borne any appreciable effect on the productive efficiency of labourers. In the jute mills the actual working hours having been always shorter than the statutory maximum, the recent increase in hours of work from 54 to 60 is not likely to tell on the efficiency

of workers who would still be able to enjoy ample leisure. The per capita output in these circumstances will undoubtedly increase. Similarly, in the coal mines the restriction of working hours will not affect the total output as the restriction will not curtail the actual hours of work. The changes in the working conditions and better provisions for housing and sanitation have imparted a steady tone to the volume of production in the three industries by attracting labour and maintaining the continuity of their respective operations. A check on further progress has however been put by the upward movement in wage levels, especially in the coal industry, synchronising with the imposition of various statutory obligations on the employers of labour. Besides the poor food value of the dietary consumed by the labourers as also their addiction to the consumption of alcohol and drugs have thrown another obstacle in the way of their productive efficiency being raised to its maximum. This is manifest in the case of colliery labourers, and is to some extent palpable in the case of labourers in the sister industries of jute and tea.

116. The committee of the chamber are of opinion that the method of securing increased efficiency in the present conditions of labour in India lies in the way of enforcing a scheme of free and compulsory education among the mass of workers, and a vigorous and sustained propaganda for the eradication of the drink evil.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

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119. The trade unions are in most cases very recent institutions, and they have not been able hitherto to disseminate such ideas among the labourers as would enable the latter to accept any scheme of insurance, or such measures as would minimise the troubles of unemployment, etc. In cases where they have been responsible for the outbreak of strikes, as in the jute mills, they have urged for strike pay, but without any appreciable success.

121. The Trade Union Act, 1926, has not been worked for sufficient time to yield any appreciable results. An amendment was moved in the Legislative Assembly last year in a non-official bill to extend the privileges of registered unions to unregistered bodies. The Committee of the Chamber then expressed the opinion that such indiscriminate extension of privileges would be detrimental to the interests of a healthy development of labour organization in India. The committee consider any amendment designed for the recognition of irresponsible labour groups to be undesirable.

122. (i) Negotiations are carried on directly between the employers and the union which champions the cause of labour.

(ii) Attempts at co-operation between employers and the employed to increase efficiency of production have been followed with little success at present, chiefly because such attempts have not been thorough enough.

(iii) The resolution between employees in State industrial concerns and the General Trade Union Movement is growing intimate as is evidenced by sympathetic strikes.

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XV.—Industrial Disputes.

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124. Although a conciliation machinery has been made available in the form of the Conciliation Board, selected from the panel referred to, no advantage has actually been taken of this machinery, except on a few occasions, when, however, the machinery was found useful. Prominent public men have played rather a more important part than officials in settling disputes. Little use has been made of the Act of 1860. There is hardly any joint standing machinery set up for the regulation of relations between employers and workpeople. The Committee of the Chamber consider that *ad hoc* committees, as proposed to be set up by the Trades Disputes Act, are better suited to deal with labour disputes in India. But a standing judicial machinery may serve some useful purpose for some time.

125. It is too early to comment on the usefulness or otherwise of the new law. But the committee are of opinion that the making of provisions in it for sympathetic strikes has been premature.

XVII.—Administration.

133. The industries are under the divided control of the central and provincial governments. This has been responsible for the lack of care with which questions affecting labour have been considered. The central government, which have reserved to themselves the determination of all vital questions pertaining to industries, have suffered from inadequate representation of industrial interests. The Committee

of the Chamber have urged several times for a permanent seat for the nominee of the Chamber in the Assembly, putting forward its claim as being the premier Indian commercial and industrial body of a major province like Bengal. But hitherto this claim has gone unheeded. The result of such a policy has been that the fate of legislation affecting industries has been decided chiefly by people who have no adequate local knowledge of the subject dealt with. The local government on the other hand, being conscious of the limited extent of their responsibility, have refrained from giving such attention to industrial questions as they rightly deserve.

134. The International Labour Organization has been responsible for a crop of labour legislation in India. It has been instrumental in stimulating public interest in labour questions and in initiating measures which might not otherwise have been adopted.

The conventions so far ratified are the following :—(*a*) Conventions limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings ; (*b*) Conventions concerning unemployment ; (*c*) Conventions concerning employment of women during night ; (*d*) Conventions concerning the rights of association and combination of agricultural workers ; (*e*) Conventions concerning the application of weekly rest in industrial undertakings ; (*f*) Conventions fixing the minimum age for the admission of young persons to employment as trimmers and stokers ; (*g*) Conventions concerning the compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea ; (*h*) Conventions concerning workmen's compensation for occupational diseases ; (*i*) Conventions concerning equality of treatment for national and foreign workers as regards workmen's compensation for accidents ; (*j*) Conventions concerning the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on board ships.

The result of the new legislation has been to put in almost every case an additional burden on the employers, and it may be apprehended that such legislation will in time have its natural repercussions on the employment of labour.

135. The relation between central and provincial governments requires to be adjusted on a new basis. Either a larger representation in the Legislative Assembly should be secured for the representation of industry and commerce from the province or a higher degree of control should be vested in the Provincial Legislatures with a wider basis of the representation of commercial and industrial interests.

136. There are no special officers to investigate the problems of labour, except the chief inspector of factories and his staff.

XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. Regarding coal, the statistics available may be considered satisfactory. The information about jute mills is not illuminating, as the amount of stock is not given. The tea statistics should be more elaborate, with special reference to the labour employed. More detailed statistics regarding industrial establishments run on an individual proprietary basis are also called for. The committee consider that such statistics should be made available to a larger section of the community even by free distribution, if necessary.

144. At present the need for an easily intelligible and at the same time elaborate system of statistics is keenly felt. The committee consider that the other provinces should follow the example of Bombay in setting up labour offices.

145. No such statistics have been compiled in Bengal, except by special committees appointed from time to time. The committee would, in this connection, observe that an index of the cost of living of labourers, similar to that prepared by the Bombay Labour Office and the Labour Statistics Bureau of Burma, should be prepared for all the provinces. The results obtained are sure to be helpful in more than one way.

146. Greater co-operation between the Government and the Associations of Employers for the collection of accurate statistics is necessary.

MANAGING AGENTS, THE MOHINI MILLS, LIMITED, KUSHTIA, BENGAL.

The mill employs 1,065 hands (including 61 under contractor), 976 adults, 11 females, 89 boys, besides the office staff, peons, durwans and others.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) When the mill, which is the only one in the district and far away from other industrial centres, was started with 10 looms (and gradually increased to 425 looms) some trained hands as weavers, jobbers and sizers were imported, and gradually local hands recruited mostly from the farmer class were trained up. Now the whole of the weaving section is run with local labour. To work the spinning section, which was started in May, 1929, some trained hands have been imported and local labour is being trained.

(ii) and (iii) The boys of the farmer class have most willingly taken up this work, as the average earning here is a good deal more than what it is if they worked in the field or as day labourers. In the beginning we used to pay the apprentices a sum to meet the food expenses, but this has been discontinued and apprentices still come to work. We have created a sort of labour population.

2. (i) and (ii) Most of our labourers attend work from their homes and those who have their homesteads at a distance live in the pucca-built houses built by us, go home week end and return on Monday morning. Those who do not belong to this district, the number of which is very few, go home once or twice a year for a few days.

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8. (i) Employment with us is continuous.

(iii) (*a*) The percentage of absentees is 17 per cent., and it is sometimes due to sickness, but mostly to indolence. This year, on account of malaria in virulent type and an epidemic form of cholera, the number of absentees due to sickness is greater.

(*b*) The absenteeism is not seasonal, but occasionally rather regular; the number of absentees increases during the malarial and epidemic season.

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III.—Housing.

16. (i) We have isolated pucca-built blocks with separate and independent rooms in an open maidan, admitting a good deal of air and light. There are quarters for single and family men.

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20. We charge Re. 1–12 annas monthly per room of 10 ft. by 8 ft., with a 5 ft. wide verandah, and these rooms are occupied by two men. The charge for family quarters, comprising a room 11 ft. by 9 ft., with 5 ft. wide verandah on each side, a separate cook room, and a courtyard, complete by itself, is Rs. 2–4 annas a month.

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IV.—Health.

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24. (i) We have a medical officer (a graduate of Calcutta university) attached to the mill, who attends daily to the sick, and with him there is one who passed from one of the medical schools of Calcutta. Free medicine and medical advice are supplied to the officers and operatives alike; we spend over Rs. 3,500 for medical help every year.

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25. The operatives, both male and female, generally take medical aid, unless sometimes through ignorance they seek the aid of *ojhas*, etc.

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30. Not necessary.

(iii) It is not necessary that western medicine should be administered in all cases, indigenous medicine is found very beneficial in many cases.

31. The few female workers we have as pickers in the spinning section are old prostitutes; so no step is necessary.

V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

32 and 34. (i) We help the operatives to improve their physique; they have formed a sort of circus party, and for amusement they show plays; we encourage them to play football and some Indian outdoor games; we spend a large sum on their amusement by bringing theatrical parties, etc., from Calcutta from time to time. There are two small shops within the compound, where tea and light refreshment can be had, and there is a shelter where the workmen can have their meals. There is a library and a club.

36. We tried to introduce education among the workmen and erected a building for the purpose, but that was not taken advantage of. The workmen, whether adults or boys, will not take to education unless law compels them to do so.

37. It is desirable that some provision should be made for old age or premature retirement. We have the provident fund system in our mill; all officers and operatives are to subscribe to it at the rate of 1 anna per rupee earned by them. We contribute 12½ per cent. of their contribution and pay 6 per cent. interest on the amount.

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IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. The weaving section actually works 60 hours a week or 10 hours a day, and the spinning section works 16 hours in two shifts. We do not work overtime.

56. We work six days in the week.

57 and 58. The workmen are greatly benefitted; they could easily work another hour daily without injuring their health, because in factories there is little or no manual labour; the attendants, especially weavers or spinners, have to keep an eye only and the work is practically done by the machine. With the 60 hours' restriction the industry had to pay more wages to the workmen. Before 1922, the weekly hours were 72 and it was reduced to 60 hours suddenly, the drop being too much; the rates and wages were increased consequently. To quote an instance, our rate for a 52 pick 10 yards dhoti was As. 1-9 per pair before the drop, and to-day it is As. 2-9 per pair. There has been an all round increase.

59. Further reduction is unnecessary because we have to face heavy foreign competition, especially of Japan, and reduction in working hours means increase in wages and necessary increase of overhead charges on account of less production. In Japan, the labour is most efficient, and the hours of work not below 11 hours.

60. In the morning the workers of the weaving section take their breakfast here, in which about half an hour is spent (the mill is not closed but workmen go out in batches), and the mid-day rest for their bath and principal meal is two hours. In the spinning section, where shift-system is worked, the rest for each batch is for five hours at a stretch.

(iii) We change the starting hour in the morning according to the season.

(iv) One day every week is given as holiday, generally Sundays are holidays; but if the mill is closed on a weekday for a festival, the Sunday preceding or following is worked according to the Factory Act.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The wages earned monthly by workers of different sections in our mill are given below :—

	1929.				1919.				
	Maximum.		Average.		Maximum.		Average.		
	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	
Jobbers	100	0	57	11	40	0	34	0	per month
Electric mistris	70	0	49	0	19	0	17	0	,,
Drivers and firemen ..	90	0	42	0	22	0	18	0	,,
Weavers	62	0	40	4	25	0	21	4	,,
Fitters	49	0	38	0	30	0	23	8	,,
Folders	40	0	32	8	30	0	26	0	,,
Sizers	47	0	29	0	30	0	23	0	,,
Carpenters	30	0	26	0	24	0	19	0	,,
Blacksmiths	27	0	25	0	17	0	14	0	,,
Warpers, including apprentices.	42	0	22	0	30	0	18	0	,,
Engineering department—men doing outdoor work.	45	0	26	0	23	0	11	8	,,
Spinners	30	0	20	0	Nil		Nil		
,, half time	18	0	11	0	Nil		Nil		
Winders	30	0	20	0	25	0	11	0	,,
,, half time	25	0	15	0	12	0	5	0	,,
Female workers	18	0	12	8	Nil		Nil		

(ii) The wage as a day labourer or in the agricultural field is 10 to 12 annas per day, but it is not certain that the labourer will get the work every day.

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106. (i), (ii) and (iii) Workmen are fined a nominal sum for absence without leave, etc., but not much. The amount is utilized in the general fund of the company. Contribution for provident fund is deducted.

(iv) No legislation is necessary.

107. (i) Weavers, winders and other piece-workers are paid fortnightly, and monthly paid servants (men of the spinning section and engineering department) are paid monthly. The workmen prefer this system.

(ii) Fifteen days' wages is always kept in hand, and that is absolutely necesary for calculation and for the good of the workers.

(iii) None is necessary.

(iv) The wages are paid promptly, but if any one leaves the service without notice it is kept unadjusted for six months or more, and if the workman does not return the wage is forfeited.

108. Some of the workmen, especially those of loose morality, are in debt, paying high rate of interest. The agriculturists and day labourers are more in debt than the mill hands, especially those who are of economic habit.

109. Bonus or reward is given to the weavers if they can turn out a definite quantity of pairs per loom per week. In 1921, when the company made a decent profit, bonus was paid to the workmen.

110. Paid workmen are granted privilege and sick leave with full or half-pay, depending on the circumstances.

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XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. We have none here. Trade combinations or unions are healthy signs among the workers when they are guided by the workmen themselves and not by outsiders, as is the case generally at present in many places; it is always preferable to lead organized and intelligent labour than a crowd of uneducated labour who can be easily lead by others. The workmen being ignorant, outsiders with selfish motives behind their back very often put imaginary grievances before them and make them go on strike. In many cases the strikers do not know what the strike is for, and they lay down their tools without putting their grievances before their employers. Outsiders should not be allowed to handle these unions. There are many among the workmen who are very intelligent and can well put their case before their superiors.

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Mr. L. M. SNELGROVE, GENERAL MANAGER, THE ORIENTAL GAS COMPANY, LIMITED, CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH.

I.—Recruitment.

General Note.—The number of workers varies very slightly with the hot weather and cold weather seasons; the following figures give an average of the permanent labour force, viz:—

Engaged in manufacture of gas, including all work ancillary thereto, viz.: Repairs and maintenance of works, plant, machinery, buildings, etc. ..	760
Engaged in the sale and distribution of gas, including all work ancillary thereto, viz.: repairs and maintenance of mains and services, meters, fittings, appliances, public lighting and the general requirements of consumers of gas	500
	1,260

(N.B.—The above figures are exclusive of our covenanted managerial staff, numbering 10 Europeans).

(i) A general census of the permanent labour force gives the following figures as to province of origin:—Out of 1,260 workers 310 hail from Bengal; 827 hail from Bihar and Orissa; 109 hail from United Provinces; 14 hail from Santhal Pergannas.

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2. (i) An examination of a period of one year (1928) shows that out of a total of 1,260 workers 473 left for their villages, due to causes such as have been enumerated above, the largest number being 71 and the lowest number being 18 in February and August respectively.

Periods of absence are entirely beyond our control, and may be taken at from one month to six months.

(ii) Extent of permanent labour force has already been given above.

3. We have never experienced any difficulty in obtaining all the labour we require.

(i) Whenever a worker leaves for his village, the general practice is for him to bring along a "substitute" who, if judged satisfactory, is temporarily recruited for the period of absence. Whenever additional labour is required, the existing employees have always produced (and can always produce) any number of extra workers.

(ii) So far as we are concerned, existing methods have proved satisfactory.

(iii) So far as we are concerned, no such agencies are necessary.

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XII.—Wages.

General Note.—In India there are only two undertakings supplying gas for street lighting and industrial and domestic requirements.

Therefore amongst gas workers there is no set standard of wages for any particular district, and comparisons are impossible and cannot lead to any useful issue. A variety of labour is necessary from that of the coolie class to that of artisan or craftsman, but it must be remembered that any degree of skilled labour as applied to gas manufacture and supply (in India) cannot be recruited as having had training (in most of the work required) at any other gas works as is the case in Europe, and progress in the degree of skill can only be attained by the workers "working alongside" older employees, in other words by "learning the work" which in actual fact amounts to "training" during the course of their employ.

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96. The present monthly pay roll of approximately 1,260 employees shows an increase of 85 per cent., as compared with the monthly roll of approximately 1,100 employees 10 years ago. The sale of gas as compared with 10 years ago shows an increase of approximately 90 per cent.

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XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. *Comparative changes in efficiency of Indian workers in recent years.*—This is not an easy question to make any pronouncement upon. Those of our employees who by comparatively long service have had close association with the various items of gas manufacturing plant and machinery, and new and up-to-date types of such plant, etc., as have been from time to time installed and brought into use, do undoubtedly display an increasing knowledge and interest in the operating and maintenance and repairing of such plant.

The same may be said of those engaged in the fixing and working of gas consuming appliances, etc., but it is quite safe to say that satisfactory continuity of operations would be impossible and progress arrested, were it not for the continued watchfulness and supervision of our European staff.

In the lower classes of labour it must be agreed that little or no change in efficiency is discernable, and the tendency towards malingering appears to us to be just as pronounced as it has been for many years past.

113. *Comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers.* If by this is meant a comparison between Indian and foreign workers working in India, we are not in a position to make any statement, as all our workers are Indians. If the comparison is meant to be between Indian gas workers and gas workers in other countries, we have no compiled statistics to refer to. The following comparison is, however, such as may be taken as typical. As already stated, we employ about 1,260 workmen. At a gasworks in England with an annual output of gas about 50 per cent. in excess of ours, the number of workmen employed is 258 only, showing a man power ratio of at least seven Indian workmen to one British workman, for an equal output of gas.

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116. *Possible means of securing increased efficiency.*—We have no comment to make beyond stating that as far as our experience goes, increased efficiency of Indian workers, whatever efforts and assistance be given them, can necessarily only come about very slowly and by transitory stages, through each of which a higher standard must be aimed at by wider education and improved intelligence, continued and ceaseless improvement in conditions of health, sanitation, living and environment, judiciously taking into account the complications arising from religious differences, customs and habits, all of which are inseparably dependant on a real display of genuine effort and determination to improve themselves from within, without expecting to attain such ends, except through steady and progressive stages, and patience extending over still many generations.

Mr. F. T. HOMAN, AGENT, THE CALCUTTA ELECTRIC SUPPLY CORPORATION, LTD., CALCUTTA.

I.—Recruitment.

1. Our total number of workers is about 3,500 ; of these some 575 come from Bengal, including skilled men employed in sub-stations and power stations ; 400 from Behar and Orissa, 2,450 from the United Provinces, and the remainder from other Provinces, including Punjab and Nepal. The coolie labour comes from Behar, Orissa and the United Provinces.

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2. During the months from April to August many of the coolies return to their villages for periods of about two months. They are temporarily replaced by others.

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8. Except in the case of mains coolies employed on construction work, which is variable, the maximum number being 2,715 and the minimum 1,571, our labour is permanently employed. No definite figure can be given. In many cases employees stay with the company until they are too old for further work. The average must be well over 10 years.

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XII.—Wages.

96. *Prevailing rates of wages and earnings :—*

Power Stations—	
Shift Engineers	Rs. 410–20–510
	265–18–355
Boiler Fitters	90– 9–162
	75– 5– 90
	20– 5– 70
Firemen	20– 5– 70
Turbine or Engine Drivers	20– 5– 70
Engine Fitters	90– 9–162
	75– 5– 90
	20– 5– 70
Electric Fitters	20– 5– 70
Switchboard Operators	117– 9–171
	82– 8–114
	50– 8– 82
Pump Attendants	28 – 31
Coolies	16 – 20
Substations—	
Substation Engineers	320–15–395
	220–15–280
Switchboard Operators	117– 9–171
	82– 8–114
	50– 8– 82
Electric Fitters	20– 5– 70
Coolies	16 – 20
Distribution System—	
Cable Jointers (European)	*535–35–685*
Estimators or Inspectors	*320–15–395*
	220–15–280
	130–10–180
	100– 6–124
Linesmen	70– 5– 90
	20– 5– 70
Masons	20– 5– 70
Coolies	16 – 20

Overtime is paid as follows :—Weekdays, Ordinary time ; Saturdays after 2 p.m., time and a half ; Sundays and holidays, double time.

Allowances.—The staff in the power stations are granted allowances ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per month, depending on their work.

97. *Movements in recent years.*—In 1919 the wage for coolie labour was Rs. 12 plus an allowance of Rs. 2. The wages since then have been raised to the figures given above, and corresponding increases have been made in all wages.

During the years 1919 to 1924, allowances were made, depending on the rate of wages, owing to the high cost of living. When these allowances were discontinued in 1924, the present scales of wages were introduced.

The Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, Limited.—Hours of Work.

	Power Stations.				Sub-stations.	
	Mains Dept.	Shift-workers.	Mistries.	Coolies.	Shift-workers. Switchboard Attendants.	Cleaners.
Hours worked per week :—						
Normal	46	45	45	45	48	56
Actual (including overtime) ..	51 and extra if required.	56	45 overtime in emergency.	60	48	56
Hours worked per day :—						
Normal	8 and 6 on Saturdays.	8	8	8	8	8
Actual (including overtime) ..	9 and 6 on Saturdays.	8 (average)	8	10	8	8
Spreadover	Nil.*	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Days worked per week	5½	6	5½	6	6	7
Intervals	Nil.	Nil.	½-hour daily.	1½-hours daily in 2 intervals.	Nil.	Nil.
Days of rest	1½, unless overtime worked.	1	1½	1	1	Nil.

* Except in the case of a few Mistries who are on call in the case of emergency at all times.

Mr. C. W. LEESON, RIVERS STEAM NAVIGATION CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

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IX.—Hours.

On inland steamers and flats work is irregular and spasmodic, the working hours depending upon conditions of service, tides, fogs and channels. Statistics show, however, that the average running time of the majority of inland steamers is 10 hours daily and with two sets of men employed, as at present, this gives each man 5 hours work daily, provided the work is evenly allotted. In addition to the above the engine room crew and the navigating staff work about 2 hours daily doing necessary petty repairs and other odd jobs, making a 7-hour day or 49 hours per week. As regards lascars not engaged upon the navigation of the ship their working hours are difficult to calculate being dependent on whether the steamer is on a passenger or cargo service, and in many cases they do practically no work for days on end. Our opinion is that in no case do the actual working hours of lascars approach an average of 60 hours weekly.

XII.—Wages.

96. *Serangs*, Rs. 46 to Rs. 150 per month ; *drivers* Rs. 46 to Rs. 120 per month. In addition to the above, bonuses are paid for good work. *Lowest ratings*, generally speaking the minimum pay is Rs. 20 per month.

97. Increased by approximately 20 per cent. since 1920.

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Mr. J. DONALD, MANAGER OF MESSRS. SONAKUNDA BALING CO., LTD., NARAINGUNGE.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Seventy-five per cent. of the workers employed in baling concerns of this district is drawn from surrounding villages. The other 25 per cent. is drawn from Behar and United Provinces. The percentage employed by the various firms varies considerably, the pucca baling firms employing about 50 per cent. labour recruited locally, and about 50 per cent. recruited from Behar and United Provinces, while the Kutcha baling firms employ about 80 per cent. local labour, and about 20 per cent. from up-country.

(ii) The cause of the recruitment of labour from Behar and United Provinces is that in the early days of the baling industry great difficulty was experienced in getting local labour to do this work.

(iii) Of recent years, however, the local people have taken more kindly to the work, with the result that the number of up-country people brought into the district is becoming less and less yearly.

2. (i) The workers drawn from local sources go to and from their village homes daily. They come to work in the early morning and go back to their village homes in the evenings. The up-country labour is housed in coolie lines built by the various firms, and at least 60 per cent. of these labourers bring their wives and families to live with them.

The jute baling industry is entirely seasonal, and extends from July to December yearly.

At the end of each season the up-country labourers go back to their up-country homes to attend to the cultivation of their own lands.

The local labourers at the end of each baling season employ themselves in the cultivation of their own lands, which, owing to the subsiding of the yearly floods, are then ready for sowing further crops.

(ii) The extent of the permanent labour force employed by the baling firms varies, but does not exceed 10 per cent. to 15 per cent.

3. (i) In the jute baling industry, the firms do not directly employ labour. This is done through contractors and sub-contractors, who take on the work of supplying labour to do the work of importing, assorting, baling and exporting at a fixed rate per bale.

In the case of local labourers these are approached by the contractor direct, who advances them small sums of money to secure their consent to work.

In the case of the recruitment of upcountry labour this is done by the contractor through sirdars, who go to Behar and United Provinces annually and advance money to secure the number of labourers they require.

(ii) Cannot suggest any improvement.

(iii) Do not think the establishing of public employment agencies is desirable, as the present system works quite satisfactorily.

4. Do not consider there is any disturbance in the family life of the workers, as in the case of the local labourers they go home daily, while in the case of the upcountry workers the majority of them bring their wives and families with them and have good housing accommodation provided them by the firms.

8. (i) The average duration of employment is six months, i.e., from July to December yearly.

As it so happens this is the time when the rivers are in full flood and most of the countryside is under water.

From January to June the labour go back to their own homes and attend to their own crops and cultivation of their own lands.

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II.—Staff Organization.

14. There are certain specified hours laid down for working, but the time of the workers is not kept, as they are paid on piece-work.

(i) Contract and attendance registers are kept by contractor, and accounts kept by Indian Office Staff and checked by manager.

(ii) Paid by contractors direct.

15. (i) All work is done on contract.

(ii) All work is divided under sub-contractors in the different departments.

(iii) This is controlled by the manager and his assistants and supervisory staff.

(iv) These are quite satisfactory.

III.—Housing.

16. Housing is provided by the various firms for all imported labour.

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18. Practically all the big European firms have pucca built lines to house their labour.

(i) Housing accommodation is supplied according to the workers' requirements,

(ii) The nature of the accommodation is satisfactory from a health point of view.

(iii) No provision for lighting is made, but there are proper filtered water supplies available, and also proper standard type latrines (separate from females).

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20. All housing is provided by firms rent free.

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IV.—Health.

24. (i) Doctor Babus are employed to look after the medical needs of the workers, and fully equipped dispensaries are kept by most of the European firms, who also supply free medicine.

(ii) No facilities provided by Government.

(iii) Dispensaries and hospitals are also kept by municipal authorities, and these facilities are available for very serious cases which cannot be adequately dealt with by the firm's doctors. Firms contribute to the upkeep of these municipal institutions also.

(iv) A lady doctor and midwife are always available from the local municipal hospital.

25. (i) and (ii) These facilities are taken full advantage of by both men and women workers alike.

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VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. There are extremely few occasions in our industry on which there is any necessity for claims under this Act, as the nature of the employment is not dangerous, and accidents are almost unknown.

IX.—Hours.

55. As our industry is seasonal it is exempt from the usual working hours as laid down in the Factory Act. The hours of work generally are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour off at mid-day for meals.

56. Six days per week.

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59. No reduction is desirable, as the industry is entirely seasonal.

60. (i) There are no restrictions, and workers can go to and from their work as they desire.

(ii) and (iii) Quite suitable.

(iv) One day per week, and all Pujah holidays.

61. (i) Sundays are generally observed as days of rest, but in some cases other days during the week are allocated according to the weekly market days of the locality.

(ii) This is quite suitable.

62. Full use is made of the exempting provisions relating to the industry.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average daily wages of time-workers are 10 to 12 annas daily. In the cases of piece-workers the average is from 12 annas to Re. 1-4 daily.

(ii) About 8 annas daily.

(iii) Very little if any.

97. (i) About 40 per cent. increase during the past few years.

(ii) Increased cost of living.

(iii) The cost of living has gone up about 40 to 50 per cent. since pre-war days.

(iv) Profits have decreased to some extent.

98. This does not arise in the case of local workers, but upcountry workers save probably 25 per cent. of their income and send same to their villages.

99. Payment in kind is not in existence to any extent.

100. Eighty per cent. of payments are made by the contractors, who take approximately 10 per cent. as their commission.

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110. Permanent workers have one month's leave per year generally on full pay.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. There are no trade combinations or union in this part of the country, and the result is that there is implicit confidence and harmony between labour and employer.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. There have been no strikes or lock-outs in the industry for very many years, and none during the writer's experience of sixteen years in the trade.

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Messrs. BURN & COMPANY, LIMITED, HOWRAH.

Introductory Particulars.

We beg to submit the following particulars regarding the Howrah Ironworks of Messrs. Burn & Company, Limited :—

Nature of Business—(1) Rolling stock builders, (2) Iron and brass founders, (3) Bridge builders, (4) Shipbuilders, (5) Permanent way manufacturers, (6) General engineers.

Output—(1) 2,000 wagons per annum, (2) 50,000 tons per annum, (3) 10,000 tons per annum, (4) 1,500 tons per annum, (5) 3,000 sets points and crossings per annum.

Period of Operation.—The firm has been in existence rather over 100 years, and has been located in Howrah since about 1850.

Number of Employees.—Males—7,500 (of whom half are daily and half contractor's men) ; females—nil ; juveniles—100.

I.—Recruitment.

1. to 3. There is no recruitment of labour for this works owing to (*a*) the large employment of the contract system; (*b*) the long establishment of the business; (*c*) The residence in the district of a large body of skilled and unskilled labour.

Our daily labour is divided approximately as follows:—Bengali, 25 per cent.; Hindustani, 53 per cent.; Ooriya, 16 per cent.; Others, 6 per cent. We have no figures regarding contract labour.

7. (i) Unemployment is largely determined by the amount of work in hand, and is to some extent seasonal, the number of men employed being generally at its lowest during April and May. This hardship is to some extent mitigated by the fact that a fair proportion of this labour always wishes to reutrn to the villages at about this time to assist in the ploughing of the Kharif crops.

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8. (i) and (*ii*) We can only give information here regarding "daily" labour. Skilled labour is generally stable, and we have many cases of men being employed for 20 years and more. Unskilled and coolie labour is much more unsettled. It must be understood that to a considerable extent our requirements of unskilled and coolie labour vary with the amount of work in hand. Further a lot of the labour classed in India as skilled would be termed elsewhere unskilled or semi-skilled.

(*iii*) (*a*) The most serious case of absenteeism to us is the large number of men who are absent on Mondays and Saturdays. This is and has for years been a serious inconvenience. Over a period of eight weeks during June and July of this year this amounted to 5 per cent. on Mondays as compared with the best day of the week, the other days not varying more than 1½ per cent. The relative figures were as follows:—

	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.
Daily men ..	97·2	100·3	98·3	98·9	100	97·1
Contractor's men	92·3	98·2	99·1	99·6	100	99·6
Total ..	94·6	99·2	98·7	99·3	100	98·5

It will be noted that there is a drop in daily men on both Mondays and Saturdays, and that contract labour drops nearly 8 per cent. on Mondays.

An analysis of the daily men shows that the percentage of absentees is greater among the skilled than the unskilled labour, and we believe the same to hold good regarding contract labour. The percentages for daily men were as follows:—

	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.
Daily skilled ..	96	100	98·4	98	99·5	93
,, unskilled ..	97·3	99·7	97·9	98·7	99·6	100

In all the above figures the numbers are taken as percentages of the best day of the week, below we give the number of daily men attending work expressed as a percentage of the number of men on the books:—

	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.
Mean attendance	85·9	88·9	87·0	87·7	88·3	85·9
Best ,, ..	88·3	91·8	89·9	89·1	90·3	88·5
Worst ,, ..	83·3	85·5	84·0	84·6	85·1	82·5

Attendance during each week:—Best—On Tuesday, 5 times; on Friday, twice; and Tuesday and Friday equal, once. Worst—On Monday, 5 times; on Saturday, twice; on Thursday and Saturday equal, once. Average attendance for the period 87·2 per cent.

(*b*) Absenteeism is not seasonal as if our men wish to help with ploughing, etc., it is generally necessary for them to go to a considerable distance, and they therefore ask for leave or resign.

(*c*) The time lost during eight weeks of June and July amounted to 196,863 man-hours or 24,483 man-hours per week equal to nearly 12·8 per cent. of the total possible man-hours. We have been unable to determine exactly the wages lost, but it may be taken as not less than Rs. 2,700 per week. The amount is probably appreciably higher for as stated in the previous paragraph absenteeism is greater amongst the skilled, and higher paid, men than amongst the unskilled workers. This refers to daily men only.

II.—Staff Organization.

11 and 12. The bulk of the managers and foremen are covenanted Europeans. Apprentices, however, frequently remain with us after completing their training, and rise to the position of foremen. There is nothing to prevent Anglo-Indians and Indians rising to responsible positions, and every effort is made to encourage this. Promotion of workmen has so far proved impracticable owing to their lack of education.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file are generally good. Daily labour is in close touch with foremen and managers, mainly through informal channels but a committee exists which can ask for a meeting with the executive at any time they desire. Contractors are represented by a committee elected mainly by themselves, which meets the executive monthly to control the contractors' provident fund. This fund is made up of contributions from the contractors and the firm, and is used to assist men too old for further work or suffering from illness, etc. These meetings though primarily for the management of the fund, provide adequate opportunities for the smaller contractors to put forward any proposals they may wish to make. The nature of their work brings the larger contractors into very close touch with the management.

14. (i) Time-keeping and attendance of daily workmen is kept by means of checks distributed to each man as he enters the works. These are placed by the men on a board in the shop. The vacant places on the gate board are noted by one of the time-clerks, and compared jointly by him and the shop-clerk with the checks hung in the shop. A record is also kept of the work on which each man is engaged for cost purposes, and this is also compared with the muster roll. Should any mistake occur it is readily detected and rectified as men are paid weekly.

Contract and piece-work is checked by the production of a challan receipted by the receiving department in support of the contractors' bill.

(ii) Wages are paid to daily men by one of the cashiers' staff in the presence of the shop-foreman (usually the foreman makes the actual payment). Payment is made in sealed transparent envelopes, and every care is taken to see that no extortion takes place. Any complaints regarding hours worked or short payment of any sort is always attended to by the foreman, who takes the question up with the accounts department. We find our foremen very keen to see that their men are fairly treated and that any mistakes which may occur are rectified.

Wages of contractors' men are paid to the men by the contractors, but we are confident that the rates paid compare favourably with those of similar daily labour employed by us.

15. (i) Almost half the total number of workers are working under contractors. The work given on contract is work of such a nature that it would present difficulty to us in apportioning the value of the work of several men all engaged on the same job. Such work as wagon erection, working of moulding machines, etc., which are essentially gang work, are given on contract.

(iii) The working conditions of contractors' men are exactly the same as those under which our own daily men work, the contractors' men working under our foremen.

(iv) Effects of contract work :—(*a*) Working costs can be more easily standardized (*b*) Less detailed supervision is required as it is to be the interest of contractors working on a piecework basis to see that a good output is obtained ; (*c*) The contractor being generally a skilled man provides considerable skilled supervision in himself ; (*d*) It is to the contractors' interest to employ good men, and to train them, whilst it is often difficult to get skilled daily men to train others for fear of losing their jobs ; (*e*) Owing to the conditions under which the work is done the contractor must pay wages at least equal to those paid to daily men in order to retain his labour.

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IV.—Health.

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24. First-aid appliances are provided in all shops, and all cases of a serious nature are sent to the Howrah General Hospital which adjoins the works. We have always contributed towards the upkeep of the hospital, and our men have been treated free and have been able to attend there at any time if unwell ; but with the increasing number of men now employed we have found it desirable to take further steps, and to have a dispensary in the works and a regular medical officer attending for the purpose of looking after our staff and our workmen.

25. We find that a very large proportion of the men strongly object to attending the hospital. They are very ready to avail themselves as a rule of the first-aid facilities offered.

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V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

37. It is customary in deserving cases to give pensions to old employees when they retire up to a maximum, new names being added to the pension list as the older ones drop out. We think it would be difficult to induce the majority of our labour to insure, and owing to the little we can know of their life we do not think that the employer should be involved in any provision for old age, etc.

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VI.—Education.

41. There is a scheme of apprenticeship in operation in the larger engineering works round Calcutta, which is run in conjunction with the Calcutta Technical School. This scheme trains men rather as overseers than as workmen. See our remarks *re* section (86).

42. Our experience generally is that literate men will not undertake manual work. Many of our mistris can read and write to a limited extent in the vernacular, and are capable of reading dimensions on drawings, etc., but they are very rarely literate in English. We are unable to offer any opinion as to the effect of education on the standard of living. There is no doubt that it would be of the greatest advantage to industry if men with greater education could be induced to take up manual work.

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IX.—Hours.

55. (i) 8 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on five days a week and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

N.B.—The Indian Factory Act specifies a break of one hour for all men working more than six hours. When the Act was introduced our labour objected to this as they prefer the shorter break and earlier finish.

This variation from the standard hours was agreed to by the factory inspection Department. We consider the break adequate under the conditions existing in our works.

(ii) The working hours are as stated in (i) and overtime is only worked when unavoidable. Only in cases of breakdowns, etc., are men worked more than 11 hours in any one day or more than 60 hours in any one week.

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57. *Effects of* 60 *hours restriction.*—(i) As we have not for many years worked hours appreciably longer than those now legalized, we have noted no effect save that men would prefer to work longer hours at rush periods rather than have second shifts started, which have to be discontinued when the rush is over.

(ii) We have no objection to the restriction which does not affect us save at rush times. Any further restriction owing to the very low output of Indian labour would not be welcomed.

58. *Effect of daily limit.*—The effects are similar to those of the weekly restriction, but we would like some further latitude at rush times.

59. We do not think that this can be done until the workers' efficiency is greatly increased. A reduced maximum would not allow of appreciably lower wages being paid and would not, in our opinion, be compensated for by a proportionately increased output. Thus it would only result in increased cost and increased overhead charges, unless double shift working were introduced. We have always found this unsatisfactory and difficult to organize owing to the men's reluctance to leave their homes at night, and to the difficulty of adequate supervision.

60. (i) (*a*) As stated earlier the rest interval in our works is only half an hour, which we find adequate, and the strong preference expressed for it by our men confirms that it is in accordance with their habits.

(*b*) As our men make their principal meals in the morning and night, the half-hour interval suits them better than a longer one by allowing them to return home earlier.

(ii) We consider that the chief inspector of factories for each province should be allowed to sanction alternative intervals of one hour and half an hour at his discretion certainly so far as the engineering industry is concerned. We have no further remarks to make.

(iii) These are satisfactory; we would prefer to start earlier during the hot months, but owing to our labour living at a distance from the factory this is impracticable.

(iv) We have 11 listed holidays, but it is usual to close the works for some days longer at the Durga Puja in October than the number of days shown on the list. A number of half-holidays are also regularly given.

61. (i) All labour is given Sundays save when required for urgent repairs on attendance on boilers, etc. These men are given a day's leave early in the following week. Their number is small.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Satisfactory.

62. The only provision which applies to us is that contained in section 30, sub-section (3) of the Indian Factories Act relating to urgent repairs. This exception is vital to the engineering industries.

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X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

86. We provide facilities for two classes of apprentices :—(*a*) Those who come to us direct from school for a full apprenticeship of six years. These apprentices are admitted on the results of an examination conducted by the Bengal Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, and are bound to attend the Calcutta Technical school for a full term of five years ; (*b*) Those who have passed through one or other of the engineering colleges, and come to us for shorter periods, varying from 3 months to 3 years, for practical training. These men having already a considerable amount of general engineering knowledge generally do well.

In regard to engineering apprenticeship generally we wish to make the following comments :—(*a*) The only schemes of apprenticeship it has been so far possible to evolve apply to the training of overseers, rather than of skilled workmen. (*b*) It will not be possible to train skilled workmen, skilled in the European sense that is, until either the mistri class become more educated or the educated classes of Bengal become much less averse to manual labour than at present. The greatest difficulty is found in all apprenticeship training in making the training really practical owing to this general dislike of manual work. We find far too great a tendency amongst our apprentices to watch the mistris working rather than attempting to do the work themselves.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We enclose (Appendix) a schedule showing the average rates of wages paid to our daily men. We have very little piece-work in the European sense but the few piece-workers we have earn similar or higher rates. We have every reason to believe that the contractors working on piece-work must pay wages at least equal to those paid to similar men in our and other works in the district or they would not be able to retain their labour.

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97. (i) There has been an increase of about 25 per cent. during the past ten years. Most of this increase occurred almost immediately after the war and the increase since has been much smaller.

(ii) The general increase in wages has been due to the higher cost of living since the war with some improvement in the standard of living especially in recent years when the cost of living has moderated somewhat without any corresponding decrease in wages.

(iii) Our records for the pre-war period not now being available we are unable to answer this question fully but we know that various allowances were made at different times and believe that the wages level at the end of the war probably approximated to the cost of living, the index figures for which were (in Bombay) 118 in July, 1917, and 149 in July, 1918. We think that wages had probably risen by 30 per cent. by the end of 1918.

A further general increase averaging 25 per cent. was given early in 1921, when the cost of living index figure in Bombay was about 180.

The wages settled then have continued unchanged up-to-date, though the cost of living index has now fallen to 148 (July, 1929).

We are thus unable to give a definite opinion as to the relation between wages and cost of living as compared with pre-war conditions but we can definitely state that real wages (i.e., wages expressed in terms of buying power) have increased by about one-sixth since 1921, and we think that this probably holds good as compared to the pre-war period also.

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102. Ordinary overtime, i.e., overtime up to a limit of two hours on one day is paid at ordinary rates. Men working on night shift and Sundays receive time and a half.

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104. The supply of skilled labour is limited and the effect of a rise in wages in one place is mainly to cause a movement towards the highest point with a corresponding return wave when wages rise elsewhere. The supply of skilled labour as a whole does not appear to be greatly affected by changes in wages.

105. We do not think that it would be desirable for minimum wages to be fixed by law for the following reasons :—(*a*) Conditions in different parts of India vary very greatly. (*b*) The minimum would have to be fixed too low to be of any real use owing to the very low standard of skill which is here classed as skilled labour. A lot of the labour here classed as skilled would elsewhere be classed as unskilled or semi-skilled and the minimum would have to be low enough to include these men.

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106. So far as we are concerned it would make no difference to us if fines were made illegal.

107. (i) Daily wages are paid weekly and contract wages half-monthly.

(ii) In both cases the period before payment is ten days, i.e., daily wages are paid on the tenth day and contractors' wages from the eighth to the twelfth day after the termination of the period.

(iii) (*a*) This would probably be desirable, but care should be taken not to make the regulation so widely applicable as to be unworkable. Periods should not be too short as more frequent payments mean to many of the men either extra expense in money order poundage, or the risk of spending or being robbed of the money before it can be sent to their families.

(*b*) This would be desirable, but the period must be considerably longer than is customary in England as it is impossible with the far less efficient clerical staff available and the far greater chance of fraud to pay wages for the week ending Wednesday night on Friday nights as is commonly done in England. We think a period of from 10 to 15 days should be allowed.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept in a special account for one year, after which unclaimed balances are transferred to profit and loss, but the records are available for at least two years and any properly supported claim would be paid, even though beyond the period laid down in the Statute of Limitations.

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109. (*i*) Some years age we introduced a scheme in one of our machine shops of paying machine men for a standard time for each job irrespective of the actual time taken. The scheme was very successful for a short period, the output being greatly increased and the workers' wages correspondingly larger. It was given up at the men's request as they preferred to earn lower wages on daily time work.

(ii) A piece-work bonus scheme in addition to daily wages is in operation in our machine shop and has helped to secure rather higher outputs.

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111. We do not think that this is practicable as it would be impossible to define what " fair wages " are in a country the size of India and with such very varying conditions.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Our experience is to the effect that there has been no improvement in industrial efficiency in recent years, but rather the reverse. This apparent loss of efficiency is probably largely due to the great increase in industry having spread the limited number of really skilled men over a larger area. Outside of the castes and classes, who have been craftsmen for generations, we do not get many really skilled men and as industry grows there is bound to be a period before the supply of skilled labour is adequate to the demand.

113. We consider that the relative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers is about in the proportion of their relative rates of payment, i.e., about one to four. Our experience is that piece-work rates are as high or higher in India than in Europe, and the Indian workman earns less because he does less work.

We have obtained certain figures, which we are willing to give the Commission in confidence, if we are assured that they will not be published, as they were given to us under a similar promise. These figures relate to drop stampings, rivetting, etc., and confirm the statement made above.

It is not possible for the Indian workman with his lesser physique and entire lack of education to produce as much work as the foreign worker, and we would point out that this lower output is a very severe handicap to Indian industry, as larger shops and more supervision have to be provided and more machines, etc., installed, for a given output. This necessarily meaning increased overhead charges.

114. *Extent to which Comparisons are Affected by* (i) *Migration of workers.*—Not seriously.

(ii) *Use of machinery.*—The Indian workman rarely uses a machine to its full capacity and takes longer to set up and take down a job than foreign workers. More men are required per machine.

(iii) *Comparative efficiency of plant.*—It is naturally more difficult to keep a plant up-to-date in India, but we are sure that our plant would compare favourably with most similar plants elsewhere and we have now in hand a large scheme of improvement.

The inherent conservatism of the worker is one great handicap to progress.

(iv) *Comparative efficiency of management.*—We do not think that management in India is generally less efficient than elsewhere.

(v) *Physique.*—The physique of the Indian workman, at any rate in Bengal, is much below that of the European workman and greatly affects his output, but the greater use of machinery tends to neutralize this disadvantage, and we do not think that the relative capabilities are as low as the present relative outputs.

(vii) *Education.*—It is only very rarely that men of any education can be induced to take up practical work, the present tendency is for any boy who has been to school to refuse to do manual work.

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(ix) *Climate.*—The climatic conditions are undoubtedly against the workers, particularly at certain seasons, but we think that the effects can be easily over-estimated.

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115. (vi) Our experience shows, that any rise in the wages level not justified by the increased cost of living, is not accompanied by an increase in output, but by increased absenteeism. This applies more particularly to the lower grades.

(vii) Recent enactments have on the whole tended to curtail production.

(viii) All that we can say is that the meat eating classes have usually better physique than the vegetarian classes.

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116. With regard to possible methods of securing increased efficiency, we do not think that much can be accomplished by legislation, other than in so far as legislation can help to make education more readily accessible ; and to remove or curtail the deadening effect on men of unsatisfactory social conditions. As the conditions of living improve, and as social abuses are gradually lessened, the physique of the people will improve and with that improvement we may expect increased efficiency.

As the social bar, which prevents men of the *badralog* classes undertaking manual work, of however skilled a nature, is removed under the pressure of economic circumstances, we may expect that a higher class of labour will be obtained, which, desiring a higher standard of living, will be ready to give greater effort.

All this, however, must be of very slow growth and we do not think that any real improvement can be affected by legislation of any sort at present.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) We are members of the Indian Engineering Association, a body existing to look after the interests of the engineering industry and associated with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. This body does not officially control wages levels, though it is customary for members to consult before giving any general increase. Owing to the differing conditions of life and caste in different parts of India any attempt to standardize wages for the whole of India would be futile.

(ii) So far as our men are concerned, there is no real organization. A loose organization, mainly from outside, was formed during the strike of 1928, but so far as we know it is no longer in existence.

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XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (i) The two strikes we have had during recent years have been due to causes as below :—Strike in 1920–21—High cost of living, and the general unrest due to the non-co-operation movement at the time. Strike in 1928—Partly sympathetic with the strike at the E. I. R. workshops at Lillooah. And partly due to external intimidation.

(ii) The duration in 1920–21 was three months and in 1928 three and a half months.

(iii) The strike in 1920–21 was settled by the men returning to work on a promise that their grievances would be considered. Increases were granted. It should be noted that in this case, the strike occurred whilst the question of increases was under consideration.

In 1928 the men returned to work unconditionally.

(iv) In 1928 the loss of output was probably about 50 lakhs of rupees and the loss to the workers 6 to 7 lakhs in wages.

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XVII.—Administration.

138. We do not think that the workpeople have any real knowledge of factory legislation and unless protected by the factory inspection department there would be ample room for an unscrupulous employer to evade the Acts.

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APPENDIX.

Monthly Rates of Pay of Workmen in the Howrah Ironworks.

Trade.	Min. Rs.	Max. Rs.	Trade.	Min. Rs.	Max. Rs.
Armature winder ..	20	70	Belt man	21	40
Arc lamp trimmer ..	18	20	Oilman	15	18
Blacksmith	20	55	Pattern maker	20	75
Boiler maker	26	45	Plumber	—	43
Brazier	28	35	Planerman	20	59
Boring machineman ..	19	20	Painter	16	26
Bricklayer	25	45	Rivetter	20	53
Coppersmith	26	40	Slotting machine operator	29	32
Carpenter	20	46	Sawyer	25	29
Crane driver	20	34	Saw sharpener	25	31
Core maker	25	41	Screwer (machine) ..	22	24
Drop stamper (mistri) ..	—	65	Switch board attendants	—	35
Driller	20	56	Turners	20	71
Engine driver	24	41	Tin-smith	27	46
Fitter	20	90	Wireman..	25	47
Fireman	18	20	Welder	—	60
Grinder	22	39	Coolies (standard) ..	—	15
Hammerman	15	18	Khalassis (standard) ..	—	18
Hydraulic press operator	15	24	Coolie sirdar	17	34
Miller	18	47	Khalassi serang ..	22	37
Moulder	20	54	Tindals	26	43
Marker out	24	60	Stokers	—	22

Notes.—(1) Men are actually engaged and paid at an hourly rate equivalent to the above monthly rates for a standard month of 212 hours.

(2) In addition to the above an attendance allowance is paid as follows :—

Under Rs. 26. per month	20 per cent.
Rs. 26 to Rs. 35 per month	17½ ,,
Rs. 36 to Rs. 58 per month	12½ ,,
Rs. 59 and over	7½ ,,

These allowances are paid provided the worker is not absent more than two days in the month.

(3) As stated elsewhere many men included in the above list would in Europe be classed as " unskilled " or " semi-skilled."

Mr. A. T. WESTON, M.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E., DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES, BENGAL, CALCUTTA.

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9. *Apprentices Act XIX of* 1850.—As far as the Director of Industries is aware, this Act is a complete dead letter. It is probable that no employer nowadays knows anything about it. The Act was introduced—it is understood—now 79 years ago in order to provide a definite channel for the employment and livelihood of orphans and Anglo-Indian children. It made no pretence to provide any solution to the employment problem or the apprenticeship of recruits for industry generally. The only apprenticeship scheme existing in Bengal is that known as the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training scheme, which body in short represents the employers of the engineering and electrical industry, the technical education authorities, and some other members of the interested public composing a Board, which sets the standard of admission which would-be apprentices must satisfy, and also lays down standard courses of training, and institutes examinations to test the technical knowledge acquired at the end of each year's apprenticeship. In this way the Board selects the best apprentices after four years' training in workshops, both from the technical and practical point of view, to proceed to the highest training available at the Bengal Engineering College. There is also a large technical school in Calcutta, training about 150 apprentices, and another school at Kanchrapara with the facilities for 100 apprentices. These latter are employed in the large railway workshops of the Eastern Bengal Railway. There are probably not more than 300 young men serving a regular apprenticeship and receiving a proper satisfactory technical training in the whole of the province. The majority of the industries in Bengal depend for their skilled supervision on European or Anglo-Indian employees—often without any real technical educational qualification or experience of industry through a proper apprenticeship or other form of practical training. As for the labour force it is mostly recruited from, what is called, the mistry and working low-caste people, who in the case of such industries as the jute and cotton textile industry are imported from Madras, Bihar and Orissa or the United Provinces. The idea of using the best intellectual talents and practical skill in industry has so far made very little headway in Bengal.

41 and 86. *Provision of Educational facilities by Employers with special reference to Technical Education.*—The part of the problem the Department of Industries, Bengal, has been mostly concerned with is the provision of technical education to the first-class apprentices, mostly young literate Indians in railway and other big workshops. The employers choose these apprentices from the pass list of an admission examination, conducted by the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, constituted under Government auspices and on which employers of labour have effective representation. Some employers also allow these apprentices time and opportunities to attend technical school classes during workshop hours, where necessary. Lastly, they contribute, more or less, to the cost of running technical schools, from which benefit is derived by their employees.

The first class apprentices are trained for the workshop and drawing office posts in industrial concerns, but educational facilities are also provided for less educated employees or employees' children in very few case only, such as at the Ichapore Rifle and Metal and Steel Factories and the railway workshops at Kanchrapara. We have little or no knowledge of these, inasmuch as no grants-in-aid have been claimed from this department.

The following is a list of the employing firms who encourage the technical training or education of their apprentices :—

Calcutta Technical School.—Burn & Co., Ltd. ; John King & Co. ; Jessop & Co. ; Garden Reach Workshops ; The Calcutta Port Commissioners ; Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore ; East Indian Railway Electrical Department ; Saxby and Farmer ; Marshall Sons & Co. ; The Vulcan Iron Works ; Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation ; British India Electric Construction Co., Ltd. ; Eastern Bengal Railway Signal Workshops ; Russa Engineering Works ; Bengal Telephone Corporation, Ltd. ; Beruck and Comens ; Telegraph Workshops ; Calcutta Tramways Co., Ltd. ; Mackintosh Burn & Co., Ltd. ; India General Navigation and Railway Company's Dockyard.

Kanchrapara Technical School.—Eastern Bengal Railway Workshops.

Khargpur Technical School.—Bengal Nagpur Railway Workshops.

Clearly, the Calcutta Technical School touches the largest number of employers of labour and more nearly represents the condition of affairs which obtains in Great Britain. It must be recorded that the employers in the above list have come into much closer contact with the school authorities in recent years. Such employers are now almost wholly drawing their apprentices from the pass lists, either of the Admission Examination conducted by the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, or a smaller but less exacting examination conducted by the Calcutta Technical School. Such employers of labour have a direct representation on the Governing Body of the Calcutta Technical School as well as the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training.

It will be recognised that only the fringe of the problem has so far been touched, and that the majority of employers and employees are quite apathetic to the advantages of technical education. As far as the employers are concerned, the advantage of giving technical education has so far been appreciated only by the engineering trade and the total number of apprentices who are receiving technical instruction with the permission and help of their employers would not exceed 300 students in the whole of the province.

The Department of Industries has endeavoured to provide opportunities for Bengali school-boys, both literate and illiterate, to take up the technical and industrial line by means of technical schools in district headquarter towns. There are four such schools maintained by Government in Bengal and ten similar schools maintained by District Boards or Missionary bodies with the aid of grants-in-aid from the Department of Industries. In spite of these facilities, however, it must be confessed that technical education is not popular. The charging of fees in technical schools is objected to, and indeed, in many cases, students expect so-called scholarships or stipends in order to bribe them to attend such schools. This lack of appreciation of the value of technical education is partly due to the fact that technical schools are not given a comparable status with high English schools. Moreover, it is only recently that any attempt has been made to bring about a common curriculum and examinations in these technical schools, and to correlate their courses of instruction with the products of the ordinary educational system at its different stages. Lastly, it has to be said that although long standing prejudice against any profession involving manual labour is breaking down, the process has not yet gone far enough to bring a large accession into the ranks of industry of the enterprising and intellectual human material of the Province.

139. (iii) *Application of the Indian Factories Act to small Factories.*—In regard to the question of the applicability of the Indian Factories Act as amended in 1922 to small factories, I observe that in accordance with the definition of " factory " in Clause 2 of the amending Act :—

" (*a*) any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any one day in the year not less than 20 persons are simultaneously employed and steam, water or

other mechanical power or electrical power is used in aid of any process for, or incidental to, making, altering, repairing, ornamenting, finishing or otherwise adapting for use, for transport or for sale any article or part of an article ; or

" (*b*) any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any one day in the year not less than ten persons are simultaneously employed and any such process is carried on, whether any such power is used in aid thereof or not which have been declared by the Local Government, by notification in the local official gazette, to be a factory ; "

cover the conditions which constitute a factory. The Act as amended has I understand in practice not been made generally applied to concerns where the number of employees is less than 20, although the Act empowers Government to bring factories employing as low as 10 or more persons within its operation. Only in the case of a very few concerns where the employees have numbered less than 20 and more than 10 has the concern been declared to come within the operation of the Act, such action being taken mainly in order to remove doubt. It is, of course, common knowledge that there are many small industrial manufacturing concerns which should strictly come within the operation of the Amending Act, but regarding which, definite action has not been taken, for well understood reasons. Bringing a factory within the scope of the Factories Act brings in consequences such as employers liability under the Workmen's Compensation Act. It also involves imposing conditions on the concern in the interests of safety, etc., which from experience it can be said will never be reasonably carried out and perhaps it has been thought that until the general standard of employment in the smaller bazaar industries becomes more amenable to the kind of organization and control as is connoted by modern industry it is hardly practicable to enforce the Act in the case of the smaller industries.

As to the extent and number of the small cottage or bazaar industries which do not come within the provisions and inspection laid down in the Indian Factories Act on account of the limitation of numbers employed being below 20, it is difficult to give any reliable estimate. The Survey of Cottage Industries Report originally made in 1924 and revised in 1928, the second edition of which is just published, gives a conspectus of these various kinds of industries. Of all places in the province, Calcutta is the one place where such industries exist in the greatest numbers because of the availability of cheap electrical power. From the survey of such industries carried out by the staff of the Calcutta Corporation at the suggestion of this Department, it will be seen that the following small factory industries, amongst others, exist in Calcutta :—

	Concerns.
Hosiery	16
Ropes and cordage	13
Tanneries	95
Buckets and small hardware workshops	49
Steel trunk factories	30
Brass hinge making	36
Wire-netting weaving	23
Brass and bell-metal casting and polishing workshops	110
Umbrella factories	20
Soap factories	35
Type foundries	12
Tobacco leaf pressing	20
Oil mills driven by electric motors	16
Oil mills driven by steam engines	43
Oil mills driven by bullocks	29

Most of these—though not all—use some form of machinery driven by electricity or other motive power. There is no doubt also that the list is not exhaustive, and that there are many small shops and premises where electric driven flour-grinding mills, soda water bottling, small chemical industries, etc., are carried on which have escaped enumeration.

It is difficult to particularize, but having had occasion to visit many of these small concerns, the general impression retained is that the various industries are carried on, usually, in the most unsuitable cramped premises, with little provision for light and air, ventilation and sanitation, and in such a state of congestion and disorder that danger to human life is an imminent and constant environment to those who labour therein. From the point of view therefore of industrial efficiency, and more especially that of safety and decency in conditions of human labour, my own view is that as soon as practicable all such concerns should be brought within the Factories Act and subjected to the process of inspection by competent factory inspectors, and the necessity of making the conditions of labour a particular consideration in the management of the concerns.

Whether such a course is possible is mainly one of ways and means, as it will necessitate the attentions of an adequate factory inspection staff. Such an application

of the Act will also evoke opposition from the persons concerned as it will be alleged that such small industries have not the capital or resources to enable them to comply with the Factory Act provision, and therefore that such industries will have to close down. While this may be true in some cases, my own view is that the discouragement of the small and less well-conditioned industries in favour of the larger consolidated and better equipped concerns will give a balance in favour of the community as a whole, and will not ultimately lead to any unemployment of skilled workmen. Another alternative which has been mentioned is that the legislation covering municipal administration should be so co-ordinated with the aims of the Factories Act as to make it obligatory on municipal bodies not to give registration to these small industries unless some reasonable observance of the conditions laid down in the Factories Act is complied with. To my mind though the intention behind this suggestion is well meaning, inasmuch as it would simplify and confine the administration of the Factories Act proper, I feel that no reliance could be made upon the administration of municipal control in the manner desired. The necessary protection and guidance to the smaller industrial concerns can only come from inspection, and the advice of competent factory inspectors, and my considered opinion is that all such concerns should be brought within the operation of the Act, as now amended, as soon as ways and means make it possible.

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Mr. M. BROOKS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE ANGUS CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

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Period in Business and Local Conditions.

Angus Jute Works began operating in May, 1913. When construction work commenced in May, 1912, the land now owned by the company was chiefly jungle and paddy fields, with but a few small brick dwellings and thatched huts, and with narrow winding roads, difficult of passage during the rainy season, leading through the jungle to these dwellings. The company has had to provide all the conveniences usually provided by public bodies in other countries—roads, water supply, electric lighting, sanitation and sewage disposal, and in addition has carried out or paid for, improvements to public roads and provided a free water supply to occupiers of land in the vicinity. Through the operations of the company's medical staff, under our Chief Medical Officer, F. H. B. Norrie, M.D., Ch.M., F.R.C.S.(E), O.B.E., a notable work has been accomplished by reducing to practically nil the incidence of malaria within a district covering about 1,000 acres, including the company's 200 acres, and having a population of about 10,000. The company's dispensaries, hospital and women's clinic, with their staff of one European Surgeon, one Lady Doctor, five Indian Doctors, and their assistants, serve a much larger area, attendances numbering about 60,000 last year and increasing this year. Small fees ranging from four annas, to Rs. 10 for a major operation if the patient can afford to pay, are charged in the case of non-employees, medical service being free to employees of the company. Dr. Norrie, as a specialist in ear, nose and throat diseases, is also consulted by Europeans from Calcutta and other parts of India, and during the past two years has been permitted by the Company to supervise medical work at several other jute mills on the Hooghly within a few miles from Angus.

Nature of Business.

Angus Jute Works.—The chief business of the company is the manufacture of special quality jute cloth, the entire process from raw jute to finished material being carried out under one roof. The output of this jute mill, consisting of 1,196 looms and 22,576 spindles, and working 60 hours per week as at present, is about 75,100,000 yards of cloth per year, of which about 50,600,000 yards are known in the trade as hessian cloth and about 24,500,000 yards as sacking cloth. Measured in tons of 2,240 lbs., the usual basis for jute mill calculations, the year's production is about 26,930 tons, consisting of 14,690 tons hessians and 12,240 tons sacking.

Angus Engineering Works.—The business of the company next in importance to the jute works is the manufacture at Angus Engineering Works of all the machinery required for jute mills. This engineering works, located at the same place as our jute works, was established on a small scale in 1917 and was extended to its present size in 1921. The output in a year is sufficient to equip completely, except engines and boilers, a new mill of 500 looms and 9,500 spindles. This is in addition to various classes of work done for railways and other industries. As in the jute works, the engineering works specialise in the highest quality of output, scientific control of materials and operations being aided by our metallurgical and chemical laboratory.

Number Employed.

Angus Jute Works.—Including works office staff and crews of boats on the river, and excluding Calcutta office and welfare department staff, the total staff employed by the jute works is about 6,200. Of this number 22 are Europeans, and of the remainder only about 12 per cent. are Bengalis, 88 per cent. of the operatives being people of other provinces who come to Bengal for work in the jute mills and most of whom return to their native villages annually for several weeks, when perhaps another member of the family takes the place of the worker in the jute mill. Most of the Bengalis come to work daily from their homes in the district, while most of the workers from other provinces are housed by the company. More detailed information regarding our jute works employees and housing is given herein later on.

Angus Engineering Works.—Including office staff and launch crews, the total staff employed by the engineering works is about 2,000. Of this number 26 are Europeans. The majority of the Indian employees are Bengali mistris (artisans) living in villages in the surrounding district or within a few miles. Many of these are carried to and from the works daily in our launches and many travel daily by train, or by train and launch. Only a small proportion of the Indian employees of the engineering works are housed by the company.

With these introductory remarks we will proceed with our statement under those subjects, set out in the Schedule of Subjects supplied to us, in which our experience mainly lies. Unless otherwise noted in each case, the statements hereunder refer to our jute works only. The various parts of our statement are numbered to correspond with the numbers of the headings in the Schedule of Subjects supplied by you.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) As mentioned in the introductory remarks, about seven-eighths of the employees in our jute works come from outside provinces. The distribution by provinces, religion and sex of the total Indian employees of the jute works is as follows:—

From	Hindus.		Mahomedans.		Totals.					
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	%	F.	%	Total	%
Bengal (Local) ..	598	94	66	4	664	87	98	13	762	12
Bihar and Orissa ..	1,713	183	1,507	25	3,220	94	208	6	3,428	56
Central Provinces ..	683	540	1	—	684	56	540	44	1,224	20
United Provinces ..	390	157	56	24	446	71	181	29	627	10
Madras Presidency ..	26	30	—	—	26	46	30	54	56	1
Other Provinces .. (Nepal 81) (Punjab 2)	83	—	—	—	83	100	—	—	83	1
Totals	3,493	1,004	1,630	53	5,123	83	1,057	17	6,180	100

It is to be noted that only those women actually employed by the jute works are included in the above table.

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2. (i) As near as we can estimate, about 13 per cent. of the labour *from other provinces* leave the jute mill each month, either with or without leave, and are absent for periods of several weeks, when it may be assumed that they have returned to their homes. The percentage is higher during the seasons of planting and harvesting, resulting in a shortage of labour at those times in many mills.

(ii) The Bengali employees, amounting to 12 per cent. of the total, may be considered as being the permanent labour force; although a large number of the workers from other provinces return to the mill yearly after their annual visit home.

3. No recruiting is necessary for Angus. The applications in person for employment are always in excess of the vacancies occurring, even during the seasons when labour scarcity may be expected.

8. For the purpose of these figures it is necessary to assume that an employee's service terminates when he leaves for several weeks' visit to his native village, although undoubtedly a large proportion of such persons ultimately resume their employment in the mill. On this basis the labour turnover (*i.e.*, actual changes in composition of the total labour staff) at Angus Jute Works average about 12½ per cent. per month, so that the average duration of employment is about eight months. The turnover varies with the class of labour and with the season, as shown hereunder:

LABOUR TURNOVER AT ANGUS JUTE WORKS.

July, 1928 *to June*, 1929.

Department.	Average number employed.	July per cent.	August per cent.	September per cent.	October per cent.	November per cent.	December per cent.	January per cent.	February per cent.	March per cent.	April per cent.	May per cent.	June per cent.	Average per month per cent.
Batching	384	8·1	12·2	10·4	9·6	15·3	9·3	17·9	10·4	12·5	15·8	18·7	16·4	13·1
Preparing	978	13·2	14·0	12·4	12·3	17·6	11·9	18·5	13·4	13·2	14·6	23·2	20·6	15·4
Spinning	971	18·2	15·8	9·8	15·6	18·6	8·3	14·7	9·7	11·8	14·0	25·0	18·6	15·0
Winding	435	12·0	12·4	10·9	6·9	13·3	7·7	12·2	9·1	8·0	9·6	11·7	9·6	10·3
Beaming	103	5·7	8·9	7·1	2·0	10·5	3·9	12·7	5·7	4·7	5·6	7·5	5·6	6·7
Weaving	1,315	17·8	24·7	20·0	17·3	26·9	10·3	15·1	17·7	17·6	19·6	21·0	19·9	19·0
Finishing	302	12·1	14·4	9·5	11·5	12·2	13·3	17·5	9·0	11·6	10·4	19·1	11·7	12·7
Sewing	379	8·5	9·5	8·0	6·8	7·8	7·4	8·2	6·3	5·7	7·1	7·7	8·4	7·6
Baling	35	11·4	5·7	14·3	Nil.	11·4	5·7	22·8	5·7	8·5	5·7	2·8	8·5	8·5
Mistris	441	2·5	1·1	Nil.	1·8	3·1	0·6	3·8	2·5	1·8	3·9	4·1	2·5	2·3
Outside	585	0·9	1·4	1·0	1·3	0·8	2·0	1·3	1·4	1·1	2·9	1·3	1·1	1·4
Overall	5,928	12·1	13·8	10·9	10·8	15·6	8·3	13·0	10·4	10·7	12·5	16·7	14·2	12·4

For classification of labour in each department by province of origin, religion and sex, see table given in our reply to subject No. 10, " Details of Organization."

II.—Staff Organization.

10. *Indian staff classified by province of origin, religion and sex.*

	Bengal Presidency.	Bihar and Orissa.	Madras.	United Provinces.	Central Provinces.	Other Provinces.	Total.
Hindu—							
Males ..	598	1,713	26	390	683	83	3,493
Females ..	94	183	30	157	540	—	1,004
Mahomedan—							
Males ..	66	1,507	—	56	1	—	1,630
Females ..	4	25	—	24	—	—	53
Totals ..	762	3,428	56	627	1,224	83	6,180

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13. (i) Generally, relations seem to be satisfactory. Special personal attention is constantly being given by the officers of the company to the improvement of working and living conditions.

(iii) There are no works committees, as understood in Europe and America. The workers are divided by race, religion and district of origin into many groups having little intercourse with those of different race or religion. The colidarity of such a group from one small foreign district, and possibly connected more or less by family ties, is probably greater than that of a works committee in occidental countries. Public letter writers in the vicinity are supplied by the company with printed forms addressed to the head office of the company, so that any illiterate workman having a grievance which he feels has not received proper attention at the works, may bring his case directly to the notice of the managing director. Any such petition or complaint receives careful investigation and considerate attention, but most complaints are settled by the European staff at the works, who are instructed in the company's policy toward employees.

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14. *(ii)* The actual payment of weekly wages is done personally by the European overseer in charge of each department, wages being handed by him to the employees in exchange for the wage tickets distributed to the workers earlier in the day by the Bengali clerks. These tickets have been made in the works office from the figures given in the above-mentioned registers.

15. The only work, other than building construction, done by contractors at Angus Jute Works is :—(1) Carrying of jute from tramway and railway wagons to godowns, and stowing in godowns, from godowns to the mill daily ; (2) carrying of cloth from looms to finishing department ; (3) loading of finished goods into railway wagons on siding and into our cargo boats at the jetty ; (4) unloading coal from railway wagons on siding and carrying coal to boilers

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III.—Housing.

16. (i) *(a)* In addition to housing provided for the European staff, housing is provided in our coolie lines for mill operatives, also in our babu quarters and mistri quarters for a large number of our babus (Bengali clerks) and mistris (Bengali artisans). The company's total investment in housing for Indian employees, including land, is about Rs. 6,20,000. As both our jute works and our engineering works are located at Angus, the housing herein mentioned is available for use of the engineering works as well as the jute works. But as a large proportion of the engineering works employees are Bengalis living in their own homes in the district outlying villages, practically all the accommodation in our cooly lines, and about half of that in our babu quarters, is utilised for our jute works employees. The mistri quarters are utilised almost entirely for engineering works employees. The babu and mistri quarters are located chiefly by those Bengalis whose homes are so distant that they visit their homes only at week ends, or less often.

(*b*) The number of dwellings provided, and the number of actual employees housed therein, apart from members of their families or others not employed by us, is as follows :—

Class of quarters.	Number of dwellings.	Number of rooms.	Number of employees housed.
Coolie lines, in blocks of 20 to 36 rooms ..	1,496	1,496	3,760
Single-family type for Bengali clerical staff	39	195	91
Two-family type for Bengali artisans ..	8	24	15
Four-family type for Bengali artisans ..	32	96	140
Two-family type for lady doctor and lady teachers.	2	6	2
Totals ..	1,577	1,817	4,008

(*c*) A description of each class of quarters can best be given by building and site plans which can be supplied if requested. The general details are as follows :—

General.—All buildings are of brick, with exterior walls plastered and colour-washed, interior walls plastered and white-washed, the colour-wash and white-wash being renewed each year after the close of the rainy season. Coolie lines have sloping clay-tiled roofs. All other buildings have flat roofs of beaten concrete on two layers of flat tiles, supported on steel beams. All buildings are single storeyed in height, and all floors are brick and concrete, cement plastered.

Coolie Lines.—The last eight blocks built on this site contain 160 rooms, 20 rooms per unit, each room being 12 ft. long by 10 ft. wide by 9½ ft. high, with a roofed and semi-enclosed verandah 10 ft. long by 4½ ft. wide, with an improved type Indian style " chula " or cooking place built in a corner of the verandah and equipped with hood and chimney, and with a steel shelf 8 ft. long by 14 ins. wide built in the wall of the room.

The older blocks contain from 22 to 36 rooms per unit, each room being 9½ ft. long by 8½ ft. wide, by 9ft. high, with a roofed open front verandah 9½ ft. long by 3½ ft. wide.

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(iii) The housing provided or controlled by landlords in the vicinity of Angus for the accommodation of mill workers falls under two heads :—1st, that provided by the landlords themselves, and 2nd, that provided by persons who have taken land from the landlords as tenants-at-will. In both cases the type of construction and the surrounding conditions are the same. The walls are constructed either from mud plastered on a split bamboo framework, or are 5 in. walls of low quality brick held together by mud plaster or a binding of ashes and lime. The roofs are of thatch or tiles. The houses are built to occupy as much as possible of their respective plots of land, closely abutting or encroaching on public lanes which thereby eventually become so narrow as to permit the passage of only one bullock cart. Light, ventilation and sanitation are given little, if any, attention by the owners of the huts or by the landlords. The rooms are small, the object apparently being to crowd as many rooms as possible into one block or " busti," to spend the absolute minimum on construction and maintenance, and to extort the greatest possible amount from rental of the land to tenants, and from the rental by landlords and tenants of rooms to mill workers. The average annual rent paid by the " busti " owners to the landlords is Rs. 3 per cottah per year (Rs. 181–8 annas per acre) ,and the rent paid by the mill workers for one room is from Re. 1 to Rs. 3 per month, depending on the size of the room ; whereas the rental of most rooms in the company's coolie lines is only 8 annas per month. The living conditions in such " bustis " are, to the Western mind, appalling and, at Angus, are only alleviated by the attention which the company's health officers give to private property in the vicinity free of charge. These conditions probably will continue until the large landholders, who never visit their holdings, acquire a better knowledge of the conditions and a greater sense of responsibility for them. Landlords, if so inclined, could do much to prevent the construction of filthy hovels, and the maintenance of insanitary conditions on their land.

(iv) The living accommodation being required chiefly by workers from other provinces, who have their homes there, no houses are built by the workers themselves except, in a few cases, by those who are able to rent a plot from the landlords and construct a " busti," as above-mentioned, for rental to others. In such cases the worker himself may occupy one or more rooms in the " busti."

17. Schemes for the further acquisition of land by the company, in order to eliminate the existing insanitary private " bustis " in the vicinity and to permit the opening up of roads by the company and the construction of additional and improved accommodation for employees, are completely blocked by the impossibility of obtaining the necessary land, either by private negotiations which have failed

or by the operation of the Land Acquisition Act, at a price which will permit proceeding with the scheme. We have offered in recent years for land in the locality, suitable for building quarters, at rates as undernoted, and for that reason it is unlikely that similar land could be acquired at any less figure even under the Land Acquisition Act.

	Rs.	
For the rights of the present tenants	2,500	per bigha.
For permanent leasehold from the landlords	500	,,
Plus annual rent of Rs. 25 per bigha which capitalized at 20 years' rent, is	500	,,
Total	3,500	

As 3·025 bighas =1 acre, this is Rs. 10,587 per acre, which, at 1s. 6d. per rupee, is £794 per acre for land 20 miles north from Calcutta and about a quarter mile inland from the west bank of the river.

18. (i and ii) Mill operatives would naturally prefer a separate walled or strongly fenced plot of land for each family, with a single family dwelling thereon which, to equal that to which they are accustomed in their own villages, need only be of bamboo and mud construction with thatched roof. Sufficient room on the plot for a small vegetable garden, and for the keeping of a cow or goats, would also be desirable. The provision of such accommodation by the mill company is impracticable in mill areas for the following reasons :

(1) The large number of workers to be accommodated, consequently the large area of land required, and the high cost of land near jute mills.

(2) The high cost of maintaining such dwellings in good repair, and, if a more permanent type of dwelling is provided, the high cost of constructing the required number of this type.

(3) The difficulty in and the cost of maintaining proper sanitary conditions over such a large area, among people whose customs are insanitary.

If land were obtainable to square the boundaries of a large irregular low-lying plot of land held by us adjoining our present coolie lines, we would proceed gradually with our scheme to raise the level of the land by excavating tanks, lay out roads, install a supply of tube-well water, a drainage and a sewage system, and construct a type of quarters more suitable for family occupation than our present lines, and distribute these buildings so as to give the maximum amount of land between houses.

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(iii) *Provision made for Lighting, Conservancy and Water Supply*—(*a*) *Lighting.*—All coolie line roads and passages, and all buildings provided by the company for the use of workers living there, such as the market, school, mosque and tea shops, are lighted by electricity supplied from the company's power house. All other company quarters have electric lights in every room, and lighted roads, the current coming from the same source.

(*b*) *Conservancy.*—Except in the factory enclosure and the European residence enclosure, both of which places are served by the septic tank system, the effluent being filtered and chlorinated, all other company housing is served by ordinary privies. The night-soil is removed daily by the company's conservancy carts to the trenching ground provided by the company. The nearest municipal trenching ground is inadequate and at too great a distance for our use. Estimates are now being obtained from contractors for replacing the ordinary privies by a more modern sewage system which we expect to install shortly.

(*c*) *Water Supply.*—The drinking water supply at Angus for all company buildings and for many residents in the vicinity is supplied by the company from two sources, the two mains being connected to maintain good pressure at all points. The main source is the River Hooghly, from which water is pumped, treated with sulphate of alumina, passed through a sedimentation tank filtered by Jewell Gravity Filters having a capacity of 18,000 gallons per hour, and sterilized with chlorine gas by Wallace-Tiernan and Chlorodon apparatus. The other source of supply is a 5-inch tube-well 260 ft. deep, located in the coolie line area and having a capacity of 6,000 gallons per hour. The pressure in the mains is kept as constant as possible throughout the day and night. The coolie lines are supplied by 36 hydrants conveniently located. All other quarters are supplied with a tap inside each dwelling. The residents on private lands in the vicinity, and the general public, are supplied free of charge by 10 company hydrants located on public roads outside the mill premises. The company has also provided free of charge a 2-inch tube-well and pump for the inhabitants of a small village about three-quarters of a mile west from the mill office.

19. The accommodation is always fully utilized and, at the rates of rental charged, any further accommodation provided would no doubt be likewise fully utilized. Rentals do not cover even the interest and depreciation charges on the cost of construction.

20. *Rent Rates in Various Classes.—Coolie lines.*—Eight annas per room per month is the rate paid for practically all rooms in the coolie lines. The highest rate paid is twelve annas per room per month for 80 rooms in the four newer units isolated from the older and more congested area. Thirty-six rooms are occupied free of rent by the " methors " or sanitary squad.

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21. Owing to the large number of workers living in the coolie lines, to the constantly changing tenancy, and to the fact that brothers, families or friends live together, although one may be employed by us and another by the adjoining jute mill, it is impracticable to restrict this housing to occupancy only by Angus employees. For the same reasons it is also very difficult to control the number of persons occupying one room at night. It is impracticable, and would naturally be resented, to demand admittance to a room at night in order to check the number of occupants. Estimates of the average number of persons housed in the coolie lines vary from 2½ to 4 persons per room.

IV.—Health.

23. (i) *Figures of Mortality.*—The figures for occupiers of the company's houses were as follows for the year 1928 :—

Deaths.

Class.	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Hindu	25	13	38
Mahomedan	7	3	10
Totals ..	32	16	48

(ii) *Birth Rate and Infant Mortality.*—The figures for 1928, for the company's houses, were :—

Births.

Class.	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Hindu	26	13	39
Mahomedan	8	3	11
Totals ..	34	16	50

Infant Mortality.

Class.	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Hindu	8	5	13
Mahomedan	1	Nil	1
Totals ..	9	5	14

A whole-time vaccinator and registrar of births and deaths is employed by the company.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided*—(i) (*a*) *Staff organization.*—The company maintains the following whole-time staff for free medical service to employees, and for improving health and sanitary conditions in the district.

Name.	Branch of work.
Dr. F. H. B. Norrie, M.D., Ch.M., F.R.C.S.(E.).	Chief medical officer.
Dr. Miss G. Owen, L.S.M.F.P.. ..	Women and maternity clinic.
Dr. J. N. Dutt, M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M.. .	General sanitation, anti-malarial squad, bacteriological laboratory.
Dr. S. P. Chandra, M.B.	Tropical laboratory, skin diseases, anaesthetist.
Dr. Asanullah Ahmed, L.M.F. ..	General dispensary, venereal diseases.
Dr. J. C. Shaha, L.M.F.	General dispensary, eye diseases.
Dr. N. L. Ghose, L.M.F.	Hospital, ear, nose, and throat, assistant to C.M.O.
Miss S. Lala	Trained midwife.

Three Bengali clerks ; two Bengali electrical assistants ; one Bengali laboratory assistant ; two Bengali compounders ; five Bengali dressers ; one sanitary patrolman ; 11 menials.

Anti-malarial squad :—One sirdar, 16 coolies.

(*b*) *Annual Expenditure.*—Excluding sanitation and conservancy, the total expenditure by the company during 1928 on health and welfare work, including Rs. 12,733 for interest and depreciation on capital invested in buildings used for this purpose, was Rs.1,63,669. Against such expenditure the company receives annually the sum of Rs. 12,600, being the income from Angus preference shares left in trust for this purpose in 1917 by Mr. J. M. Bemis, since deceased, one of the founders and, originally, the largest shareholder in this company. The following additional receipts were applied against the above expenditure in 1928—

	Rs.
From non-employee patients, as fees and donations	7,136
From unclaimed wages at Angus Jute Works ..	1,141
From fines for faulty work at Angus Jute Works ..	2,412

(*c*) *Medical Equipment and Methods.*—The units composing the dispensary include the following departments:—General dispensary, tropical dispensary, eye, ear, nose and throat, venereal, skin, bacteriological laboratory. Electrical-X-ray, diathermy, ultra-violet light, ionization and massage. Operation theatre, women's outpatient clinic, maternity clinic, hospital.

All departments, except possibly the hospital, are well equipped and kept up-to-date. Most modern methods of treatment are available for employees and their families free of charge. Small fees are asked from non-employee patients.

An attempt has been made to establish the clinic system, each member of the staff having some special branch of work in addition to general duties. We have found this system to be of great advantage to both doctors and patients. Consultations on interesting cases are held regularly, attended by all concerned.

(ii) No medical facilities are provided by the Government in the immediate locality. However, there is a Government hospital at Chinsurah and another at Serampore, each being about 6½ miles from Angus, under the civil surgeon of Hooghly district stationed at Chinsurah.

(iii) Other jute mills in the district have dispensaries to serve their own employees and there are small municipal dispensaries about one mile from Angus, both north and south.

(iv) Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or "dais." (See (i) above and 25 (ii) below).

25. (i) The attendances at Angus dispensary during 1928 were as follows:—

New Cases,

Origin.	Number.	Percentage of total.
Angus Jute Works—Employees and families	11,019	55
Angus Engineering Works—Employees and families ..	6,086	30
Non-employees	3,056	15
Total ..	20,161	100

Total Attendances.

Origin.	Number.	Percentage of total.
Angus Jute Works—Employees and families	33,133	55
Angus Engineering Works—Employees and families ..	16,512	28
Non-employees	10,118	17
Total ..	59,763	100

(ii) (*a*) The attendances of women have increased quite recently owing to the addition to our staff of a lady doctor. The attendances of women during 1928, before this additional service, were as follows:—

New Cases (Women only).

Origin.	Number.	Percentage of total.
Angus Jute Works—Employees or families	1,301	55
Angus Engineering Works—Families of employees	424	18
Non-employee families	659	27
Total	2,384	100

(*b*) A maternity clinic with outpatients' department has been operated since 1926. We experienced much difficulty in obtaining a suitable midwife and it is only since May, 1928, when we obtained Miss Lala from the Eden Hospital, Calcutta where she received her training, that consistent progress has been made with this work. In August of this year, Dr. Miss Owen was appointed to take charge under Dr. Norrie, of the medical work for women, and rapid progress in this department is already being recorded. Two untrained " dais " of the Chamar caste who practised their crude profession among our women workers, have been taken into this department for instruction and training as future assistants, thus becoming allies instead of unhygienic competitors in the work. The successful argument in winning them over was the offer of a fee of 8 annas for each case of theirs brought by them to our maternity ward for delivery, and they are now learning and appreciating the benefits of scientific supervision of childbirth.

26. (i) Latrine accommodation for operatives while at work in Angus Jute Works consists of—

Three large septic tank latrines, each of the same type and capacity.

Total capacity	13,740 persons per day.
Total seats	540 (male 396, female 144.)

At Angus Engineering Works the accommodation is—

One septic tank latrine.

Total capacity	2,000 persons per day.
Total seats	44

The effluent is filtered at each tank, then flows to a common sump, where it is treated by chlorine gas through a Wallace-Tiernan apparatus before discharge through an underground drain. The final effluent is tested twice a month in our bacteriological laboratory, and once a month by the Public Health Department, Government of Bengal.

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(iii) (*a*) *Coolie Lines.*—There are four large bathing tanks excavated by the company in the coolie line area. One of these has brick walls on all sides and six brick bathing " ghats " or steps leading into the water. The other three have sloping natural banks on all sides. The larger of these three has three brick and cement bathing " ghats." All four tanks are inter-connected, and the renewal and circulation of water is effected by pumping in water from the river through a conduit of about half a mile in length. The surface of the water and the banks of the tanks are kept in clean condition by the sanitary staff and the anti-malarial squad.

(*b*) *Other Quarters.*—All other quarters for Indian employees have a bathing enclosure in each dwelling, provided with a filtered water tap.

(*c*) *Hydrants.*—It is customary for all filtered water hydrants to be used for bathing and washing. There are 36 of these in the coolie line area.

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29. (i) There are no serious industrial diseases at Angus. There are numerous cases of engorgement of certain parts of the nasal passages, probably due to inhalation of dust in the batching department of the mill. Apart from some little inconvenience, this is a minor complaint.

In certain parts of the mill where workers handle jute treated with mineral oil and whale oil, a skin disease exists known as jute dermatitis, which is due to the sweat glands becoming clogged with oil and dirt. This disease could be avoided to a large extent by greater attention to personal cleanliness. In cases investigated the disease appeared about three months after the patient returned to work after a visit to his home province, and a similar period of leave at home results in a complete disappearance of the lesions.

(ii) *Cholera.*—During 1928 there were no cases of cholera in our coolie lines, with the exception of one imported from Howrah, although the disease was epidemic from March to May and again during October and November in neighbouring villages where about 250 cases occurred with 60 to 70 deaths.

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The total anti-cholera inoculations carried out for the three years 1926–1928 were :—

1926	474
1927	3,825
1928	5,836
Total	10,135

Every effort is made to obtain prompt report of any case of cholera in the vicinity, and all cases are brought under treatment. All contacts and probable contacts are

inoculated immediately. We have no difficulty in persuading workers to be inoculated; in fact many ask to be done, as they are now beginning to appreciate the benefits conferred by protective inoculation.

The cases of cholera attended by our medical staff during 1928 were :—

Angus Jute Works employees and families	31
Angus Engineering Works employees and families	5
Non-employees	45
Total	81

There was a very heavy death-rate from cholera in Bengal during 1928, and the value of inoculation was strikingly demonstrated by the absolute freedom from the disease of workers living in our coolie lines, while the epidemic was raging in the surrounding villages and on the other side of the Hooghly from Angus.

Malaria.—During 1928, apart from a few imported cases, there was no malaria among our employees living in quarters provided by the company. There were also but few cases in the neighbouring villages under treatment by our anti-malarial squad. In former years there have been many fatal cases of the pernicious type of malaria in these villages. In 1928 no case was reported, although the whole neighbourhood was under supervision to detect any occurrence of the disease. It would appear that malaria is well under control in the vicinity of Angus, and we may attribute this to the work of our anti-malarial squad, the recurring cost of which is only about Rs. 5,000 per year. We hold malarial surveys and take spleen indices twice yearly in the locality, and also supply coolies, trained in anti-malarial measures, to any of the neighbouring jute mills who apply for them.

The cases of malaria attended by our medical staff in 1928 were :—

Angus Jute Works employees and families	713
Angus Engineering Works employees and families	457
Non-employees	210
Total	1,380

Hookworm.—The number of cases found among our employees is not large. The total cases treated by our medical staff during 1928 were :—

Angus Jute Works employees and families	51
Angus Engineering Works employees and families	7
Non-employees	47
Total	105

Small-pox.—There has been no case in our coolie lines since 1926, although the disease has been more or less constantly present in nearby villages. Practically all children and adults living in our coolie lines have been protected by vaccination. Owing to the continuous influx and eflux of persons living there, it is necessary to have our vaccinator at work constantly. The total number of vaccinations carried out for the three years 1926–28 were :—

1926	6,214
1927	2,187
1928	1,042
Total	9,443

Of the 1928 vaccinations, 573 were primary and 379 secondary.

Tuberculosis.—During 1928 there were nine cases of pulmonary phthisis among employees residing in our houses. The number of phthisical patients from neighbouring villages attending our dispensary comprises a high proportion of the total cases treated, which for 1928 were :—

Angus Jute Works employees and families	23
Angus Engineering Works employees and families	11
Non-employees	70
Total	104

Kala-azar.—In 1928 there were no cases of this disease in our houses, and very few of those treated were from nearby villages. The disease seems to be checked, or is dying out in the locality. Most of the cases treated were from distant points, the total for 1928 being :—

Angus Jute Works employees and families	10
Angus Engineering Works employees and families	7
Non-employees	41
Total	58

Rabies.—This disease is unknown in the locality, though elsewhere cases of dog-bite from suspected animals are of frequent occurrence owing to the large number of unlicensed and diseased dogs permitted to roam about. As an anti-rabic measure and to minimize the nuisance of pariah dogs, we carry on a continuous campaign against them ; 565 dogs were destroyed by our sanitary staff during 1928. Rats are also destroyed regularly.

Other Tropical Diseases and Influenza.— The number of cases treated by our medical staff in 1928 was as follows :—

Origin.	Influenza	Dysentery	Dengue Fever.	Leprosy	Filariasis.
Angus Jute Works employees and families.	756	234	99	30	16
Angus Engineering Works employees and families.	430	125	47	14	9
Non-employees	78	134	109	53	23
Total ..	1,264	493	255	97	48

31. (i) *Extent and Working of Existing Schemes (including Allowances given before and after Childbirth).*—During 1921–23 we had a maternity benefit fund, but there were only two claimants. Our experience led to the conclusion that the payment of money before and after childbirth was of less benefit to the woman than obtaining her submission to proper medical supervision at childbirth. Much difficulty was experienced in persuading women to abandon the practice of calling in the usual ignorant low-caste dai or midwife, whose insanitary administration often causes the death of both mother and child. It is only recently that we have succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory and properly trained midwife and a lady doctor for our maternity clinic. On the 1st September this year a notice was posted in the jute works that no woman would be allowed to work therein during the period from one month before to one month after childbirth, and that full wages would be paid during such period of absence from work providing that the woman would attend our maternity clinic. This has resulted up to date (14th September) in bringing 18 cases of pregnancy under proper medical supervision. We are drawing up plans for a separate small hospital for women to improve and increase the existing facilities, and are embodying in the plans a creche for small children.

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(iii) In considering any legislation on the subject of maternity benefits, it may be well to bear in mind that, unlike similar schemes in other countries, no subscription to the cost of such fund could be enforced or expected from the employee, and that the entire cost probably would have to be shared by employers and the Government.

V.—Welfare (other than Health or Housing, but including Education).

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33. Apart from our chief medical officer, and several members of our European staff who work without remuneration in the interests of the various welfare activities at Angus the company does not employ a separate welfare staff.

34. (i) (*a*) *Refreshments.*—The company has provided in the coolie lines two Mahomedan and one Hindu teashops. These are rented to shopkeepers to operate under the company's supervision. Tea is also served to employees in the jute works during the morning and afternoon by the teashop staff.

(*b*) *Shelters.*—Practically all work is conducted under shelter.

(*c*) *Creches.*—We have none, but are now drawing up plans for one.

(ii) We have supplied an outdoor gymnasium in the yard of the boys' school, equipped with ladders, horizontal bar, parallel bars and Swedish horse. Mr. W. N, Hardy, of Angus Engineering Works, gives gymnastic instruction here to boys of the school and to a few young mill operatives. Mr. G. Williams, of Angus Jute Works, an ex-army non com., gives instruction in boxing to the Boy Scouts.

Two football grounds are provided by the company for the use of the Indian staff.

A tennis court is provided in the area of the Bengali clerical staff quarters for their use.

Many of the tanks existing on the company's land have been stocked by us with fish, and fishing with rod and line is permitted free to all employees. Netting is prohibited.

For the European staff a golf club house has been provided by the company, and the free use of a portion of the company's land for a nine-hole golf course. The staff, by means of golf membership fees, have themselves constructed and maintained the course. Several tennis courts and a bowling green are provided in our European residence compound.

Fortnightly cinema shows throughout the year are provided free by the company in the coolie line area, and are well attended by workers.

Radio receivers with loud-speakers have been installed by the company in the three teashops in the coolie lines.

(iii) (*a*) *Staff Provident Fund.*—The total membership of this fund is about 790 employees, and the total amount lying to the credit of members in the fund is about Rs. 8,22,000. Membership is open to all employees of the company drawing wages or salaries of at least Rs. 30 per month. Employees drawing less wages than this minimum are of the mill operative class, whose average duration of employment is eight months (*see* Subject 8 (*i*) herein), so that it is impracticable to admit them to the benefits of this fund. The objects of the fund are to encourage and assist the employee in making some financial provision for old age, disability, and the major calamities of Indian life, such as collapse of one's house (or the marriage of a daughter). The member contributes at least 5 per cent. of his salary each month and the company contributes the equivalent amount every half-year. The amount contributed during 1928 by the company free of income tax was Rs. 64,744, as against Rs. 46,744 contributed by members. Six per cent. of the company's contribution accrues to the member for each half-year of service with the company, but this provision is not strictly enforced, and the company's contribution, in the majority of cases, is paid in full to members leaving our service. Loans may be taken by members up to two-thirds of the amount of their own subscription, and this privilege is extensively used.

(*b*) *Clerks' Tiffin Fund.*—In the Calcutta office of the company it was found some years ago that the health of clerks suffered through abstinence from mid-day refreshment, and that the abstinence was due chiefly to the difficulty in obtaining near the office food of good quality at a sufficiently low price. A scheme was therefore put into effect at a cost of about Rs. 4,800 per year to the company, under which we contribute to the clerks' tiffin fund at rates depending on the salary of each clerk—the less the salary the greater the company's contribution in each case. About 60 clerks are employed, and the fund is managed by a committee elected from and by the clerks themselves.

(*c*) *Vernacular library.*—A library with about 900 volumes in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu is provided by the company for the free use of Indian employees. The library is located in a lower room of the clock tower in the coolie lines, and a whole-time librarian is employed.

(*d*) *Bazaar.*—A large market building is provided by the company in the coolie line area, containing shops and stalls for grain, foodstuffs, aerated water, clothing, and miscellaneous small articles used by the workers. Shops and stalls are rented to shopkeepers. The company endeavours to exercise control over prices and usury. If the conduct of a shopkeeper is the subject of complaints from our workers, and we are unable to remedy the condition otherwise, he is evicted after reasonable notice.

(*e*) *Mosque.*—A large mosque has been provided by the company for the Mahomedan workers.

(*f*) *Burial ground.*—A burial ground for Mahomedans has also been provided by the company.

(*g*) *Boy Scouts.*—The Boy Scouts movement was introduced by us in January, 1928, in connection with our Boys' School.

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Total scout strength is 30, cub strength 41. The scout masters are employed by us as school teachers.

(*h*) *Girl Guides.*—Mrs. B. McDiarmid, wife of an assistant manager of our jute works, has been taking the course of training in Calcutta as guider, and the Girl Guide movement will shortly be started by her among the pupils of our girls' school.

(*i*) *Ice plant.*—An ice plant with a capacity of 4 tons per day is maintained by the company, the ice being supplied free of charge to employees.

(*j*) *Aerated water factory.*—A plant for the manufacture of aerated water has been provided by the company and is operated by the committee of the Angus Community Club, under agreement with the company that all profits are to be used for the benefit of employees. The product is purchased by our European staff. A shopkeeper in our bazaar provides aerated water for sale to Indian workers.

(*k*) *Angus Community Club.*—The company has provided for the European staff in their compound a building containing a library of about 4,200 volumes, a billiard room with two tables and a concert hall to seat about 150 persons. A librarian, a billiard marker and three menials are employed by the company in this connection. The affairs of the club are managed by a general committee, with sub-committees for entertainments, golf, tennis and the aerated water business. All expenses, other than building maintenance and the staff above mentioned are paid by the members of the club from the proceeds of membership fees and admittance fees to entertainments. Concerts, dances and cinema shows are held during the cooler months, and cinema shows during the hotter months. Entertainments are largely attended by Europeans from other places as well as by Angus Europeans.

35. The object of all the company's health and welfare work is to provide for employees the best working and living conditions possible in the industry. A very large share of the writer's time during his residence in India, which covers the entire period, with the exception of furloughs, from the clearing of jungle for the mill construction up to date, together with a corresponding amount of time and attention by all the administrative staff of the company, has been given to this object by the direction and desire of the chief shareholders, Mr. A. F. Bemis, a director, and Mr. A. V. Phillips, the chairman of the company. Much remains to be done, and no doubt members of the Commission can point out much that obviously should or could be done, towards raising the standard of living among the rank and file. It is for others than ourselves to judge what has been done, but we believe it has resulted to some extent in attracting to Angus a little higher grade of employees than the average in the local industry. This is more noticeable among the higher paid employees and less noticeable among the rank and file.

36. (i) Evening classes in elementary subjects are held for adults in our boys' school conducted by the three schoolmasters and attended as follows :—

Class.	Average number of pupils.
Bengali and English	11
Urdu and Persian	10
Hindi	12
Total	33

(ii) We do not employ any half-time workers.

(iii) (*a*) A boys' school with three schoolmasters is provided by the company, day classes being held. The average attendance is—

Class.	Pupils.
Bengali and English	39
Urdu and Persian	32
Hindi	37
Total	108

(*b*) A girls' school with two Bengali lady teachers is provided by the company. The pupils attending are mainly Bengali girls. No girls attend after 12 years of age. There is a well-equipped Indian-style kitchen in a separate building attached to the school, where cooking lessons are given once weekly. Mrs. B. McDiarmid, wife of an assistant manager of our jute works, teaches knitting and supervises the sewing class, and other Angus European ladies assist by supplying sewing materials. Subjects taught are reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, music, drawing, physical

drill, outdoor games, and, in addition, to the senior standards, English writing and reading, Bengali literature, geography, dictation, knitting and hygiene. Total attendance is as follows :—

Grades.	Children of employees.	Children of non-employees.	Totals.
Junior Classes—			
A	14	3	17
B.	5	10	15
C.	6	2	8
Senior Classes—			
1st standard	7	4	11
2nd „	7	3	10
3rd „	1	1	2
Total ..	40	23	63

(*c*) Plans are being made for another school to accommodate children of workers. A census of all children in our coolie lines this month (September, 1929) revealed the following figures classified to show the number of boys and girls not attending school at present, whose parents expressed willingness or unwillingness, respectively, to send the children to such a school if built. The census also shows the number of children under school age who, in addition to the infants in arms of employees living elsewhere, would possibly be benefited by the proposed creche.

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Abridged Census of Children in Angus Coolie Lines, September, 1929.

	Under 4 years.			4 years and over. Willing.			4 years and over. Unwilling.			Total Children.
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	
Hindu	67	63	130	104	33	137	2	67	69	336
Mahomedan ..	22	25	47	45	15	60	10	26	36	143
Total ..	89	88	177	149	48	197	12	93	105	479

37. For the permanent staff it is possible to make provision for old age and premature retirement under such a scheme as our staff provident fund, which has 790 employee members, and which is described here under Subject 34 (iii) (*a*). For the majority of employees, whose average duration of employment is eight months, it does not appear possible at present to make such provision.

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XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The average earnings per week for each class of operatives inside the mill at Angus Jute Works is as follows, excluding Bengali Clerks, Mistris (artisans) and Europeans. There are no half-timers or children. All workers are employed for 60 hours weekly under the single-shift system. The number of women operatives in each department is shown in the table given under subject 10 (*c*).

Weekly Wages at Angus Jute Works.

Department and Class.	Number Employed.	Average Weekly Remuneration. Rs. a. p.
Batching (Sacking)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	17 12 11
Other Sirdars ..	7	7 5 10
Operatives ..	133	4 0 2
Batching (Hessian)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	17 12 11
Other Sirdars ..	11	7 10 11
Operatives	234	4 0 0
Preparing (Sacking)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	23 2 7
Other Sirdars ..	39	8 12 5
Operatives	446	3 10 9
Preparing (Hessian)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	22 13 11
Other Sirdars ..	37	8 13 9
Operatives	472	3 9 10
Spinning (Sacking)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	25 9 6
Other Sirdars ..	38	12 1 10
Operatives	400	4 14 1
Spinning (Hessian)—		
Head Sirdar ..	12	6 1 6
Other Sirdars ..	48	12 2 10
Operatives	494	4 13 5
Winding (Sacking)—		
Head Sirdar (Warp)	1	7 15 0
,, ,, (Cop)..	1	9 14 0
,, ,, (Beaming)	1	8 14 0
Other Sirdars ..	3	7 10 7
Operatives ..	202	5 14 9
Winding (Hessian)—		
Head Sirdar (Warp)	1	9 14 0
,, ,, (Cop)	1	10 2 0
,, ,, (Beaming)	1	13 6 0
Other Sirdars ..	3	8 5 4
Operatives	328	6 8 9
Carried forward	2,907	

Department and Class.	Number Employed.	Average Weekly Remuneration. Rs. a. p.
Brought forward	2,907	
Weaving (Sacking)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	32 10 2
Other Sirdars ..	17	15 8 5
Operatives ..	322	8 10 3
Weaving (Hessian I)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	35 5 7
Other Sirdars ..	31	14 15 4
Operatives	546	8 2 2
Weaving (Hessian II)—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	31 1 0
Other Sirdars ..	22	13 8 11
Operatives	373	8 0 0
Finishing—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	10 14 0
Other Sirdars ..	13	7 1 9
Operatives	250	4 8 5
Machine Sewing— ..		
Head Sirdar ..	1	9 14 0
Other Sirdars ..	4	8 3 5
Operatives ..	210	5 11 4
Hand sewing—		
Head Sirdar ..	1	9 14 0
Other Sirdars ..	8	6 1 0
Operatives ..	183	3 12 0
Cloth Examination—		
Sirdar	1	9 3 0
Operatives	69	5 0 4
Total	4,962	

Summary.

Class.	Average Remuneration per person. Per week.	Per month (4–1/3 weeks)
300 Sirdars	Rs. 11-7-0	Rs. 49-9-0
4,662 Operatives	Rs. 5-9-6	Rs. 24-3-10

The wages paid to Indian employees at Angus Jute Works, working 60 hours weekly as at present, amount annually to Rs. 16,46,000 for weekly wages and Rs. 2,76,000 for monthly wages, total Rs. 19,22,000. Operatives' wage rates have for some years been reduced to their simplest form at Angus. For each class of work in

the mill there is only one wage rate per 60-hour week, which includes all extras customarily added separately as "khoraki," "50 per cent. war bonus," "electric light money," etc. There has been retained, however, a separate small bonus of 4 annas to 8 annas per week to time workers for good attendance, and a bonus system to piece workers for production in excess of a certain figure in each case.

98. The total amount of remittances by money orders through the Angus Post Office during 1928 was Rs. 3,88,797. We are informed by the Postmaster that practically the entire amount represents remittances home by jute mill operatives. The remitters were not all Angus employees, however, as this post office, together with the post office at Baidyabati, 1½ miles south, is used to some extent by workers in neighbouring mills. On the other hand, money may be taken home by a worker or sent by a brother worker returning home on his annual visit.

106. (i) The total wages paid to Indian staff at our jute works during 1928, when operatives were employed 54 hours weekly, amounted to Rs. 17,56,500. The total of fines deducted from wages during the same period was Rs.2,412, or 137/1000ths of 1 per cent. of the wages paid. Fining is only resorted to in case of faulty work causing loss or damage. The average fine is about 4 annas, but may be as high as Re. 1 in the case of an artisan drawing Rs. 35 to Rs. 50 per month, depending on the extent of the damage.

(ii) There are no other deductions from wages at Angus, with the exception of the monthly subscription of provident fund members, and income tax in cases where the company is required by the income tax officer to make such deduction from salary.

(iii) All fines deducted from wages are credited to the welfare fund and applied against the expenditure of the health and welfare department.

107. (i) All wages to Indian employees at Angus Jute Works, with the exception of clerical staff and a few employees outside the mill, are paid weekly. Bengali mistris, or artisans, were formerly paid monthly as is customary elsewhere, but have been paid weekly since December, 1928. For the purpose of weekly wage payments the staff is divided into six sections as undernoted, the week ending on a different day for each section. Payments of wages occur consecutively on each working day of the week, so that the calculation and payment of wages is a continuous process.

Programme for Weekly Wage Payments.

Section.	Wages paid on	For week ending on the previous	Unpaid wages in hands of company
Spinning	Monday ..	Thursday night	1½ days.
Weaving	Tuesday ..	Saturday noon	1 day.
Preparing	Wednesday ..	Saturday noon	2 days.
Batching, Beaming and Winding.	Thursday ..	Monday night	2 days.
Finishing and Sewing ..	Friday ..	Tuesday night	2 days.
Mistris and General ..	Saturday ..	Wednesday night	2 days.

The usual procedure in jute mills, and the procedure used at our mill before the above system was adopted a year ago, is to calculate wages in all departments for the week ending on the last working day of the calendar week, which is Saturday in the case of single-shift mills and Thursday or Friday in the case of multiple-shift mills. The labour of such calculation at one time, and the preparation of wage tickets, for several thousand employees is so great that wages usually are not ready for payment until the last working day of the succeeding week.

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(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept for one year after the date they became payable. It is our experience that such wages are usually claimed within three months of issue and rarely claimed thereafter. At the expiration of one year, unclaimed wages are transferred to the credit of the welfare fund, and used for health and welfare work for employees. The total amount of wages lying unclaimed on 31st July, 1929, covering a period of one year previous, was only Rs. 1,137, or about 65/1,000ths of 1 per cent. of the total wages paid during the same period. The total amount lying unclaimed after one year, and thereupon credited to the welfare fund, was, for the same period, Rs. 1,115. During this period the programme of weekly wages payments, mentioned under (i) above, was introduced, and the shorter periods of time now elapsing before payment of wages has resulted in a noticeable reduction in the amount of unclaimed wages.

108. It is customary for mill operatives to obtain their food supplies on credit from the shopkeepers, who are also money-lenders. While we have no statistics of the extent of such indebtedness, we believe that the reduction of elapsed time before payment of wages tends to reduce the amount of the debt.

109. (*a*) A small weekly bonus for good attendance is paid to time workers, and a weekly bonus for production in excess of the fixed quantity is paid to piece workers at Angus Jute Works, but we consider this not as a bonus but as part of the weekly remuneration, the bonus being earned by practically all operatives.

(*b*) There is also a bonus on production paid to certain clerks and sirdars connected with the operation of some departments of the mill. This also is included in our table of wage rates given under subject 96 (i).

(*c*) We have a scheme drawn up for the payment of a monthly profit-sharing bonus to all Indian employees at the jute works, based on the profit, if any, made by the jute works during the preceding month and distributed in proportion to wages paid to each employee during that month. The scheme has not yet been adopted owing to the fear that a reduction in or failure to pay the bonus in any month, owing to decreased profits or a loss occurring, may be too difficult of comprehension to the ordinary illiterate mill operative, and may cause resentment and misunderstanding.

(*d*) A large share of the remuneration of the European staff directly concerned with the operation of our jute works, consists of a monthly bonus based on production. Claims, if any, against the company for any faulty goods are deducted from this bonus and are thus borne by those Europeans.

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110. Leave is granted upon request to mill operatives, except in cases of incompetent workmen, who then leave without permission and toward whom we feel no obligation to re-employ if they return. Leave granted is evidenced by a leave ticket signed by the European overseer, and bearing the thumb impression of the worker impressed at the time leave is taken and again, for identification, upon his return. Such tickets, without means of identification, are often sold or transferred. Holders of leave tickets are, upon return, given first opportunity of employment to fill the vacancies occurring daily.

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XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (*a*) On 1st July, 1929, all mills in the Indian Jute Mills Association, representing 97 per cent. of the total looms in Bengal jute mills, resumed working 60 hours weekly after having been working 54 hours since 1st April, 1921. The objects in so increasing production were to supply the world's increased demand for jute goods, and to bring down the price to a normal level, thereby tending to reduce the increasing danger to the industry in Bengal through competition from new jute mills on the Continent and elsewhere, which were encouraged by the high level of prices existing last year.

(*b*) In the case of Angus Jute Works, where wage rates were on the simplest possible basis, the alteration in working hours simply meant that workers were employed for 60 hours instead of 54 hours, both time workers and piece workers receiving exactly proportionate increases in weekly remuneration, and piece workers receiving a slight additional benefit, amounting to a total of less than Rs. 90 per week for the entire staff, owing to no change being made in the fixed task for 54 hours work, beyond which bonuses were paid for excess production. (There are no deductions from piece workers' wages for producing less than the fixed task; the same rate per piece is paid for all pieces produced up to the fixed task.)

(*c*) Dissatisfaction occurred among the workers in some mills over the question of "khoraki" and the alteration of the piece workers' fixed task in proportion to the increased working hours, and by the 15th August about 60 per cent. of the total looms in mills were stopped at one time by labour trouble. Certain persons became active immediately in encouraging the spread of the trouble from the two or three mills where it originated, until practically all mills were closed for various periods at some time from early in July to the 23rd September. We attach herewith translations made by our Indian staff of three vernacular leaflets widely distributed in mill areas during the trouble. (See appendices.)*

(*d*) Angus remained unaffected until 19th August, when about 50 weavers stopped their looms and ran about shouting to others to stop work. The disturbers were successful in bringing out the weaving department and, with one department in the mill stopped, no other department can continue running. Every effort was made by the management to ascertain what demands or grievances the weavers wished to present for attention. No demands were presented to us by anybody before the trouble, and none were forthcoming as a result of our interviews with large groups in the coolie lines except a few scattered demands for 25 per cent. and 75 per cent. increase in wages and 3 months' leave to be granted every year. An attempt to restart the mill three times during the succeeding few days resulted in most of the

* One printed.

male workers in other departments being present, but weavers remained out and women were afraid to come to work for fear of molestation. We were told by some of the weavers that if they resumed work they would be visited by bands of hooligans from other areas on strike, and would have half their beards shaved off, which is a crowning insult to Mahomedans, the beard having religious significance. The district authorities posted a large body of police for the protection and assurance of the large majority who desired to work. By the end of the week the excitement had subsided and all workers resumed work on Monday morning, 26th August. No increases in wages were given during or after the trouble. All increases granted by other mills as a result of the strike had already been incorporated in the wages rates at Angus on 1st July, when we began working 60 hours weekly.

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Appendix C.

7th September, 1929.

Translation of Urdu, Hindi and Bengali Leaflets being distributed in mill areas.

BENGAL JUTE WORKERS UNION.—NOTICE No. 1.

Be careful of Capitalists—Request to Labour Brothers (Friends).

Dear *Brothers*:—Looking at your unity and the wonderful enterprise of Mother *Provabati Dasgupta*, the eyes of the capitalists and millowners have been opened. *They have now come to realize* that three lakhs of labourers and artisans being *united* have the capacity and are in a position to remove their own troubles and difficulties. Your peaceful Hartal (strike) and picture of unity poking at their eyes like pins. They are now endeavouring to make a breach among the labouring and craftsmen classes. This is her order and request that you should work quietly *for three months*. In the meantime you should inform your grievances at the Titaghur Union office or you should bring it to the notice of Mataji's (Mother Dasgupta's) office in mill areas and of other places. Gourepore, Titaghur, Jagatdal, Kankinara, *Telinipara* and in other places union offices have been opened.

Dr. Provabati Dasgupta is the father and mother of the poor. You know perhaps that in the last strike of Methars and Dhangars she undertook so much untiring trouble for their cause which achieved success in the long run. She is trying her level best to remove your miseries. In order to make a dis-union and complications amongst you, the capitalists and millowners are trying in various ways. Their men are distributing notices in every mill and they have taken up many youths to their sides. Be careful not to believe in the least their notices and preaching. You should try to remove your troubles quietly. You should inform your grievances verbally or in writing to local union office. In emergent cases you should inform your grievances in person to the president of the union (Mother Provabati Dasgupta), Head Office of Bengal Jute Workers Union, at No. 1, Antony Bagan Lane (near Raja Bazar Tram Depot), Calcutta.

There are twelve departments in each mill. From each department you should select one honest man (whom you can trust) and send the names of such twelve men to the head office. It has been estimated more than enough that the prestige of three lakhs of men have been saved in such a bad time. Besides that you shall have to remember the comforts and conveniences of your peasant brothers. You should mind also that they may not be put into inconveniences and difficulties for your cause. The capitalists are profited in both ways. During Hartal the price of jute comes down and they used to store jute to the value of several millions. On the contrary, they are also profited if Hartal fails. Consequently, it would be better for your peasant brothers if you continue to work instead of Hartal. We hope that you should go through this notice patiently, and should be read to your other brothers, and it is also hoped that it will not be difficult to attain your aim if you continue your work quietly.

Vice-President: Narendra Nath Chatterjee.
General Organizing Secretary: Nripen Choudhury.
Titaghur Group: Nripen Choudhury.
Secretary of Budge-Budge Group: Panchanon Babu.
Titaghur: K. Ahammad.
Shamnagar—Secretary: Nando Kisore Sarma.
Kankinara—Secretary: Mahammad Siddik.
General Secretary: Bakar Ali Mirja.
Barrackpore Group—Secretary: Kali Banerjee.
Hooghly-Chinsurah Group—Secretary: Ramlagan Parsad Jaswal.
KamarhattyAgarpara—Secretary: Ronjoy Mukhopadhay.
Kamarhatty-Agarpara—Asst. Secretary: Ramgopal Bhattacherjee.
Jagatdal—Secretary: Samu Mia.
Gourepore—Hazinagar—Secretary: Bibhu Banerjee.

MAJOR-GENERAL G. TATE, I.M.S., SURGEON-GENERAL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

The problems presented in enclosure 2, para. IV—Health, more nearly concern the public health department than mine, and I take it that, so far as I am concerned, what the commission requires is information regarding the supply of medical men in Bengal.

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2. There are 5,778 medical men registered in Bengal, and their distribution is roughly as follows :—

	Graduates.	Licentiates.
In Calcutta	1,136	292
In district headquarters towns	257	362
In district board and other local bodies dispensaries ..	—	1,196
Health department	14	145
Railways	145	185

The remaining number find employment in tea gardens, mills, factories, shipping companies, etc., and a few only seek practice in rural areas.

The average number of students who pass out yearly from the medical colleges and schools in Bengal is :—Graduates, 187 ; Licentiates, 260 ; total, 447. When the four new medical schools come into existence—two of these are under construction—there will be an average of over 550 newly qualified medical men turned out yearly by our teaching institutions.

There can be no question that the supply even now exceeds the demand. I should like to make it quite clear that I do not refer to the *needs* of the province which are great, but there is no general *demand* at present for skilled medical assistance so far as the rural areas are concerned, and to a lesser extent I believe the same holds good in the case of the industrial population. The Khabiraj, the Vaid and the Hakim still more than hold their own against the exponents of western scientific medicine, and education is, I believe, the only real remedy, although a certain amount could be done by propaganda. So far as medical aid is concerned there is therefore no lack of medical men on whom to draw. Anything in the nature of a panel system would be a god-send and help to save a situation which is rapidly becoming a serious one.

3. Bengal is exceedingly backward so far as rendering of medical aid to women is concerned. The sadar hospitals situated in the headquarters of districts have as a rule women's hospitals attached to them, but in few of these is there any maternity or real gynaecological work done, and as often as not the women's hospital simply becomes a female ward of the sadar hospital in which ordinary medical and surgical cases are treated. Few of the sadar hospitals provide any nursing for the patients, and only in Calcutta, Dacca, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Mymensingh is any training of nurses attempted.

The number of nurses who complete their training annually is :—senior nursing certificates and junior nursing certificates, 43 ; midwives, 56.

The sources of supply of nurses are limited to Anglo-Indians—who supply by far the largest number—Indian Christians and girls from the hill tracts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. So far, better class Bengali ladies have not entered the fields of nursing, except in purdah nashin institutions in Calcutta. A few male nurses are trained at the Carmichael hospital. Supply and demand so far as they relate to nurses fairly balance each other, but again it is necessary to distinguish between the needs of the province, which are great, and the demand which, in the rural areas, is practically non-existent.

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MR. M. DALMIYA, SECRETARY AND GENERAL MANAGER, KESORAM COTTON MILLS, LTD.

I.—Recruitment.

1. Up to June, 1929, the Kesoram Cotton Mills were worked on single-shift system and the labour force numbered about 4,500. But since July, 1929, double-shift working has gradually been introduced in some of the departments, and, therefore, the number of workers has at present increased to a total of about 6,500. This will further increase when all the departments will be run on double-shift system. The total number is composed of approximately as follows :—Men, 5,750 ; women, 600 ; children, 100. Total, 6,500.

Out of this total number of 6,500 workers, about 5,000 are those who have migrated from other provinces and the remaining 1,500 only are local. Most of the workers come from Behar, Orissa, Central Provinces, Madras and United Provinces. The weavers are generally Mohammedans, both local and up-country, and a large portion of the spinners are Uriyas.

(ii) The main causes of migration from distant provinces and villages are want of local employment, failure of crops and famine. These causes lead people to go to industrial centres to seek for employment in mills and factories. When they get employment and earn good wages they induce their friends and relations also to come and work in the mills.

(iii) Labour from outside provinces are coming to Calcutta in increased numbers.

2. (i) Among the migrated workers about 80 per cent. have contact with villages. They periodically send money to their village homes and go there every 8 or 10 months for 2 or 3 months.

(ii) Besides the local labour of about 1,500, a number of the migrated labour are also settling down in the locality. Though, of course, it is difficult to give the exact number, still the total of 2,500 would be a fair estimate.

3. (i) There is no direct recruitment on the part of the company. Different sardars get men from their different provinces and communities, mostly from their own villages and neighbourhoods. Poor, ill-fed villagers, hearing of jobs fetching good wages, come to the sardars for employment of their own accord, when the sardars go to their village homes. The sardars bring them down and get them admitted into the mills.

(ii) *Possible improvement.*—I have got no suggestion to offer on this head.

(iii) Public employment agencies, if established on proper lines and under official supervision may be useful both to the employers and the workers. They will be able to find right type of workers for the mills and factories, and also right type of jobs for the men.

4. There is no denying the fact that family life among the workers is disturbed to some extent as a result of their contact with modern industrial city life. But it is very difficult to give accurate information on this point. In some cases wives are left behind at village homes, and husbands working in mills either take fresh wives and settle down or become addicted to vices and never go back to their families. Sons who go to work in the mills or factories, leaving aged and dependent parents behind in village homes, do not in some cases take any further notice of their poor parents and settle down permanently in the cities where they work. These are some of the effects of disturbance of family life.

7. The question of unemployment does not concern us, as we are mostly short of the required number of workmen and there is never any excess.

8. (i) The average duration of employment is about nine months.

(ii) There is hardly any casual employment in our mills.

(iii) (*a*) Nearly 8 per cent. of the workers absent themselves from work. Some of them do so with permission, but most of them without permission of or notice to the proper authorities. Causes of absence are illness, domestic festivities, return to villages, etc.

(*b*) The workers absent themselves mostly in the latter part of the summer season and during the rainy season. Some absences are caused by epidemics.

(*c*) Three days in a month are lost in time and Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 in wages.

9. *Apprentices Act*, 1850.—It is a dead letter so far as we are concerned.

II.—Staff Organization.

10. *Details of Organization—Administrative and Departmental.—Administrative.*—Managing agents, secretary and general manager, assistant secretaries, manager, head clerk, under staff.

Departmental.—(*a*) Weaving department—Chief weaving master, assistant weaving masters, departmental assistants, head jobbers, line jobbers, weavers, fitters, vicemen, carpenters, coolies.

(*b*) Spinning department—Spinning masters, departmental assistants, head jobbers, head mistries, assistant mistries, line mistries, head winders, doffers.

(*c*) Engineering department—Chief engineer, electrical engineer, assistant engineers, overseers, head mistries, assistant mistries, head carpenters, carpenters, coolies.

(*d*) Workshop—Officer-in-charge, head mistry, mistries, mechanics, coolies.

(*e*) Machinery overhauling department—Erection officer, head fitters, assistant fitters, mistries.

(*f*) Cotton department—Cotton expert, departmental assistant, under staff, sardar, coolies.

(*g*) Stores department—Storekeeper, departmental assistant, under staff, coolies.

(*h*) Timekeeper's department—Head timekeeper, assistant timekeeper, departmental timekeepers, office staff.

(*i*) Medical department—Resident medical officers, head matron, sanitary inspector, compounders, dressers, nurses, ayahs.

(*j*) Dye house department—Dye master, departmental assistants, head mistry, under staff, workers.

(*k*) Warehouse department—Officer-in-charge, departmental assistants, warehouse man, under staff, workers.

(*l*) Efficiency department—Officer-in-charge, assistant, under staff.

(*m*) Watch and ward department—Superintendent, jamadars, darwans.

11. Managing staff are selected from experienced and expert candidates obtained through newspaper advertisements or on recommendation of well-known men in the line, and also promoted from assistants on merit.

12. (i) Supervising staff, both superior and subordinate, are partly selected from outside candidates and partly obtained through promotion of apprentices and talented and skilled workers.

(ii) There is no special arrangement for training of workmen. Those who have some intelligence and a natural inclination to learn, get trained up in the course of their actual employment. There is every facility for promotion. A worker can rise to the post of a head jobber, fetching a salary of from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per month.

13. (i) Relations between staff and rank and file of the workers are generally cordial—though occasion sometimes arises when they become strained. But such occasions are very rare.

(ii) Jobbers are a lot of very skilled people whose employment is valuable for all purposes, though sometimes they create trouble among the workers by ill-treating them and exacting illegal gratifications from them.

(iii) *Works committees : their constitution, extent and achievements.*

(iv) *Works councils and industrial councils.*—The existence of any of the above bodies are not known to us.

14. (i) Registers are kept by the timekeepers of different departments and checked by the head timekeeper and his staff. Different departments have got different tokens and each worker must possess one, with his number stamped on it. At the commencement of every shift, the workers, as they come in, produce their tokens before the departmental timekeepers and he notes the attendance against their names. A daily abstract of attendance is sent to the head timekeeper's office from each department.

(ii) Wages tickets are prepared by the departmental timekeepers and checked by the head timekeeper and his staff, which are then distributed to the workers. Wages are actually paid to the workers by specially deputed officers on production of wage tickets.

15. There is no contract system of work in these mills.

III.—Housing.

16. (i) Housing is provided by the employers to the extent of 35 per cent.

(ii) None by Government or other public agency.

(iii) Private landlords provide housing to the extent of 55 per cent.

(iv) Workers themselves provide 10 per cent.

17. There are absolutely no facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses. Government is indifferent in these matters and no help has so far been received from that quarter in this respect. Housing is a great problem with the employers and it is impossible to get land in the neighbourhood at a reasonable price for building workers' quarters. Therefore, it is most desirable that there should be legal facilities for acquisition of land for this purpose.

18. (i) The workers' demands in the way of accommodation are very moderate. They are satisfied if they can get pucca rooms to live in and adequate arrangements

for latrines and water supply. The accommodation provided by the owners meets all these demands of the workers. The accommodations provided by the private landlords and workers themselves are mostly ill-ventilated kutcha houses.

(ii) Though none of the different classes of accommodation is ideal from the health point of view, yet the lines owned by the company are a little better than those provided by private landlords. They are cleaner and kept in better repair.

(iii) The company has made adequate arrangements for lighting, conservancy and water supply in the lines owned by them. The lines are lit by electricity and provided with service privies. Drinking water is obtained from Calcutta Corporation and supplied from reserve tanks. Ganges water is supplied through pipes for washing purposes. In the privately-owned lines the water supply is obtained mostly from wells and partly from street hydrants. Service privies are provided, but there is no adequate lighting arrangement.

19. The workers utilize available accommodation to its utmost capacity.

20. The company charges a nominal monthly rent of from 8 annas to 14 annas per room. The private landlords charge Rs. 2–8 annas to Rs. 3–8 annas per room.

21. No case of subletting of quarters in the company's lines has come to the notice of the management. The company is extending its coolie lines and pending completion of the building work has lately rented some houses in the locality and sublet them to the workers at half the rent they are paying to the landlords. Occupation of company's houses by outsiders is not allowed, and there has been no necessity of evicting workers from the lines.

22. The moral effect on the workers of industrial housing conditions has been of a mixed type—both good and bad. Working together and living in very close proximity to each other, the workers have learnt the value of co-operation and mutual help and also it has to some extent slackened the rigidity of social customs of different castes and sects. On the other hand, for the same reasons, there is some amount of mixing up of sexes, which leads to sexual irregularities and their consequences. This is inevitable under the present circumstances. Spread of education and better housing conditions may improve matters—but both these depend on Government action.

IV.—Health.

23. The general health conditions of the workers of these mills are fairly good.

(i) and (ii) We are not in a position to furnish details of births and deaths among the workers, as no registers are kept. The mills being situated within the municipal area of the Calcutta Corporation and that body keeping regular birth and death registers, no special register for the mills seemed necessary.

(iii) (*a*) Working conditions at work places are certainly better than they could possibly be at the workers' village homes. The mills are situated on the bank of the river and are composed of pucca buildings. The workers get better houses to live in at working places and purer water to drink. They are better protected from rain and sun and get better medical help when ill.

(*b*) At their village homes, the workers, who are mostly cultivators or day labourers, live mostly in kutcha insanitary houses, work under the scorching sun and in the pouring rains and drink filthy water. In most villages medical help is not available. Of course their open-air life in the villages saves them from some of the diseases that people of the cities are liable to suffer from.

(iv) Dietary varies according to race, and climate of the province the workers come from. But the main articles of food are rice, atta, dal, vegetables and fish. The Mohammedan workers take meat occasionally.

(v) Physique varies according to race and province the workers come from Those coming from up-country are sturdier than the Bengalis, Uriyas, and Madrassis.

(vi) *Effects of disturbance of Sex Ratio in Industrial Cities.*—The effects are—(*a*) a certain amount of disruption of family life, (*b*) moral depravity among a certain percentage of workers and (*c*) prevalence of venereal diseases and consequential breakdown of health.

(vii) There is close relation between housing and mortality. It is generally seen that mortality is higher, in damp, dark and ill-ventilated quarters.

24. (i) The company has got in their service two medical graduates of the Calcutta University as resident medical officers and also passed compounders and dressers to look after the medical needs of their employees. There is a well-equipped dispensary in the mills, which contains, along with other things, a big ultra-violet-ray apparatus, and the workers are given free treatment and medicines. Those who are too ill to come to the dispensary are attended to at their houses by the resident medical officers free of charge. During epidemic periods the company engages

additional medical officers to render adequate medical aid to the millhands and their families. The workers who get injured while working in the mills not only get free medical treatment and medicines but are also supplied with special sick diet by the company according to medical advice.

The company has a scheme in hand for the establishment of a hospital and preliminary work for it has already begun. Pending completion of the hospital building temporary arrangements have been made to take in a few emergency cases as indoor-patients. A maternity home on a small scale and a baby clinic, with a children's creche attached, have lately been started.

(ii) There are Government hospitals in Calcutta where workers are admitted, but all of them are at a considerable distance from our mills and accommodation in them is not quite adequate.

(iii) The Corporation of Calcutta supply prophylactic vaccines for cholera and small-pox during epidemic periods only and their paid mid-wives render help to the female workers free of charge if called in. There are a few private practitioners also in the locality, but they, of course, are not available free of charge.

(iv) The company has lately engaged a lady medical officer, who is fully qualified in maternity and baby clinic work and placed her in charge of those departments. She has some trained dais and nurses under her. As stated under item (iii) there are also corporation midwives who render free help to the women workers if called in.

25. (i) Utilized to the full extent by all male workers.

(ii) The women also take medical help for ordinary diseases to the extent of 75 per cent. But they decline to receive medical aid from male doctors for female diseases.

26. (i) (*a*) In the mill compound there are two septic tank latrines for workers and, of course, separate arrangements for males and females. Officers of the public health department of the Government of Bengal take the filtered and unfiltered effluent from the septic tank latrines every month, get them chemically analysed and send us a report on the result of the examination. (*b*) The workers' houses, both in the company's lines and private landlords' lines, are provided with service privies. The sewage is disposed of by the sweepers of the Calcutta Corporation.

(ii) There are 21 reserve tanks for drinking water in the mill compound, the capacity of each being 400 gallons. The Corporation of Calcutta supplies filtered water daily by a steamer and the water is stored in the tanks. Workers get their drinking water from these tanks. But those living in the houses of private landlords get their drinking water supply from the Corporation street hydrants or water lorries.

(iii) The water of the river is used for bathing and washing purposes, both in the mills and in the attached coolie lines. The company has laid out pipes to carry the water to different places. Separate sanitary baths for males and females, fitted with water taps and shower baths, have been provided in the mills. Water supply in these baths is continuous. The workers living in outside lines use well water or street hydrant water for bathing and washing purposes.

27. (iii) *In Mill and other Industrial Areas.*—The only official supervision as regards health of the workers, is done by the health department of the Corporation of Calcutta and practically confined to vaccination against small-pox and cholera inoculations when epidemics are apprehended.

29 (i) No disease has been noticed among the workers of the cotton mill which can be regarded as peculiar to the industry.

(ii) A few cholera cases occur during the summar months and malaria prevails in a mild form in the latter part of the rainy season. Hookworm cases do not occur, but two or three cases of Kala-Azar in a year and some cases of dysentery occur among the workers.

30. *Sickness Insurance*—(i) *Suitability of International Labour Convention.*—Not suitable for India.

(ii) *Possibility of introducing other systems.*—A special scheme suitable to Indian labour conditions may be formulated. Though the measure is desirable, it is doubtful whether it is possible at this stage.

31. Liberal provisions have been made by the company for maternity benefit. The company pays a cash gratuity of Rs. 10 to all prospective mothers with continuous service of three months or more and grants 15 days' leave with full pay to those with continuous service up to six months, and a months' leave with full pay to all those with continuous service of seven months or more. Cash gratuities are paid before the parties go on leave and the leave allowances are paid when they rejoin duties, if within four months from the date of the sanction of the leave.

V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

32. (i) The company is taking keen interest for the welfare of the workers in all departments of their life, viz., health, sanitation, morality, education, etc., as will be evident from the answers on the other points in this section.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—Nothing.

33. The company has a welfare officer under its employ, whose only duty is to look after the welfare of the workers, to enquire about their difficulties and to bring them to the notice of the authorities for redress ; to organize amusement for the recreation of the workers, etc.

34. (i) A big shed is in course of erection, which when completed will provide the workmen with shelter to spend their off-time in leisure and which will also serve as an auditorium for the amusements.

A children's creche has lately been opened under a qualified matron and an adequate number of ayahs has also been appointed to help her. Toys have been provided for the children to play with, and milk and sweets are given to the children at the company's expense.

(ii) The company encourages physical culture among the workers and has provided two wrestling grounds (*akhras*), one within the compound and the other in the coolie lines. These *akhras* are furnished with Indian clubs and dumb-bells. Competition in physical feats are held from time to time and prizes awarded to the deserving athletes.

The company owns two complete outfits of bioscope machines of the latest type and shows cinema pictures to the workers every week-end, weather permitting, within the mill compound. Theatrical and Jatra performances are also occasionally arranged for the amusement of the workers. These cinema shows and other performances not only provide the workers with healthy and innocent amusement, but help to keep them away from Toddy shops, gambling dens and other allied mischiefs.

(iii) Lantern lectures on health, sanitation, etc., are arranged occasionally to impart knowledge to the workers on these vital subjects.

The company has established a small bank in the mills where money is lent to the workmen at an interest of from 9 per cent. to 12 per cent. per annum. The workers were in the habit of borrowing money from money-lenders paying interest at the rate of 2 annas to 3 annas per rupee per month. The establishment of the bank has saved the simple workers from the clutches of the bazaar shylocks.

(*b*) *By other agencies.*—Nothing.

35. Results so far achieved are that the workers are beginning to take intelligent interest in their own welfare and that they are being saved, to some extent, from their perpetual indebtedness.

36. (i) *For adult workers.*—A night school is run by the company for the adult workers, but they do not care to take advantage of it.

(ii) and (iii) There is a day school for both half-time workers and workers' children.

(iv) These schools are under competent teachers, but they are not utilized by the people they are meant for to the extent they are desired to be. About 50 of the workers' children regularly attend school and are given all encouragement and facilities. A Scout Master has been appointed to organize a company of Boy Scout cubs from among the children of the workers. This will improve their health, engender discipline among them and keep them away from mischief.

37. Provision for old age is desirable, but its possibility is doubtful considering the fact that workers are very reluctant to contribute to any scheme of this kind.

38. Co-operative movement has never been tried among the labourers. It cannot be successful, if it is done.

VI.—Education.

40. There is no special facility for the general education of the workers' children in the area in which our mill is situated. Of late the Corporation of Calcutta has started a few primary schools, but they are not adequate in relation to the number of children population of the locality. There is also a long-established high school in the neighbourhood and it is run by the local public. There is no Government Institution near about.

41. *Facilities for Industrial and Vocational Training.*—None.

42. Education is likely to improve the standard of living of the workers to some extent and also engender a sense of responsibility in them, which in turn is expected to improve the skill and efficiency of the workers.

VII.—Safety.

43. Regulations regarding factories are in general adequate, but those relating to fencings around machinery seem a little bit drastic. The management ought to be allowed some discretion in the matter.

44. A statement is given below showing accidents for two years up to the end of June, 1929 :—

	Total accidents for two years.	Average per year.	Incidence.
Fatal	1	0·5	0·11 in 1,000
Serious	24	12·0	2·6 in 1,000
Slight	381	190·5	42·0 in 1,000

N.B.—The number of total workers—about 4,500.

45. The great majority of accidents are due to negligence on the part of the victims or to disregard of the specific orders of the management.

46. All recommendations of Inspectors are carried out and adhered to, as far as lies in the power of the management ; and also warnings are given to all workers regarding the danger of cleaning or, in any way, interfering with any part of moving machinery.

48. The medical officers and assistants are continually in attendance in the dispensary during working hours, and medicines and attention are given free of charge.

50. No case of accident has occurred which could be attributed to weariness through too long working hours, or conditions of working.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) The Workmen's Compensation Act is being used to the full extent.

(ii) All possible claims are actually claimed. The Company take special care to see that no injured worker is deprived of his legitimate compensation.

(iii) Effects are good. It has created confidence in the workers that they can now depend upon getting appropriate compensation without any difficulty and this confidence is an asset for the good of the industry. The Act has regulated the scale of compensation and has thus saved the industry from wasteful litigation and great deal of disaffection among the labour.

(iv) There are several insurance companies who accept proposals for workmen's compensation and the company has insured with one of them. The value of insurance from workers' point of view is that they have not to fight with the employers for compensation, the employers now fight for them with the insurance companies for the prompt settlement of their claims.

(v) Some measure for compulsory insurance by employers is desirable for securing workmen against possible loss of compensation.

53. *Suitability of Provisions relating to*—(i) *Scales of Compensation.*—Not quite adequate in all cases, specially where the loss of a minor limb is concerned. For example :—

Several fingers of a man's hand are seriously injured in an accident. After a prolonged treatment of eight months, the wounds heal up and all his fingers are saved. He gets half-monthly allowance all through this period of eight months as compensation. But if after eight months' treatment one of his fingers is amputated, the man gets for this partial permanent disability, only 5 per cent. of the total disability compensation, which comes to much less than half-monthly allowance for even six months.

The scales should be revised in the light of the past few years' experience of the working of the Act.

The Company not only pays compensation to the injured workers in accordance with the provisions of the law, but also allows them additional privileges, such as (*a*) full pay for the period they are absent from work, including 10 days' waiting period, (*b*) free medical treatment, and (*c*) specially prescribed diet, such as milk, fruits, etc.

(ii) The system of waiting period causes real hardship to the injured and disabled workers and should be eliminated altogether. They should be entitled to get the compensation from the very first day of their absence from work.

(iii) *Industrial Diseases.*—The present provisions are quite suitable.

(iv) *Machinery of Administration.*—Quite suitable.

(v) *Other Matters.*—Recurring payments may be substituted for lump sum payments in the cases of workmen who are residents of urban areas. Both systems of payment, lump sum and recurring, ought to be in force and the manner of payment to individual claimants be left to the discretion of the Commissioner, who may consult the desire of the party himself in the matter and also the opinion of the employer.

Section 12 of the Act should be amended so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the person, contractor, or sub-contractor, as the case may be, directly employing the workmen in every case.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. (i) The hours worked per week are 60, and per day 10, normally. But now that most of the departments are working on double shift system the total daily working hours are coming up to 19½ hours, " A " shift working 10 hours and " B " shift working 9½ hours, and therefore the total hours worked per week come up to 117 hours.

(ii) No overtime is worked except in the case of machinery maintenance, and this varies as occasion arises.

(iii) The workers are not on call except during their actual working hours.

56. Six days worked per week.

57. *Effect of 60 hours restriction.*—(i) The effect on the worker has been very beneficial, specially with regard to their health. They are getting more time for rest and recreation.

(ii) The effect on the industry has been a decrease in production and profit, though gradually compensated to some extent by an increase in the efficiency of the workers.

58. As the shifts are not worked more than 10 hours, the restriction on the daily limit does not affect us in any way.

59. The reduction of the present maxima of working hours is not at all possible.

60. (i) (*a*) (*b*) In working single shift 1½ hours' interval is allowed between the hours of 11-45 a.m. and 1-15 p.m. This is used in most cases as a time of rest. Although officially employed from 6-15 a.m. till 11-45 a.m., most of the workers take time off during these hours for meals, the machines on which they are employed being attended to during their absence by the workers of the adjoining machines and vice versa or stopped altogether.

In working double shift the workers are divided into " A " and " B " shifts. " A " shift commencing at 5-30 a.m. works until 10-30 a.m. and again from 2-0 p.m. until 7-0 p.m., " B " shift from 10-30 a.m. till 2-0 p.m. and again from 7-0 p.m. till 1-0 a.m. " A " shift, having an interval of 3½ hours, works 10 hours daily and " B " shift, with an interval of 5 hours, works 9½ hours daily, though paid for 10½ hours. This applies to adult workers only.

(ii) The existing law is quite suitable, but some extra time should be allowed for cleaning, repairs and maintenance work.

(iii) *Suitability of hours during which Factory is working.*—Quite suitable.

(iv) *Number of holidays given.*—Sunday of each week and about 12 other days for Hindu and Mohammedan festivals.

61. (i) Sunday of each week is observed as a day of rest.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Quite suitable.

62. The only use made of exempting provisions is in the case of machinery repairs and upkeep.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81. *Effect of 1922 Act on Employment.*—The effect so far noticeable has been that the number of children among the mill labour has decreased to some extent.

82. Where there are no provisions for creches, the children should be allowed to be with their mothers in the factories.

83. The regulations for women's work are quite suitable.

84. *Suitability of Regulations affecting Children.*—(i) and (ii) The regulations are quite suitable.

85. *Double Employment of Children.*—Nothing is known of such occurrences. Very difficult to detect if practised.

86. There are no special facilities for apprenticeship or training up of children. They get trained by working with their relations or friends.

87. *Extent of " Blind Alley " Employment.*—No such practices are followed here. When the children reach their full age they are allowed to work full time and get full wages as any other worker.

88. In single shift working, longer hours have to be worked at a stretch, but in double shift working, the workers get longer intervals and so more time for rest and leisure, and keep better health. But as women are not allowed to work at night, they cannot work in double shifts.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i)—We have got different rates of wages in different departments for different occupations. A statement showing the monthly wages of workers up to head jobbers is given below :—

	Rates of Wages per Month. Rs. Rs.
(*a*) *Weaving Department*—	
Head jobbers	150 to 200
Line jobbers	100 ,, 125
Weavers, fitters, vice-men, carpenters	40 ,, 60
(*b*) *Spinning Department*—	
Head jobbers	125 to 150
Head mistries	70 ,, 100
Asst. mistries	40 ,, 50
Line mistries	30 ,, 35
Head winders	25 ,, 30
Piecers, winders	20 ,, 25
Doffers	15 ,, 20
(*c*) *Engineering Department*—	
Head mistries	125 to 150
Asst. mistries	60 ,, 70
Head carpenters	50 ,, 60
Carpenters	30 ,, 40
(*d*) *Workshop*—	
Head mistry	125 to 150
Mistries, mechanics	35 ,, 60
(*e*) *Machinery Overhauling Department*—	
Head fitters	150
Asst. fitters	100
Mistries	40 to 60
(*f*) *Cotton Department*—	
Sardar	30 to 35
Coolies	20 ,, 25
(*g*) *Dye House Department*—	
Head mistry	60 to 75
Workers	20 ,, 25
(*h*) *Warehouse Department*—	
Warehouse man	100
Workers	20 to 25
(*i*) *Sanitary Department*—	
Sweeper—Jamadars	18 to 22
Sweepers	14 ,, 17
(*j*) *Watch and Ward Department*—	
Jemadars	25 to 35
Darwans	22 ,, 30
Women workers	15 ,, 20
Half-timers	7 ,, 10
Coolies	15 ,, 25

(ii) *In surrounding Agricultural areas.*—Exact information on this head is not available. The average does not in any case exceed Rs. 10 per head per month.

(iii) *Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.*—Those of the workers who live in the Company's lines get about Rs. 2 extra in the shape of lower house rent than that charged by the private landlords.

From time to time the Company offers prizes to the workers in the form of money-bonus for good work, which not only encourages healthy competition among them but adds substantially to their income, to some as much as Rs. 50 in a month.

Some workers also receive occasional gratuities when they are in distress or on the occasion of some ceremonies.

97. (i) Rates of wages have gradually increased in recent years. Wages were increased 50 per cent. in 1920 and between 1925 and 1929 a gradual increase of another 15 per cent. has taken place.

(ii) The main reasons for variation in wages are the higher prices of commodities and consequent higher costs of living.

(iv) Excepting the first increase in wages in 1920, the profits have no relation to the fact of increase of wages which has taken place in recent years, as there has been a gradual decrease in profits during these years.

98. The workers usually remit about a third of their earnings to their village homes.

99. There is no system of payment in kind in this Mill.

100. No payments are made through contractors, sub-contractors or head men. All payments are made direct to the workmen.

101. Wages are fixed according to the individual skill of the workers.

102. Twenty-five per cent. extra is paid for overtime and 50 per cent. extra for Sunday work.

103. There is no standardization of wages, and none is possible.

104. As the wage changes in recent years have taken the form of increases only, the labour supply has also increased, though not to the desired extent. Our supply is affected by the fact that there is no other cotton mill in this area.

105. Fixing up of minimum wages by statute is not at all advisable.

106. (i) Fining is generally restricted to weavers and winders for bad work and the amount of fine never exceeds four annas.

(ii) There are no other deductions, if the house rents deducted from the wages of those workers who live in the Company's lines are excepted.

(iii) A Workers' Fund has been formed with the fines realised, unpaid wages and certain other monies, and the workers are helped in various ways out of this Fund.

(iv) Imposition of fines is essential to maintain the quality of production and there should be no legislation to restrict it.

107. (i) Wages are paid monthly for the period of a month's working.

(ii) Wages are paid after the lapse of a fortnight, i.e., by the 15th of the following month.

(iii) (*a*) and (*b*) The present practice is quite suitable and no legislation is necessary. There is no unnecessary delay in payment. Some time must be kept in hand for the preparation of the wage bills.

(iv) If any wages lie unclaimed for more than three months the amounts are transferred to the workers' fund mentioned under item (iii) of Section (106) above.

108. (i) and (ii) There is no doubt that great indebtedness exists among workers, both in villages and industrial areas, but it is not possible to say to what extent that prevails. It should, however, be noted that this indebtedness of the workers is not due wholly to poverty, but mostly to extravagant social ceremonies and partly to habit.

109. *Bonus and Profit Sharing Scheme.*—No such schemes have ever been or are at present in force in these mills.

110. *Annual or other Leave.*—There is none, so far as the workmen are concerned.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. There has been very little advance in the efficiency of the workers in recent years, taking into consideration the improvements which have been made in machinery.

113. No correct comparison is possible, having had no personal experience of the working of the foreign workers. But if comparison can be made, relying on the reported efficiency of the foreign (European) workers, then 1 to 2 would be the approximate ratio of Indian efficiency as compared to European. It may, however, safely be asserted that the Indian workers could be more efficient if they wished, but, unfortunately, they would not.

114. *Extent to which Comparisons are affected by.*—(i) Migration of workers, 10 per cent.; (iii) comparative efficiency of plant, 5 per cent.; (v) physique, 10 per cent.; (vi) health, 10 per cent.; (vii) education, 10 per cent.; (viii) standard of living, 15 per cent.; (ix) climate, 15 per cent.; individual disinclination, 25 per cent.

115. (i) Production has not been appreciably increased in the case of time workers by shortening working hours, but an increase per day is noticeable in the case of piece-workers.

(iii) There is certainly an improvement due to the greater interest that is taken in the health of the workers and the attention that is paid to the proper sanitation of the mills.

(iv) Housing affects production advantageously in this way, that, where good living quarters are available, there is not the coming and going of workers, which prevails in the case where bad accommodation is provided.

(v) Methods of remuneration are gradually being altered from daily rates to piece rates and it is expected to improve production to some extent.

(vi) Wage levels have gradually gone up, but that has made no effect on the quantity or quality of production.

(viii) Dietary has very little effect on production.

(ix) Many workers are addicted to drinking, but only a few to drugs. This has some bad effect on production, no doubt, but not to any great extent.

116. It is very difficult to say what methods could secure increased efficiency in the workers. As has been remarked before, the workers could be more efficient if they wished. To bring them to that frame of mind, education is absolutely necessary.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) The employers are organized under chambers of commerce and in some places under millowners' associations.

(ii) Unregistered trade unions have cropped up in recent years for workers to combine. But these bodies are very loosely organized by outsiders and generally patronized by only a small fraction of actual workers.

118. (i) The effect of organization of employers is that they are able to save the industry by helping each other when there is any trouble. Trade union organizations, on the other hand, have done harm to industry by their irresponsible manipulation of the labour movement.

(ii) Workers' conditions are gradually improving, mostly through the goodwill of the employers and partly because of the activities of labour unions.

119. The activities of trade unions in this part of the country are mostly confined to organize strikes. The idea seems to be ingrained in them that there cannot be any justification of their existence if there are no strikes. Trade unions are not heard of when the workers are in real distress. There is no attempt on their part to organize any benefit scheme for the workers. The employers would welcome trade unions organized on proper lines and would be glad to co-operate in those of their activities which are aimed at doing real good to the workers.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. There has never been any lock-out since the mills came under the present management, but there have been four strikes since 1925, as detailed below :—

1.—*Strike in March*, 1925.

(i) *Causes.*—Cause of this strike was that restriction was put on the workers going out whenever they liked during working hours.

(ii) *Duration and Character.*—Only the workers of spinning department struck work and it lasted for only a day and a half.

(iii) *Nature and Methods of Settlement.*—The management agreed to allow a certain number of workers to go out at a time during certain specified hours if they could arrange with other workers to look after their machines during their absence, and the strikers accepting this arrangement resumed work.

(iv) *Loss to Industry and Workers.*—The workers lost in wages only about Rs. 2,000 and the loss to the mills was negligible.

2.—*Strike in August*, 1926.

(i) A section of the workers put in a demand for increased wages and struck work.

(ii) Only a portion of the workers of the weaving department struck work and the strike lasted for five days.

(iii) The secretary and general manager addressed a gathering of strikers and pointed out to them the unreasonableness of their demand and the strikers resumed work unconditionally.

(iv) Workers' loss, about Rs. 3,500, and loss to the mills, negligible.

3.—*Strike in April*, 1927.

(i) It was a lightning strike caused by the imposition of fines on the workers of spinning department for absenting themselves from work on the day following a holiday.

(ii) Only the workers of spinning department struck work and the strike lasted for a single day.

(iii) The workers resumed work on their fines being remitted by the authorities.

(iv) Workers' loss, about Rs. 1,500, and loss to the mills, negligible.

4.—*Strike in May—June*, 1928.

(i) The cause of this strike was reduction of rates of the weavers on the production quantity from the new looms.

(ii) The strike originated in the weaving department, but the workers of all other departments joined in it and there was complete suspension of work for 11 days.

(iii) The dispute was settled by the authorities agreeing to pay the old rates.

(iv) The mills lost about Rs. 60,000 and the workers about Rs. 20,000.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, is an Association representing various commercial and industrial interests. Its membership includes shipping companies, jute presses, jute mills, match manufacturing companies, iron and steel manufacturing companies, cotton mills, rice mills, tanneries, coal mines, glass manufacturing works, pharmaceutical works, railways and mechanical workshops, etc., etc. As several of its members will submit their memorandum and tender evidence before the Commission and as they will throw full light and discuss in detail the labour conditions of their respective industries, my Committee have attempted to present in this memorandum their views on a few outstanding questions regarding the labour problem.

The labour force for the different industries in Bengal such as jute mills, cotton mills, etc., is drawn from the local residents and, particularly, from Bihar and Orissa, Madras, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces. The present methods of recruiting labour seem to be quite satisfactory, and there does not appear to be any need for establishing special agencies for recruiting labour. In most of the jute mills a large number of the labourers excepting the local people live with their families in the areas near about the mills. Those who live without families go to their villages after 6, 12, or 18 months according to their habits and needs.

There is no doubt that much unemployment prevails amongst the classes from which Indian labourers are drawn. In any event the income of the families is not sufficient to maintain all the members and they do not have sufficient work to employ all the members. A proof of this lies in the fact that no shortage of labour is experienced in any industry at any time and new hands are available whenever necessary. The solution of the unemployment problem amongst labourers lies in the development of industries throughout the country. At the present time almost all the labourers employed in the industries belong to the agricultural classes. Whilst there has grown, and is growing, a permanent industrial labour population, there is still a large section that work on the industries only during the months when their labour is not required in their villages for the purposes of sowing or harvesting the crops. And so long as the state of things remains in which the labourers return to the soil for a few months of the year, it is difficult to bring about a substantial improvement in their efficiency as the periods for which they are working are not continuous and the work assigned to them on their return to the industry after a holiday is generally not the same as they had before they left. Specialized knowledge of a particular branch of the industry cannot thus be easily acquired by them, and unless they have had the same work for a very long time it is difficult for them to add to their efficiency.

Another great handicap in the way of improving the efficiency of labour is the problem of illiteracy prevalent in the country. Almost all the labour population is steeped in illiteracy and ignorance. Indeed, most of them are analphabates. It is easy therefore to see that unless primary education is made compulsory, there is hardly any hope of bringing about an improvement in their efficiency, standard of living, etc. The Committee of the Chamber regret that in spite of the increasingly higher taxation levied on the people of the country since the outbreak of the War, the needs of the people in the matter of compulsory education have not yet been met by the Government though they profess to evince great solicitude for the welfare of the working classes and the masses. The stumbling block in the progress of labour in all directions is, in the opinion of my Committee, their illiteracy and ignorance. It is, as a result of this ignorance and illiteracy, that the labour population falls a prey to the advice offered by so-called labour leaders in their own interests. They are unable to perceive what is good and what is bad for them, and it is natural that they follow outsiders who are able to speak to them with knowledge and persuasion. It is on this account that we see of late sudden outbreaks of strikes in many industries without any justification. Due to the influence of outsiders who make a show of having a great interest in the welfare of labour, these labourers are found declaring strikes in their works without, in many cases, even intimating their grievances to their management. In several cases, the grievances have not even been formulated

before embarking upon a strike. Somehow or other an impression has gained ground that a strike is the most expeditious and potent method of redressing the grievances. In point of fact, a strike is detrimental to labour inasmuch as it means loss of wages to them, and is detrimental to the industry which suffers losses due to the cessation of work, and this curtailment of production is therefore a loss to the country. The average national income of this country is grievously low in comparison with other countries, and when to that is added the huge sum lost by way of wages to the workmen, and loss of profit to the industries, these strikes cannot but be deplored in strongest terms by every one having the welfare of the country at heart. In the recent jute mill strike of Calcutta the grievances of the workmen were not formulated, the workmen did not know what they wanted, and the strike was progressing in some mills even against the wishes of the labourers, due to the influence of outside agitators who for their own ends made it difficult for them to go to work. To prevent all this happening, the only remedy is the spread of literacy amongst the labourers who can then see things for themselves and distinguish between what is in their interest and what is not. Along with the provision of compulsory elementary education which my Chamber strongly recommends, facilities ought also to be provided for higher and technical education for the labourers to enable them to occupy higher posts by gaining experience and knowledge about their work from books, industrial journals, etc. Inculcation of the habit of reading is very desirable as it will tend to broaden the outlook of labour and increase their efficiency. In Japan, almost all the cotton operatives have the knowledge of the alphabet and, indeed, many of them are eager readers. The Indian labourers are intelligent and can easily adapt themselves to the work in which they are placed, if they are given the necessary opportunities and facilities.

An efficient labour force would be a great asset to the industries, and also to the country, and there are various other directions in which the employers can help in improving the conditions of labour and increasing their efficiency, as for example, by the provision of industrial schools which are very necessary for training the future labour force of the country, by the provision of facilities for hospitals and efficient medical aid, housing, sanitation, higher wages, etc. But the introduction of all these measures means an additional burden on the industries which to-day thanks, largely to the disastrous policy of the Government in regard to currency and finances and *Laissez Faire* policy in regard to the industrial development of the country, they are unable to bear. The Government have been unperturbed spectators of the depressed condition of the various industries and have not come forward with any bold measures of giving them relief in their difficult times even though the troubles are due partly to their unwise and ill-suited policy in regard to the finances of the country, which has sought to care for the interest of the foreign industries at the expense of the indigenous industries. In the absence of a vigorous industrial policy on behalf of the Government, the Indian industries which are in a nascent state are in the throes of acute depression and are unable to pay even adequate wages to the labourers. It is entirely foolish to expect the employers to do the impossible, viz., to pay increased wages to the labourers for improving their standard of living when the industries are making no profit or running at a loss. If, therefore, the Government are genuinely solicitous about the well-being of the labour force in the country, it is up to them to give protection to the industries and restore the industries to their prosperity, because the prosperity of the industries will naturally be reflected in the prosperity of the labour force, which is after all a partner in the industries, strengthening with their strength, and weakening with their weakness.

My Committee are also surprised to notice the promptness with which the Government of India desire to take action for the ratification of the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Conference. While it may be desirable to ratify these conventions in the interest of labour, it should not be forgotten that the burden falls on the industries which, due to the increased cost of production, are unable to stand foreign competition. It is also remarkable that while the Government is thus ready to take immediate action on these conventions and recommendations, it does not act with half that zeal in settling industrial disputes and deadlocks whenever they occur. The recent strike in the Bombay Cotton Mill industry is an instance in point when the Government took no immediate action and watched the situation which was threatening the peace of the city of Bombay more or less as disinterested spectators. Even with regard to the other strikes that occurred on the railways during the last one or two years and the strike in the Tin Plate Works at Jamshedpur, the Government remained adamantine and refused to appoint a court of arbitration so frequently urged by the Indian Chamber and the public. If the welfare of labour is really desired by the Government it is absolutely essential that they should offer immediate intervention by means of a suitable machinery and settle strikes which, as they are fully aware, are detrimental to the best interests of the country. The necessity of providing for an improvement in the welfare and well-being of labour which is not possible to be done by the employers due to the depressed

condition of the industries at the present time, constitutes a very cogent argument for the grant of adequate and full protection to the industries in India to enable them to develop.

In regard to sickness insurance for labourers in industries, while my Committee do not think it advisable to adopt the International Convention in toto, they are in favour of making some provision for some sort of sickness insurance for the workers in order to maintain their physique, efficiency and longevity. A start may be made in a certain group of industries, but, here again, the main difficulty that will arise will be about the contribution. It would be very difficult to bring home the advantages of sickness insurance to the labourers due to their ignorance and illiteracy, and to get them to contribute even a very small portion of their incomes for the purpose, it might be difficult, though perhaps not to that degree, to induce the employers to make a substantial contribution for meeting with the expenditure of this scheme, for providing relief to labourers in their sickness, in the present depressed state of industries when they are likely to resent every item of additional avoidable expenditure. Whatever sum falls short after the provision is made by the employers in this connection should therefore be made good by the Government. The Indian employers are generally sympathetic towards the demands of labour as they realise the advantages of a contented, efficient and healthy labour force. If they are averse to launching upon expensive welfare schemes which, when once started, would require a recurring heavy expenditure, it is because they are apprehensive of the apathetic attitude of the Government which shows no eagerness or anxiety to help them even when the industries are doing badly. It is this attitude of the Government that is mainly responsible for making them a little conservative in regard to the provision of many facilities for the welfare of labour. Assured of the sympathetic attitude of the Government in periods of industrial depression, the Indian employers will not lag behind in earmarking adequate sums of money for the welfare of labour. My Committee would heartily welcome the formation of genuine and well-regulated Trade Unions amongst labourers. They are aware, however, that most of the recent labour strikes were fomented by outside agitators who were instrumental in widening the gulf between capital and labour. These trade unions should receive regular contributions from the members, and their work should be managed by men of the working classes from their own membership, or by regularly appointed trade union officials. Only last year there was a huge strike in the jute mills which caused a loss of production of about 170 lakhs of rupees and a loss of wages to the labour force of about 21 lakhs of rupees, and affected about 2½ lakhs of labourers. My Committee hold that if the grievances of the labourers in the recent jute strike had been properly formulated and brought to the notice of the employers for their consideration and if sufficient time had been allowed to ventilate them, perhaps there would have been no necessity of declaring the strike. This was due largely to uneducated labour, irresponsible labour unions and the evil influence of the so-called well-wishers of labour who sought to impose the strike for their own ends. To prevent the occurrence of such wild and lightning strikes, my Committee would reiterate their suggestion here that it is of imperative necessity that the labourers should be educated, trained, and made alive to their duties, to their responsibilities and to their relations with the employers who employ him. They must be educated and enabled to conduct their own affairs and to discriminate between what is good for them and what is not. If the Government are genuinely anxious to do any good to the labour of this country, they should not, on any ground, whatsoever, shirk their responsibility of providing compulsory education to the labourers as, then alone, we will begin to have an educated and efficient labour force, as desired by all, after a period of about 10 or 12 years or more. When labourers are educated and organized and can think for themselves, these lightning strikes declared without much forethought and regardless of their consequences may perhaps be minimized and their grievances settled more amicably and expeditiously to the satisfaction of both themselves and the employers. My Committee therefore trust that the Royal Commission on Labour will not fail to recommend to the Government the adoption of measures like adequate protection to industries and compulsory education which will increase and improve the efficiency of labourers, their average earnings, their standard of living and which, in turn, will bring about development of industries and prosperity to the country.

Mr. J. P. MANDELIA, SECRETARY, THE BIRLA JUTE MANUFACTURING CO., LTD.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) The migrated labour is 1,900 or 31 per cent. as follows :—23·1 per cent. up-country (mostly weavers and sack-sewers) ; 5.6 per cent. Uriyas (mostly employed in loading and unloading works) ; 2·4 per cent. Bilaspuri (carriers).

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of migration.*—Unemployment at home; temptation for better wages; bettering their standard of life; failure of crops and famine.

(iii) Migration is increasing every year.

2. (i) Single up-country men (98 per cent. Mahomedans and 82 per cent. Hindus) go home every year for 2-3 months; family up-country men (2 per cent. Mahomedans and 18 per cent. Hindus) go every 2 years for 2-3 months; Uriyas who are almost without families, go every 14 months for 2 months; Bilaspuri go home every 10 months for 2 months.

(ii) 69 per cent. local Bengalis. Non-Bengalis are not permanent.

3. *Methods of recruitment.*—Unnecessary because of non-existence of labour shortage.

4. *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*—No effect is felt because of the following reasons:—always going and coming of neighbours; periodical money orders; correspondence.

7. *Unemployment.*—(i) *Extent and character.*—We do not perceive any unemployment existing in this district.

(ii) *Extent to which caused by.* (*a*) *Retrenchment or dismissals.*—Dismissal except in case of gross negligence in work is rare, as the sirdars are not allowed to indulge in extortions from workers, and are therefore not interested in the latter's dismissals.

(*b*) *Voluntary retirement.*—The workers can't afford.

(*c*) *Other causes.*—Adoption of single shift system by the double shift mills caused in the past temporary unemployment.

(iii) *Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.*—There being no unemployment, the question does not arise so far as this mill is concerned.

8. *Labour "turn-over."* (ii) *Extent of casual employment.*—During some months of the year, if heavier qualities are made, 1 to 3·5 per cent. more men are required. In the jute season every year from September to January about 1½ per cent. more men are required for unloading and piling jute bales.

(iii) *Absenteeism.* (*a*) *Extent, character and causes;* (*b*) *Seasonal or otherwise.*—During the time of paddy transplanting and cutting, which take place in the months of July and December respectively, about 10 per cent. of the total Bengali labour in the case of the former month, and 15 per cent. in the latter, keep away from work. Up-country labour usually go home in April-June. Ordinarily, up-country workers living in the mill lines do not absent themselves unless compelled to do so by illness; but the Bangali workers which constitute nearly two-thirds of the whole labour force of this mill, do keep away very often, due to festivals and domestic interests, and therefore they do not require to take any periodical leave like their up-country brethren. The weavers among them, however, do not indulge in this frequently.

(*c*) *Time and wages lost.*—Bengali 9 per cent. time and wages lost; migrated 4 per cent. time and wages lost.

II.—Staff Organization.

10. *Details of organization, administrative and departmental.*—It consists of secretary, assistant secretary, manager, departmental overseers, their assistants, head sirdars and line sirdars.

11. *Selection of managing staff.*—They are generally promoted from the supervising staff.

12. *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*—(i) The superior staff consisting of overseers is either selected from amongst the subordinate ones or recruited from educated and cultured class, and then trained locally for sufficient period to get properly qualified to undertake the responsibility. The subordinate staff can be divided under two heads—one is formed of sirdars who are generally illiterate and selected from workers according to their experience, merit and organizing capacity, the other is constituted of departmental assistants who come from educated class.

(ii) There are no special facilities for training the workers, but they are allowed to learn the work on the machines with their relatives and friends, and thus they pick up the job in time. The workers are by stages promoted up to head sirdarship only. They are unsuitable for promotion to higher posts, only for want of education, otherwise they might have made themselves good supervisors.

13. (i) Relations generally between the staff and workers are cordial. They, of course, could have been ideal had the illiteracy of the workers not hampered the selection of the supervising staff from amongst themselves.

(ii) *Value and defects of employing jobbers.*—It is a necessity as the workers require to be organized in small groups, and their work watched and looked after. Defects such as extortions, arbitrary dismissals of workers under them, injustices and other pinpricks crop up only when proper check is not exercised over them.

(iii) No works committee is existent.

14. (i) The time-keeping of daily hands or work of the piece workers is done by clerks under the assistant overseers in departments. There are always sanctioned numbers of different sorts of workers against whose names presence or absence, as the case may be, is marked in the registers. The next day, departmental abstracts of attendance are made out, signed by the departmental heads and then submitted to the office. There are two kinds of checkers. One to check the attendance after it is taken by the departmental timekeepers and the other checks the wages books for the past week. The former checks daily any department selected at random while the latter has to check all the registers.

(ii) The tickets are made out for individual workers to be distributed on pay-day, which is always the last working day of the week, by the respective timekeepers. They are, of course, checked and initialled by the overseers who themselves make payments.

15. (i) No work in the mill proper is given on contract. Only the works of jute and coal unloading, casting of machinery parts and blacksmithy, are on contract.

(ii) Sub-contracting.—Does not exist.

(iii) The foreman in charge of the department exercises control to a certain extent.

(iv) The contract work is always expeditious, but cannot be given with advantage where quality is concerned.

III.—Housing.

16. (i) The company has built 501 workmen's quarters on the riverside with the extraordinary facilities of a small septic tank latrine, a cook room, and a yard attached to each of the quarters. In addition to these the company has got 120 pucca rooms in the mill compound. The local workers forming the major portion of the labour force daily go to their homes, so do not require rooms in the lines.

(ii) *By Government and other public agencies.*—None.

(iii) Mud and straw huts are in existence owned by private persons.

(iv) Very few huts belonging to the workers are in existence.

17. There are no facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.

18. (i) The houses provided by the company are superior in relation to the workers' demands. The workers are satisfied so long as they get pucca rooms with latrines and water within a reasonable distance, while the mills have provided each room with a separate kitchen, a separate latrine and an enclosed compound of its own.

(ii) We regard them as one of the best types from the health point of view, on account of their being well ventilated from both sides and situated on the river bank.

(iii) Septic tank latrines have been installed separately in each room. Provision for water is made.

19. The accommodation provided by the mills is fully utilized.

20. The company charges a nominal monthly rent of As. 8 to Re. 1 per month respectively. The private owners charge from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8 per room per month.

21. Sub-letting is not prevalent. Occupation of company's rooms by outsiders is not allowed. Eviction is not necessary when the man is in employ.

22. Moral lapses on the part of the male labourers do occur on account of their living without families for long periods. It can be checked to a certain extent by spread of education. Drug shops and gambling dens also grow up, but they can be stopped by legislation and strict police surveillance.

IV.—Health.

23. (iii) The work is carried on in pucca buildings having plenty of space, light and air and also facilities for water, privies and urinals. Agriculture being the only occupation, they have to work in fields without any of the above facilities.

(iv) Dietary consists mainly of rice, Khasari pulses, fish and vegetables in case of Bengali and Uriya labourers, while the up-country take coarse Atta (wheat flour). Arhar pulses, rice and occasionally meat.

(v) Generally the physique of the Bengali is weaker when compared with the migrated labour.

(vi) We think the effects are harmful to a certain extent.

(vii) Proper drainage and a plentiful supply of water leave little chance for bad effects on living in the thickly populated areas.

24. (i) An equipped hospital and dispensary under a qualified doctor is always open for free treatment of the patients. Beds are also provided in the hospital for indoor patients.

(ii) *By Government.*—None.

(iii) *By other agencies.*—There are a few private professional physicians practising in the vicinity.

(iv) *Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.*—No provision.

25. (i) Generally all the workers take advantage of the facilities.

(ii) Women also equally utilize the benefits.

26. (i) *Latrines.*—A 46-seated activated sludge system septic tank is provided at the works, and 500 small septic tanks are installed in the houses.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Taps are provided at works.

(iii) *Bathing and washing.*—Tank water is supplied through showers at works.

27. (i) No work of boards of health in existence.

29. (i) *Prevalence of industrial diseases.*—None.

(ii) We get cholera cases occasionally in hot seasons. Other diseases are negligible.

30. *Sickness insurance.* (i) *Suitability of International Labour Convention.*—Migratory difficulties, and added to that the unwillingness of the workers to contribute, make it unsuitable for the present.

(ii) *Possibility of introducing other systems.*—No suggestion to offer.

31. *Maternity benefits.* (i) *Extent and working of existing schemes.*—Since the recent strike we have started granting 5 weeks' wages.

(iii) *Possibility of legislation.*—It is quite possible.

V.—Welfare.

(*Other than Health and Housing but including Education*).

32. *Extent of welfare work.* (i) *By employers.*—Welfare work is being carried on for about a year.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—None.

33. One welfare worker is in employ at Rs. 125 per mensem to look after the health, sanitation, morality, etc.

34. (i) *Provision for refreshments, shelters and creches.*—None.

(ii) *Provision of physical culture, recreation and amusement.*—A complete outfit of cinema machine has been purchased for free fortnightly shows for the workers.

36. A primary school is provided for the children only.

37. *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*—It is desirable but does not seem possible in view of labour's unwillingness to contribute anything towards it. We took their votes on provident fund scheme some two years ago and found them unanimously unagreeable.

VI.—Education.

40. There are primary schools in workers' lines and neighbouring villages with scanty means.

42. Education will most likely improve the standard of living of the workers to a considerable extent and also develop a sense of responsibility in them and thereby improve the skill and efficiency of the workers.

VII.—Safety.

43. The present regulations in force are adequate.

46. In spite of the safety devices and particular directions of the factory inspector, accidents sometimes happen, mostly through negligence arising out of illiteracy.

48. Surgery on a small scale is provided in the mill hospital where accident cases are at once taken and attended to. Serious operation cases, after getting first-aid here, are sent to town hospitals.

49. The inspection and enforcement of regulations under the Factory Act are very strictly carried out by the factory inspectors.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

51. *Workmen's Compensation Act.*—(i) It is fully exercised.

(ii) All the cases have so far resulted in the full satisfaction of the claimants.

(iii) It is beneficial to both employers and employees, as it gives former facilities for insurance against unforeseen calamities beyond their means and the latter a sense of security, although before the introduction of this Act compensation was meted out to workers in the jute industry.

(iv) Insurance facilities are always available, and so far as jute industry is concerned we think they have been invariably utilized. This Act has been much appreciated by the workers.

(v) *Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.*—We think it is desirable as it would ensure better security for workmen against possible loss of compensation.

52. It is desirable to be extended to as far as practicable.

. . . . . .

53. All quite suitable.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. (i) Sixty hours a week and 10 hours a day since July, 1929. Before, we were working 54 hours a week and 11 hours a day for four days and 10 hours on the fifth day. The extension in hours was the result of an agreement between all the members of the Jute Mill Association.

(ii) Normal and actual working hours are just the same with us.

(iii) Generally the workers are relieved for 25 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon. In the case of daily hands the relievers are employed for the purpose, while for the piece-workers either the work suffers or the neighbouring worker attends his machines as well.

56. Six days per week since July, 1929. Before, we were working five days.

57. *Effect of 60 hours' restriction*—(i) *On workers.*—From the workers' point of view it has met with universal appreciation.

(ii) *On industry.*—No adverse effect has been caused to the industry.

58. As the mill is working 10 hours a day, 11 hours' restriction does not affect

60. (i) (*a*) Sufficient relieving hands are employed to relieve the workers for about 25 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon.

(*b*) Two and a-half hours' interval from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. is provided, which is sufficient for the purpose.

(ii) The law in force is quite suitable.

(iii) *Suitability of hours during which factory is working.*—Quite suitable.

(iv) Ordinarily the labour gets one holiday a week. Besides, there are festival holidays which amount to nine days a year.

61. (i) Sunday is the day of rest.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Quite suitable.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—So far as the maintenance staff is concerned the use is made.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

82. In our opinion either there should be nurseries or the infants should be allowed with their mothers inside the mills. Remaining outside without their mothers' care seems harmful.

83. We employ only 3 per cent. female labour, and that, too, mostly in the hand hemming department, where the work is carried on piece-work system and their attendance is never strictly enforced. They come and go according to their convenience and hence this question does not bear much importance in our case.

84. (i) As half of the children work for 5½ hours and the other half for 4½ hours only against 6 hours allowed under the Factory Act, it is suitable in our opinion.

(ii) Minimum age is 12, while the maximum age is 14.

85. There being no neighbouring industry within a radius of 5 miles, children employed with us cannot go to the other places for work on the same day.

86. Except spinning, weaving, and sack-sewing departments, other departments do not require any special training. As regards those that require, the necessary training is acquired by working with friends and relations. Besides, no other facilities are provided.

87. The children are not dismissed on their attaining adult age but promoted to the higher grade, i.e., spinner's job.

88. Double-shift mills have the advantage of shorter hours and days for workers over single-shift ones.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average wages per worker for 60 hours (half-timers for 30 hours).

	Rs.	a.	p.
Batching—			
Hessian.			
Sirdars ..	10	11	1
Workers ..	4	11	5
Sacking.			
Sirdars ..	10	10	10
Workers ..	4	14	3
Preparing—			
Hessian.			
Sirdars ..	12	5	10
Workers ..	4	4	11
Sacking.			
Sirdars ..	10	10	11
Workers ..	4	7	0
Spinning—			
Hessian.			
Sirdars ..	11	7	7
Spinners ..	5	12	8
Other workers	4	11	3
Half-timers ..	1	14	3
Sacking.			
Sirdars ..	11	7	7
Spinners ..	6	6	10
Other workers	4	11	5
Cop winding—			
Sirdars ..	9	3	6
Workers ..	5	7	8
Warp winding—			
Sirdars ..	9	10	7
Workers ..	4	11	7

	Rs.	a.	p.
Beaming—			
Sirdars ..	11	9	10
Workers ..	8	6	11
Weaving—			
Hessian.			
Sirdars ..	15	1	7
Weavers ..	9	7	11
Other workers	6	10	1
Sacking.			
Sirdars ..	14	7	2
Weavers ..	9	3	10
Other workers	6	10	0
Calendering—			
Sirdars ..	9	1	0
Workers ..	5	4	0
Sack-sewing—			
Sirdars ..	8	9	1
Workers ..	5	10	1
Finishing—			
Sirdars ..	8	3	11
Workers ..	5	6	7
Mill mechanic shop—			
Mistries ..	6	2	6
Oilers ..	6	0	0
Factory mechanic shop—			
Mistries ..	6	4	2
Engineering—			
Head mistries	12	4	5
Mistries ..	7	1	11
Other workers	3	15	10

(ii) Twelve annas for household or agricultural work is the rate per man per day in the surrounding villages.

97. (i) In May, 1928, 5 per cent. increment was given to about three-fourths of the workers. In August, 1929, general increment of 8 per cent. was given to the labour. No decrease was ever effected.

(ii) In the first instance it was granted to encourage the labour to improve efficiency of the production, and in the second as the result of the strike, which practically involved all the jute mills of Calcutta in July–August, 1929.

(iv) The profits have gone down and are on the verge of being turned into losses while the wages have increased.

98. Figures for three years of the amounts sent from Birlapur P.O. to the villages are given below. They represent the migrated labour only, which is about one-third of the total :—February to December, 1927, Rs. 68,575-11-3 ; January to December, 1928, Rs. 1,20,002-9 ; January to September, 1929, Rs. 1,10,623-13.

100. *Extent and effect of Payment through Contractors, Sub-contractors or Headmen.*—Average monthly figures in case of jute and coal unloading are as follows :— Jute unloading, Rs. 3,988-9-2 ; coal unloading, Rs. 951-5-8.

Amount for the casting of machinery parts and blacksmithy is about Rs. 1,200 a month.

Workers always prefer working direct under the company.

101. *Method of Fixing Wages*—(i) *By negotiated agreements.*—None.

(ii) *Other means.*—No particular method of fixing wages is in force.

102. So far as the manufacturing work is concerned, overtime is never worked. For repairing and maintenance work 25 per cent. more is paid.

103. Standardization of wages does not exist due to different conditions prevalent in different places.

104. Wherever the wages are higher the labour is always attracted.

106. (i) *Extent of Fining.*—Except the weavers no other worker is fined. The fine is always inflicted for bad work and never exceeds four annas.

(ii) *Other deductions.*—None.

(iii) The money realized through fines is used for welfare work.

(iv) Deductions for bad work is essential to maintain the standard of quality in case of piece-workers and legislation is not desirable.

107. (i) Wages are paid weekly to the textile, mechanical and engineering workers. Only the general coolies in the outside department, the contractors of casting and blacksmithy are paid monthly.

The monthly paid workers are 3½ per cent. only.

(ii) A week elapses before the weekly wages are paid, whereas monthly wages are paid on the 15th of the month following.

(iii) Legislation is not desired because wages are paid at present with as little delay as possible. Some delay is unavoidable, for time is required for calculating wages, making vouchers, checking the same and getting cash from currency. Besides, there are advantages of week-end payments from the workers' point of view also, as the money is taken to their homes at once without leaving any chance for being mis-spent.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are utilized for welfare work.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. It seems that the efficiency is increasing steadily.

115. (i) Recently the change in working hours from 54 to 60 a week has taken place, but it has not affected the production, which is just proportionate.

(ii) If the workers are better housed they care more for their work and the efficiency increases.

(iv) The increments which have been given in the past have undoubtedly resulted in their increased carefulness for the work.

(viii) *Dietary.*—No effect has been felt.

(ix) Most of the jute mill labour is addicted to the use of toddy, a country liquor derived from wild date trees. This affects the production to a certain extent.

(x) *Industrial fatigue.*—This is not felt in view of spare hands kept for relieving.

116. In our opinion the removal of illiteracy can contribute a lot to the efficiency of the workers.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) Almost all the jute mill concerns have formed themselves into an organization called by the name of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) There is an unregistered trade union which represents the cause of workers when necessity arises.

118. (i) The industry has been much benefited by the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) Trade unionism, as a matter of fact, brought about the recent general increment in the wages of the workers and maternity benefits.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (i) After the adoption of single-shift working in February, 1924, the recent one was the only strike caused on the false promises made to the labour by an unregistered trade union that they would get them 33 per cent. increase in wages if they just did as directed by them. The change in working from 54 to 60 hours has little connection with the occurrence due to the fact that the mill worked smoothly for six subsequent weeks, and it was only after the appearance of the union and wide circulation of their inflammatory leaflets that the strike was brought about.

(ii) The strike lasted for two weeks only. It was partial inasmuch as the weavers worked for two days so long as the yarn was there, and about one-fifth of the mill was always working. On the first day of the next week the strike had practically opened as the result of the general settlement concerning all the mills, but the neighbouring mills having gone on strike the next day our workers again went out.

(iii) When the attempts of trade union people to call off the strike after the general settlement failed, Mr. G. D. Birla came to the spot, called a meeting of the workers, and after giving them a patient hearing assured them of the highest wages prevailing in any of the mills on the river plus 1 per cent. added to it. This pleased the workers much, who resumed work next day.

(iv) About a lakh of rupees was the loss to the industry while the workers suffered about Rs. 60,000.

THE BENGAL MARINERS' UNION.

History of Inland Steamer Services in Bengal, Behar, Orissa and Assam.—In the above provinces, formerly the country boats used to maintain the river transport facilities. In was in the middle of the 19th century that two important steamer companies, namely, the India General Navigation and Railway Co., Ltd., and the River Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., came into existence and by ousting the country boats they soon monopolized the river transport services in these places. These two companies at first began to work in competition with each other. Finding that such an unhealthy competition was detrimental to their interests, these two companies combined and they have now been working under a joint management. The I.G.N. and Ry. Co. is a limited company and they publish their accounts for general information, whereas the R.S.N. Co. is a private limited company and they do not publish their accounts for such information. The strength of the fleet and the labour employed by each of these two companies are almost the same. It appears from the annual report and the balance sheet of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd., which were placed in the meeting of the said company held in London, on 23rd May, 1928, that on 31st December, 1927, this company had on commission 151 steamers, 153 flats and 227 cargo boats, 29 barges and 46 receiving flats, making a total of 577. The said report also revealed the fact that in 1927 the said company made an increased profit amounting to £32,000 and declared a dividend of 8 per cent., and that in 1928 the increased profit amounted to nearly £24,000 and declared a dividend of 7½ per cent. on the ordinary shares, making a total of 10 per cent. free of income tax; and that block account, including stores, amounted to £895,025, and it was deemed advisable to transfer £85,000 to general reserve. The joint steamer companies' services are extended in all the navigable rivers of these provinces. They monopolize all the districts therein which are not served by any railway line, and as a result these companies naturally make a huge profit. They have to engage at a time 1,350 masters and drivers and about 25,000 crew, excluding their workshop employees at the different centres. The joint companies are financially well off, but the establishment expenses of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd., are comparatively larger than those of the R.S.N. Co., Ltd., though their profits are presumed to be almost the same, and the R.S.N. Co.'s dividend would be higher than that of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd.

Conditions of Men's Services.—The I.G.N. & Ry. and R.S.N. Companies' steamers were at first for several years run by European commanders and engineers, with the help of the Indian crew. In the beginning of the 20th century the joint companies replaced the European commanders and engineers by Indian masters and drivers at a comparatively very low rate of wages. The advantages regarding accommodation and personal servants which were extended to the Europeans were denied to these Indian masters and drivers, who were not given even one-sixth of the wages which were paid to the Europeans. Besides, an additional responsibility in the matter of recruiting the crew was thrown upon these Indian masters and drivers. The crew on the other hand are labouring under various disadvantages, namely, their very low wages, absence of proper accommodation on board the steamers, want of medical relief, and no fixity of hours of duty. As regards recruitment of the crew the procedure followed is rather curious. The joint companies leave this important matter affecting the vital interests of the crew to their masters and drivers. The companies do not hold themselves responsible in any way in this matter. They are just like the Zamindars of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, with their masters and drivers as Patnidars, and having no connection with the tillers of the soil, who in their case are the crew. Each master and driver at the time of his engagement is required to pilot the steamer with the requisite number of crew to be recruited direct by him. These masters and drivers very often find it difficult to get men for their steamers, and sometimes it so happens that the crew, who mostly come from villages, refuse to work, finding no bright prospect in the steamer service and having no direct connection with the companies, who do not keep any register of the crew, who are recruited by the masters and drivers. It is desirable for the interests of all concerned that the joint companies should make direct recruitment of the crew, and with the help of their union whenever found necessary.

The Bengal Mariners' Union.—The masters (serangs) and drivers (mistries) and the crew, in order to ventilate their grievances and for their redress by the joint companies in the matter of wages, accommodation, working hours, medical relief, accident benefits, provident fund, leave rules, unemployment benefits, old age pension, etc., combined in 1920 and formed what was then known as " The Inland Steamship and Flat Employees' Association." The Chandpur steamer strike happened in June, 1921, when the Non-co-operation Movement in Bengal was in the full swing. The said association for some time remained in a moribund state. In October, 1925, it was revived under the present name and style of " The Bengal Mariners' Union," on purely trade union principles. The union is now registered under the Indian

Trade Unions Act of 1926 (Register No. 9) and is affiliated with the All-India Trade Union Congress (?) and the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam. The union has also been recognized as a properly constituted organization by the R.S.N. Co., Ltd., and the I.G.N. Ry. Co., Ltd.

Men's Grievances.—On account of the consistent agitation of the men employed in the companies' service and carried on through their union from different press and platform, the joint companies acceded to some extent to the men's request in the matter of their wages, " claims," restoration of retrenched hands, grading system of the pay of masters and drivers, etc. The following are the present outstanding grievances of the men, including workshop employees, and for the redress of which they through their union have been pressing the joint companies to take immediate steps. The companies up till now have not moved in the matter, on the other hand, they are trying to put it off as long as they can on flimsy grounds.

Men's Grievances and Demands.—(1) Twenty-five per cent. general increment in the wages of the deck and engine-room crew, workshop employees, barge manjies and khalasies, pilots, butlers and steamer and flat clerks, excepting the masters and drivers, in whose case a grade system has recently been introduced.

(2) Introduction of 8-hour day and 48-hour week, according to the Washington Convention of 1920, and recommendations of the last International Labour Conference held at Geneva.

(3) Direct recruitment of crew by the joint companies and with the help of their union whenever necessary.

(4) Overtime allowance for extra work.

(5) Arrangement of medical relief.

(6) Housing accommodation for the crew and the workshop employees in the companies' different centres and facilities for their recreation.

(7) Establishment of an institution for giving the necessary training to the crew and the workshop people and their children.

(8) Dissemination of prophylacting literature in vernacular amongst the crew and the workshop people for prevention of venereal and other tropical diseases.

(9) Better accommodation on board steamers for crew and those who work on shore in workshops.

(10) Maintenance of service sheets for all men of all ratings.

(11) Unemployment to be minimized and introduction of insurance and co-operative credit societies and death benefits and regular old age pension.

(12) Adequate safeguards against high-handed dismissals.

(13) Amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act so as to include native prams under 100 tons, for conferring compensation benefits for accidents to the crew engaged in small vessels.

(14) Engagement of sufficient number of crew in order to avoid over-strain and abolition of differentiation in the number of crew in vessels of same size and tonnage.

(15) Modification of existing leave rules according to the Negotiable Instruments Act.

(16) Abolition of alcohol and drug shops, and removal of brothels from the neighbourhood of a workshop and the different steamer stations.

Employees under other Companies.—A section of the crew (including their serangs and drivers) are employed in the steamers and vessels of the E.B.R.S.S. Co., the Sonakanda Building Co., R. Sim & Co., Chittagong & Co., Gardin & Co., and Co-operatives Societies & Co. The standing grievances of this section of the crew are those just mentioned before, and their distress and sufferings arising from their very low wages and the insecurity of their services, require careful consideration and necessary action at the hands of the authorities. The men under these companies are not employed for the whole year round, but their services are only requisitioned during the jute season, and for the rest of the year they are subjected to forced idleness with no occupation but to shift for themselves.

The condition of service of the crew employed in the water boats of the Calcutta Corporation are not also so much satisfactory as they ought to have been.

It is an open secret that abuses exist in the matter of recruitment, transfer and promotions of serangs, drivers and crew engaged under the different inland steamer companies and Calcutta Corporation, and the attention of the authorities has been repeatedly drawn to these prevailing abuses but without any result as yet.

The members of the Bengal Mariners' Union avail themselves of this opportunity of drawing the attention of the honourable members of the Commission to their legitimate grievances mentioned in this memorandum and earnestly hope and expect that this Royal Commission would take such adequate and effective steps as they deem fit and proper for their redress at an early date.

The existing grade system of pay for the masters and drivers and the scale of wages of the crew of the joint steamer companies and other companies and the Corporation of Calcutta, are given in an Appendix* attached herewith for the information of the honourable members of the Commission.

* Appendix not printed.

THE INDIAN QUARTER-MASTERS' UNION.

Recruitment.—The Seacunnies generally come from the different districts of Bengal and specially from those districts which are flood-affected. Insecurity of agricultural products is the greatest cause of their migration. They gather in the port of Calcutta where from they are recruited. Up to the year 1925 they lived out of touch with, their native districts for years together, some spending their lives here. Before the starting of the union the number of labour varied with the variation of seasons both new and old, but now such variation is rare. At present a man, after one full voyage is compelled to go home and come only when called. But there are cases where men become tired of waiting and come before time causing great difficulties.

Up to the year 1925, our quarter-masters were a body of scattered individuals, unorganised and hence subject to all sorts of oppression without the power of protest. In that year a body was organized to be known as the Indian Quarter-Masters' Union which immediately took up the task of waging a war along constitutional lines against all the oppressors as a result of which all the shipping companies except the B.I.S.N. & Co. and Turner Morrison & Co. were compelled to give effect to the recommendation (paragraph viii) of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee of 1922 and gradually they were able to assert their rights in all other matters. During this short period of five years the union had to pass through many catastrophies some of which still hang on it.

We beg first to refer to the method of recruitment. We have always held the " Roster System " to be the best of all systems and though the Government view was strongly against it, the trial given to it for a period of full five years justified our view. The greatest advantage of the system is that it saves the seacunnies from having to pay heavy bribes (at Rs. 100 on average) for each employment, borrowing at the rate of 108 per cent. per annum interest and makes the seacunnies certain as to the time when they will be called and hence while out of employment can devote their time in other occupations at home instead of wasting time here where living is so costly and thus incurring debt at an exorbitant rate of interest. We are at a loss to understand why Government and the companies should still stubbornly refuse to recognize the system formally.

Unemployment.—The evils of unemployment have been partly remedied by a method akin to guild socialism. But this is no solution of the problem. Method must be found for new recruitment, as also provisions laid down when a man shall have to retire. The union cannot take up any step so long as the employers are hostile to it. The present system is likely to work satisfactorily for a few years more until the supply has considerably gone down or the demand has considerably increased.

Present condition.—Present condition of our quarter-masters is far better than it was in 1924. They have been saved from the clutches of the moneylenders of the port, they have not to depend on the mercy of the Lathi-holders since they have a Lathi of their own under the management of the union. Though the eighth Recommendation of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee referred to above has not been formally recognized, all the companies except the two named above, generally recruit seacunnies along the line recommended, as a result of which our labourers have been saved from paying heavy bribes to the intermediaries but the Union has to be always on the alert as the companies and the interested parties are sparing no pains to deprive our seacunnies of the fruits of a hard-fought battle.

Though better housing arrangements have been made, it must be admitted that it has not been as it ought to be. This is due to the poverty of the seacunnies as also the want of financial strength of the union. Unfortunately the Calcutta Corporation instead of helping, try to exact taxes as much as they can from the union. Rate of wages of our seacunnies, also is very low, lower even than that of their brethren at Bombay, not to speak of white seamen, although all render alike services. The most glaring of all their sufferings is that they are not allowed sufficient time for sleep when on board ships. They have to work 12 hours a day, two at a time in three watches. Leisure allowed is four hours at a time, nearly half of which is taken in having bath and performing other necessary functions. Then there is the question of a suitable place for a sound sleep. Often they are not given separate cabins for use and even those cases where allowed they are not at all fit for use and would have been better termed if called cages. What is worse is that these so called cabins are situated adjacent to the folk-cell and hence the carousing of these who are awake hardly allows them to utilize those few hours. Want of a wheel-house in some ships leaves them to sun and rain and consequently prey to sickness.

Grievances relating to Sickness, etc.—Far from giving effect to the International Labour Convention relating to sickness insurance or to any equivalent method thereto, the officers on board the ship at once discharge the man who falls sick, his wages stop from the moment and he is left helpless in the hospital of the nearest port. Although the term of agreement has not run, the Law of Contract is kept at abeyance but in case the desertion is intentional the Contract Law is enforced to the extent of going to an excess.

No welfare arrangement has been made either in the port or on board the vessels. There is no arrangement either for old age pension or for insurance, thus making people unwilling to retire. Majority of seacunnies are illiterate. No facilities are given to those who are literate to utilize their time. Food allowed on board ships is also of a very low quality.

Merchants Shipping Act.—In connection with the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, there is the question of disciplinary measures on board the vessels. We fully realize the need of a strict discipline on board the vessel, but this is no reason why a man should be allowed to be heavily punished for slight offences or no offences at all and at the same time will not be allowed to appeal, due to want of means and expensive method of litigation against such punishments or be given opportunity to do so. They are often arrested and prosecuted in foreign courts at the whim of the officers and where seacunnies can hardly defend themselves. The Indian Merchant Shipping Act has made them so helpless. As a consequence they are not only fined and imprisoned but also doubly and sometimes trebly punished by being made to serve for period, without pay and then discharged with bad remarks in their continuous discharge certificates which deprives them of opportunities for future jobs. This miserable state of affairs has recently been brought to light from the proceedings of several cases in the Calcutta High Court as also in foreign courts (c. f. Anwar Ali seacunny Vs. Andrew Weir & Co., Calcutta High Court, Statesman, July, 16th, 1929).

The Union.—The Indian Quarter-Masters' Union has a membership of 1,666 souls, there being very few left in the port who are not members of this union.

The Bengal National Bank failure causing loss of about Rs. 4,000 and the constant litigation with the intermediaries costing about Rs. 6,000 put the union in financial difficulties from which the union has only recently recovered. In spite of all these difficulties the union contributed largely in the fund of the local Indian Seamen's Union to which it has still been rendering help by lending the services of one of its paid officers so that she may achieve for herself the direct recruitment system along the line of the quarter-masters and thus come up to her standard. Besides, the union contributed to the all-India Trade Union Congress, The Bengal Trades Union Federation and the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam, to all of which our union is affiliated. The panic stricken by the Bengal National Bank failure has now evaded and we are about to open our account with the Imperial Bank of India.

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Mr. S. A. M. SHOOSTRY, GENERAL SECRETARY, BENGAL LABOUR ASSOCIATION.

The memorandum sets forth the working and other conditions of approximately 15,000 stevedoring labourers at present employed in the ports of Calcutta, in accordance with their unanimous opinions.

The men are employed by the stevedores in gangs of 9 to 10 men to load and unload cargoes. The wages of one such gang is Rs. 12-8 annas and Rs. 16-8 annas per day and per night respectively. The gang is expected to load or discharge over 100 tons of cargo in a full day work, for which said 100 tons the stevedores get from Rs. 62-8 annas to Rs. 100, according to the class of cargo, from their shipping companies.

Fully 75 per cent. of the workers come from Durbhanga, as owing to their superior physique and brawn, are well fitted to the calling.

Owing to the gross carelessness on the part of the stevedores, 50 per cent. of these labourers remain totally unemployed for months, whereas the rest usually earn from Rs. 18 to Rs. 20 per month.

It is difficult for them to obtain proper food or clothing for themselves and for their families or to educate their children. The lack of education is deeply felt, and no arrangement of any kind has so far been made by the employers.

Most of the men are driven to rent room in the bustees on the outskirts of the town, and have either to live fifteen to twenty men in one room, or sleep on the pavements of Calcutta or the courtyards of the mosques.

The working hours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., but, as the majority of the workers live from 5 to 7 miles away from the jettys, they are forced to leave home as early as 3. a.m. in order to be in time for the bookings which the stevedores hold at 6 a.m. Further, stevedores always call out more men than there is work available, and thus daily many of the men are sent back.

There does not exist any arrangement for proper inspection of the chains, and other arrangements, for the safety of the workers, and thus accidents, fatal and otherwise, are a daily occurrence.

In case of any kind of disputes, the stevedores have made it a common practice never to pay any attention to the claims, and just grievances of the workers, and all representations, are always ignored, and treated with contempt.

Want of sanitary quarters near the site of work, lack of sleep, for reasons already enumerated, and proper food and clothing are daily taking their toll, over and above this in case of sickness, or disablement, the employers never render any assistance, nor make any kind of arrangement for the care or medical treatment of the workers, who are just left to suffer as best they may.

The workers want recognition of their association, and in the whole body of the union not more than 5 men are those who are not connected with industry, the rest being all actual workers.

The abolition of the stevedoring system will, in the unanimous opinion of the members, totally do away with every one of their grievances.

The men are unanimously in favour of arranging employment through their association on the one side, and the shipping companies on the other, thus the union will be in a position to secure the workers regular employment, and to immediately settle all disputes as they arise, also to remedy, and remove any cause of discontent that may then occur.

This measure, if adopted, will at once do away with the prevailing tension of feelings between the stevedores and the men, and will greatly help to remove for ever the constant threat of strikes, which as past experience shows has been frought with dire consequences, as in the times of the strikes these men go back to their villages, and those that are left here devote their idle time and energies to whatever may be just then going on, in the shape of bloodshed, plunder, such as invariably follow in the wake of every strike.

Heavy loss is caused to the shipping companies, the exporters, and importers, and everyone connected with any kind of trade or business are made to suffer; as these stevedoring labourers are the men that keep the wheels of industry and commerce going round.

Prof. N. GANGULEE, C.I.E., B.Sc., Ph.D., KHAIRA PROFESSOR OF AGRICULTURE, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY, BENGAL.

Preamble.—The historians have yet to analyse and evaluate the impetus given to India since the great war. The growing labour consciousness in India is a social phenomenon which has to be contended with, and the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into and report on the existing condition of labour is a reflection of the recognition of problems that have, in recent years, manifested

themselves in trade and industry of this country. The Commission has, indeed, come at a time when the shadows of the conflict between the employer and the employee show signs of an ominous situation. The undertaking may also be regarded as a policy of Government to provide accurate knowledge as a guide in constructive legislation.

With the growth of industrialism in India have come, as they inevitably do, the characteristic socio-economic phenomena which tend to disturb harmonious articulation among all factors of national welfare. Although India has entered rather late into the field of industrial enterprise, she has the unmistakable advantage of obtaining the knowledge of the collective experiences of various developmental processes, undertaken and initiated by the west, in order to harmonize the conflicting interests of labour and capital. Their applications by Japan and China under the social circumstances totally differ from those of the west, furnish fresh data for formulating an industrial and labour policy for India. Then, one of India's chief advantages is its ready-made place and position in the International Labour Organization, which enables her to maintain, through her own representatives, an effective control in claiming the attention of the civilized world to justify her grievances and seek her redresses. But India can and will derive benefits from these advantages if and when she organises industrial relations on a basis of mutual understanding between predominant conflicting interests.

The purpose of this memorandum is not to reiterate and emphasise the existence of the conditions under which the ordinary Indian workman lives and works. They have been adequately dealt with in the evidence supplied to the Commission. I shall venture to offer a few suggestions in regard to labour administration and labour welfare work, generally, laying stress on the part the Government of India should play in bringing abour harmonious relationship between industry and labour.

My interest as a student of social sciences brought me in close contact with the labour movement in 1919–20. A number of labour associations in Bengal was then in existence, but there was no co-ordinating body which might assist these infant organizations in developing in the *right* direction. An attempt was, therefore, made to set up an agency under the title "The Bengal Central Labour Federation." But, within a very short time the symptoms of internal dissension became conspicuous and there was a marked tendency on the part of the organizers of the federation to identify them with the disruptive political forces. The constructive programme of the organization has had no chance under the circumstances created by predominance of political influences and consequently I ceased to take any interest in the movement.

Another occasion that brought me in direct touch with labour was in 1922, at the time of exodus of the Assam tea labourer. The situation was engineered by the extremists. As the coolies were put to an ordeal of suffering at Chandpur on account of the strike of the steamer crew, the late Mr. S. R. Das (then a prominent lawyer of Calcutta Bar) and myself made an arrangement for repatriation of the coolies by chartering a steamer.

Since then I have followed the growth of the labour movement in India more as a student than as an active participant. I venture to submit herewith a few remarks on some of the questions raised by the Commissioner.

XVII.—Administration.

I believe that the time has come in India when the Central Government must recognize more fully than in the past that it has a serious responsibility to discharge in regard to proper direction of forces that affect industrial relations. Labour questions in India embrace such problems which cannot and should not be treated in an isolated manner and therefore the Central Government should be very closely concerned with the matter of labour legislation, administration and other allied functions. The multiplicity of various administrative authorities, in the present stage of India's constitutional development is likely to produce chaos. My proposal is that a Central Labour Council should be constituted by an Act of the Imperial Legislature. The functions which the Labour Council would be called upon to discharge are stated as follows :—

Central Labour Council.—(i) Labour Legislation. The Labour Council would be a body to which the Government of India could look for guidance in all matters relating to labour legislation. The responsibility of ratification of international conventions would rest with the Council, and it would suggest ways and means by which legislative measures may be enforced.

(ii) General control of labour recruitment. The policy in regard to recruitment would be framed by the Council and it would supervise the working of provincial organizations (e.g., Assam Labour Board) set up for recruiting labour for factories, railways, mines and plantations.

(iii) Direction and control of labour emigration. The council would take over the duties now entrusted upon " The Department of Health and Lands " of the Government of India.

(iv) Conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes. The Council should bring into existence a standing committee on industrial disputes, which would act as the advisory and consultative body on matters arising out of strikes and lock-outs.

(v) Labour intelligence. The Council should maintain a Bureau of Labour Intelligence and should conduct such investigations as may be necessary for proper understanding of specific problems relating to labour and industry. Such investigations may be conducted through universities and trade unions under the general direction of the Central Council.

(vi) Direction of welfare work. The Council should be in a position to formulate a general scheme for welfare work and to indicate how best it may be given effect to. The Council would not exercise any administrative control over the welfare organizations but it would provide the requisite degree of co-ordination among them.

(vii) Control guidance and superintendence of trade union movement throughout India. The Council would assume the responsibility of fostering better relations between employer and the employee, and it would assist unions in winning recognition in Industry.

Composition of the Labour Council.—In order to discharge the functions enumerated above, the Labour Council should have representation not only from the employers and workmen, but also from the Central Legislatures, and recognized public bodies concerned with the welfare of labour and industry. The Central Labour Council, as I visualize it, should be more than a Joint Industrial Council and it must be invested with real authority of a department of the Government of India.

The Central Labour Council should consist of :—

(1) The The Honourable Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet in charge of the portfolio of Commerce and Industry—President.

(2) A whole-time Administrative Officer—Vice-President.

(3) Whole-time Secretary.

(4–5) Two whole-time Technical Advisers.

(6–8) Three representing railways—one of which would represent Railway Union or Federation.

(9–11) Three representing Docks—one of which would represent Union or Federation of Labour.

(12–14) Three representing Mines—one of which would represent Union or Federation of Labour.

(15–16) Two representing shipping—one of which would represent Seamen's Union.

(17–18) Two representing tea and other plantations.

(19–21) Three representing cotton industry—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(22–23) Two representing jute industry—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(24–25) Two representing iron works—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(26–27) Two representing post and telegraph services—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(28) One representing Indian Chamber of Commerce.

(29) One representing Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

(30) One representing Associated Chambers of Commerce.

(31–32) Two representing Trade Union Congress.

(33–34) Two elected by the Assembly.

(35) One elected by the Council of State.

(36) One representing Railway Board.

(37–38) Two nominated by the Government of India from Medical Service.

(39–43) Five nominated by the Government of India—one of which should be a woman.

The executive functions of the Council would be discharged by a Standing Committee consisting of :—

(1) The Honourable Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet in charge of the portfolio of Commerce and Industry.

(2) The whole-time Administrative Officer.

(3–4) Two whole-time Technical Advisers.

(5–7) Three members elected by the Council.

(8–9) Two members nominated by the Government of India.

The specific duties, such as exercising general supervision on recruitment or examining the working of Trade Unions, or formulating particular schemes for welfare work, may be discharged by *ad hoc* Committees. For the purpose of settling disputes, the Council should have a Standing Committee. This Committee would act as a permanent Court of Appeal for settling disputes within a certain period.

The whole Council should at least meet twice a year preferably in certain industrial centres and full publicity should be given to its proceedings. The Executive Committee should meet as often as it may be necessary and its proceedings should be strictly confidential. The Council should be maintained by a grant from central revenues.

So much, then, about the Central Labour Organization. A permanent unification of all interests concerned with industry and labour under the guidance of the Government of India should bring to an effective focus the fundamental aspects of the labour problem in India. The collective agreements between industrial organizations and labour unions would form the foundations of a constructive programme that will meet the needs of industrial India at this stage of its development.

Provincial Labour Councils.—As regards administrative authorities now in existence in Provincial Governments, I am of opinion that the Central Labour Council should be invested with the responsibilities of administrative functions now discharged by provinces through special labour officers. The duties, such as factory inspection, mines inspection, and general supervision and control of welfare work, should rest with Provincial Governments and in each major province there should be a labour council under the chairmanship of Director of Industries. The Council should consist of representation from (1) principal industries, (2) recognised trade unions, (3) local government and (4) general public. It would be an advisory body and would suggest means of adjusting conditions of labour with analogous bodies of employees.

The relation of provinces with the Central Government is provided in the adequate representation of various industries and trades in the proposed Central Labour Council.

In certain quarters, the suggestion for creating a central body will be resented ; but I am convinced that the time for decentralization of administrative functions in regard to labour has not yet come in India. For instance, the machinery of arbitration and conciliation to curb the wastes of industrial conflict must be run by a central agency, if it is to function properly and efficiently. A sound economic policy (which must embrace all problems relating to industry and labour) and an efficient administrative procedure to give effect to that policy are the two things India is in need of, and the responsibility of providing them rests with the Central Government.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

On the subject of trade combinations, both the state and employers must realise that trade unionism is the necessary product of the industrial growth in India and that the movement has assumed the character which is at once national and international. In one sense, the movement is certainly defensive and protective ; but I would like to consider it as being " the fruit of a creative impulse." In order to create an industrial civilization based on that impulse, it is necessary to avoid all possibilities of conflict between labour and capital. The remedy of " the moralization of the employer " as suggested by the Le Play Societies in France and by the English positivists has a special significance in India. In the Western countries the employers are beginning to realise the efficacy of the remedy referred to above. The great American industrial magnate, Carnegie, writes in his " Gospel of Wealth " :—

" The right of the working man to combine and to form trade unions is no less sacred than the right of the manufacturer to enter into associations and conferences with his fellows, and it must sooner or later be conceded. Indeed, it gives one but a poor opinion of the American workman if he permits himself to be deprived of a right which his fellow in England long since conquered for himself. My experience has been that trade unions, on the whole, are benficial both to labour and to capital.

They certainly educate the working men and give them a truer conception of the relations of capital and labour than they cared otherwise for. The oldest and best workmen eventually come to the front in these organizations."

The Commission is fully aware of the criticisms of the nature of trade union activities in India. It is, indeed true that the standard of intellectual capacity of organizers is low and that their interest in the movement may not always be free from political bias. The extraneous pressure has undoubtedly given a false direction to the movement but the ultimate source from which it draws nourishment lies in the general conditions of life and labour of the working man. As long as they have to deny themselves of some of the essential amenities of life, the labour unrest must continue to be one of the distressing features of industrial development in India. The growth of trade unionism has already come to a stage when the movement cannot be warped and thwarted by not recognising its legitimate place in the constitution of industrial regime in India.

There would be no need of urging this commonplace view if the extreme conservatism and bitter opposition to unionism did not exist among organized industrial groups. They must, however, change their attitude towards organized labour in conformity with the tendency of the time.

On the other hand, the *raison d'être* of trade unionism should always be kept in view; that is, the movement must be directed to explore all means by which the wastes resulting from labour conflicts may not retard the growth of industry. Its ideal should be to foster the spirit of organized self-help. The movement should not aim at aggressive campaign against industrial ventures.

My suggestions are as follows:—(i) I recognise the importance of legalising trade unions and consider the Trade Unions Act of 1926 is a step in the right direction. But, the Act should be amended in order to widen its scope and to invest the Central Labour Council with such powers as may be required for proper control, guidance and superintendence of all trade union activities.

(ii) Three seats of trade union representatives elected by the Trade Union Congress should be reserved in the Legislative Assembly and one in the Council of State. The representation of labour in the Legislative Council in each province should be secured through electoral colleges and *not* through nomination. In each province there should be three such representatives.

(iii) Government, through the Central Labour Council, should make special arrangements for training trade union workers at least in one Indian University. The opportunities of studying trade union organization of the principal industrial countries should be given to suitable Indians. The Council should be in a position to offer facilities to trade unions for understanding the problems of industry.

(iv) The Central Labour Council, in collaboration with trade unions, should formulate schemes in regard to methods of negotiation between employers and employee. The schemes, as adopted by the Council, may be enforced by an Act of Legislature.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

I have already mentioned about conciliation and arbitration machinery and have suggested the formation of a permanent tribunal for settling disputes. Only those official and non-official conciliators who may be authorized by the tribunal to take part should be recognized by the parties involved in industrial disputes. I think the Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act of 1860 should be amended in the light of the experiences gained during the last few years in negotiating disputes.

The public is not fully aware of the extent of economic wastes caused by strikes, lock-outs, etc. The Central Council of Labour should publish an account of each dispute showing fully the loss sustained by industry and workers. These publications should also be printed in principal Indian vernaculars.

V.—Welfare.

Under this head, I desire to deal with certain aspects of welfare activities which have an intimate relation with that of housing and health improvement.

Liquor Traffic.—In the first place the question of liquor traffic in industrial areas is of so great importance that no scheme of "better living" can hope to succeed unless the drink evil is effectively kept under control. I am not a fanatic in temperance reform but I believe in the dictum of Lord Rosebery that "if the state does not control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic will control the state."

In industrial areas, the licensing authority should consult the Provincial Joint Industrial Boards before issuing licences to retailers or wholesale dealers, and *special* measures should be taken for controlling the sale of liquors and drugs. For instance, no sale should be permitted on Sundays* and other holidays; credit sale should be

* Wales has a Sunday Closing Act. Both Scotland and Ireland, I believe, have had similar Acts.

strictly prohibited ; and the supply of intoxicants should be limited to a minimum standard of requirement, and they should not be sold to young persons under eighteen.

While advocating these controlling measures, I am not unmindful of their inadequacy in eradicating the drink evil. The real solution is to be sought in the improvement of industrial conditions under which the labourer works and lives. The case has been well put by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in their report which says :—

" The close connection between a craving for drink and bad housing, bad feeding, a polluted and depressing atmosphere, long hours of work in over-heated and often ill-ventilated rooms, only relieved by the excitements of town life, is too self-evident to need demonstration, nor unfortunately is the extent of the evil more open to dispute."

I attach some importance to persistent temperance propaganda through reliable agencies. Attractive posters and cinema films illustrating the risk of intemperance may be effectively used in propaganda work and the local authorities should be asked to remove all liquor advertisements within the industrial areas. With the extension of propaganda work, the time may come for the adoption of a scheme of local option.

Indebtedness of labourers.—The second evil to which a reference should be made is the growing indebtedness of labourers. Pathans, Marwaris and other indigenous money-lenders should not be permitted to carry on their trade among workmen. It is on these agencies the workmen usually depend during strikes.

The problem of indebtedness can be effectively tackled by starting Co-operative Societies ; but, at this stage, they should be established in a few selected areas where conditions of success appear to be favourable. The societies thus started should be under the supervision of a special officer of the provincial department of co-operation. In the organization of co-operative enterprises, both the industry and the union can render a valuable service, and I believe through their combined efforts and resources, the foundations of all forms of welfare schemes may be truly laid. To cite an example of an American Trade Union—six co-operative apartment houses for more than three hundred workers' families at a cost of $1,800,000 were completed by the union in New York City and are now fully occupied, thus taking its members out of the old tenements and making it possible for them to get proper housing at reasonable cost.

There are numerous instances of co-operative labour banks organized in industrial areas of Europe and America which have made a substantial contribution to raising and maintaining a high standard of living. A small committee consisting of two representatives of the Trade Union Congress and one of the Central Labour Council should be deputed to Europe to study the growth of co-operative enterprises among industrial labour.

It cannot be said that in India we are generous in doling out " gifts " of welfare schemes to the working masses either in factories or in mines. The real solution of the problems of welfare work is to be sought in the vitality of the labour movement so that the workers themselves may unite in order to improve their social status. In the meantime, the state and the industry have a serious responsibility to discharge in the direction of providing the requirements of a decent environment for the workers to live in.

The question has to be considered from two points of view ; namely, one of effective organization and the other relating to finance. Unfortunately, as the existing welfare work in India lacks in both, the rate of progress has been extremely slow and unsatisfactory. The Commission will have before them volumes of evidence indicating the character and extent of the problems of labour welfare and it would not be difficult for the proposed Central Labour Council to formulate, in consultation with Provincial Labour Councils and Trade Unions, a positive and constructive programme. And that programme should include, among other items, an intensive propaganda scheme to be carried on in each industrial centre by authorised agents. The primary subject of this propaganda campaign should be to quicken a desire for better living among the workers so that they may voluntarily rally round the organizations set up for amelioration of their conditions of life. These organizations should consist of (1) representatives of industry, labour and the state, and (2) should aim at combining resources of industrial, labour and official bodies in order to give effect to a bold and comprehensive policy of welfare of the working class.

As regards the question of finance, I venture to offer a few suggestions :—

(1) A labour welfare fund should be constituted by a grant from the fund raised in India with a view to commemorating His Majesty's recovery. I trust that the proposed welfare fund will be considerably augmented by donations from various sources when the work initiated by the Central Labour Council would begin to attract attention. I am also of opinion that at this stage, the Government of India should make an annual grant to this fund, the administration of which would rest in the Central Labour Council.

The Commission is aware of the devolution rules in the present constitution under which the Central Government cannot incur any expenditure in the provinces for the work of labour welfare. I am of opinion that these devolution rules should be modified on the broad principle that the Central Government cannot divest themselves of the responsibilities for initiating and aiding such activities as are calculated to improve the lot of Indian labour. The Central Labour Council should be in a position to supplement provincial welfare activities or to finance such approved schemes drawn up by the recognised organizations of industry and labour.

2. For the purposes of general education of children in industrial areas, I think the fund should come from a provincial grant and from a reasonable contribution of the trade unions. The facilities for technical education should, however, be financed from the joint contributions of Provincial Governments and the industries directly interested in a particular form of technical education.

3. As regards sanitation and housing in industrial areas, the responsibilities should be shared, for some time to come, by the employers and Provincial Governments. The problem of housing must be tackled in a comprehensive manner and I do not think local bodies are competent to discharge this responsibility. Improvements of housing conditions should be made in the first instance in the factories and workshops directly under the control of the Government. The more enlightened type of employer is beginning to realise the importance of providing better housing accommodation which should certainly be considered as reproductive capital expenditure.

The Central Labour Council may profitably direct a portion of the fund at its disposal to (*a*) child welfare schemes (*b*) provision for creches and nurseries where woman labour is employed (*c*) provision for woman doctors, trained midwives and dais, and other forms of welfare work which would make an impression on the workers as regards the benevolent intentions of the Government. In India we cannot ignore the psychological effects of paternalism in the sphere of administration.

4. I am in favour of creating a statutory miner's welfare fund; but its control and supervision should rest with the proposed Central Labour Council.

VI.—Education.

Twenty-two years ago, the Indian Factory Labour Commission (1908) considered that every facility and encouragement should be given to promote the education of children working in factories, and they recommended the opening of special schools close to the factories. It is probably unnecessary to state here that the progress of a development, on which the prosperity of both industry and labour depends, has been very slow. What is worse—there is as yet no definite educational policy laid down by the Government of India in regard to (*a*) general education of children in industrial areas and (*b*) vocational training of boys who may be employed in various Industries. One of the first important duties that the proposed Central Labour Council must discharge is to formulate a general policy in regard to education in industrial areas. I see no useful purpose in encouraging the waste of our primary educational system by establishing a number of ill-equipped schools there; what is really needed is to provide certain typical areas, where conditions are most favourable, with a number of well-organised schools so that the labourers themselves may appreciate the value of education imparted to their children. The Provincial Labour Council should carefully watch such intensive experiments and record their progress. Should they indicate satisfactory results, I am confident that the Trade Unions will do much to assist in the spread of literacy among the working class children.

On the subject of vocational training, I desire to say that it has to be "broad-based" upon a good general education if the object of such training be to turn out men capable of taking some share in the industrial development of the country. I think it is a mistake to give technical training before the most critical years of adolescence are over.

Perhaps the most effective means of spreading education on proper and practical lines would be to organise a scheme of adult education such as it exists in the West. I would like to see the beginning of an agency for adult education like that of the Workers' Educational Association of Great Britain. During my visits to England I had many opportunities of observing some of the essential features of this Association and regretted very much that in India we had no such efficient body. The initiative in this direction should be taken by some of our well-organised trade unions and for such work, the departments of public instruction should make adequate grants.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women and Children.

Although welfare schemes in the way of providing the employee with medical aid, maternity benefits, education, etc., are receiving some attention, I trust the Commission has had sufficient evidence to impress on them the gravity of the social

situation in the industrial areas where women and children are employed. It is a truism to say that the sort of surroundings into which the child is born would go far to determine its after-life. Childhood in the industrial areas is in danger, and if there be no substantial improvement in the direction of better housing, better nutrition, better education, India can never hope to obtain an efficient labour force to develop her industries.

The above schedule has raised several questions which have a close relationship with the welfare of women and children; but I propose to confine my remarks to the nature of organization required to administer their needs. In the Central Council of Labour, I suggested reservation of at least one seat for a woman member. Unfortunately there are not many Indian women whose services may be utilized for creating a strong permanent women's committee, the purpose of which would be to advise both employers and Government on problems peculiar to the employment of women in factories, mines and plantations. For the present, three seats in each Provincial Labour Council may be reserved for women, one of which should be from the Public Health service.

III and IV.—Health and Housing.

I have already dealt with some of the questions placed under these schedules. Here I should content myself with a few suggestions in regard to (1) facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses, (2) effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities, and (3) need of women doctors.

(i) Owing to land speculations, land values in the neighbourhood of industrial areas are artificially raised. These speculators desire to reap the benefit of such improvements and developments which come from the efforts and energies of industrial or municipal enterprises and keep the land values far too high. The result is that land is not made available to industrial or municipal enterprises for their expansion at a reasonable price.

This problem has been solved in China by a system of land taxation and I would ask the Commission to consider similar schemes for their adoption in industrial areas where housing accommodation is insufficient.

(ii) The problem of sex-ratio in industrial cities has not arrested the attention it deserves and perhaps it may be difficult for the Commission to obtain relevant data for framing definite recommendations. The subject requires to be investigated into and examined in details before a workable solution may be suggested. As the problem is inter-related with the entire social system the urge for reform should come from the working class through the initiative of Labour organizations.

(iii) The small cadre of the Women's Medical Service in India is wholly inadequate for rendering any effective service to women and children. As it is, women doctors have to work under great disabilities and they are unable to cope with the work they are called upon to do. It is obvious that the cadre has to be increased for any expansion of the activities of the Women's Medical Service and here the responsibility lies with the Government. The Dufferin Fund constituted for the purpose should be augmented by further grants from the Central Government and constitutional changes should not be allowed to interfere with the administration of such funds.

Seasonal Migration of Labour.—In the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture, we discussed the general labour situation as it affects agriculture. The seasonal migration of the rural population to industrial centres and the overseas emigration are two factors, which from the point of view of the economic welfare of the population, are of considerable importance. The pressure on the land in certain parts of India is alarmingly excessive and demands relief. Consequently, we were of opinion that "all restrictions on the movement of labour throughout India" should be abolished and that the objections urged by some of our public men against such measures could be met by improving the conditions of life in industrial centres. Prior to the withdrawal of the existing prohibitory measures, the Central Labour Council should, through a special Committee, review the situation from all points of view. The provision of decent livelihood in industrial centres or in plantations, the development of communications in rural areas and the growing pressure on the land—all these factors must tend to encourage seasonal migration. If industries desire to take full advantage of this source of labour, they must, to quote the words of the Agricultural Commission, "ensure that the housing and general social surroundings of the countrymen in the city are tolerable and decent."

Possibilities of Overseas Emigration.—While I realize that the Labour Commission is only concerned with "the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India," I am inclined to think that the problem of overseas migration of Indian labour to countries within the British Commonwealth cannot be entirely precluded from the consideration of the Commission. A well-formulated scheme of emigration with adequate safeguards against imposition of iniquitous

restrictions by the Empire overseas is desirable both from political and economic points of view. Certain congested areas in India have to be relieved and vast territories in Australia, South Africa, British Guiana, and other parts of the Empire overseas require to be developed. India has been given the status of a dominion in the many Imperial Conferences that have been held since the war, and I am confident that the problem of emigration from India will be dealt with the statesman-like attitude by all concerned with the solidarity of the Empire. The Central Labour Council, as proposed in this Memorandum, should make a careful survey of the possibilities of opening out avenues of employment of Indian labour in the tropical and sub-tropical zones of the British Empire outside India and should scrutinize the existing emigration legislations with a view to exercising an effective control over the system of recruitment and the conditions of life of Indian labour abroad.

" *Forced* " *Labour*.—Since the attention of the International Labour Office has been drawn to the subject of forced labour, the powers, which agreed to apply " the slavery convention " adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations, have been making serious investigations into the law and practice regarding forced labour in their respective territories. I am not aware of any reliable literature dealing with the conditions under which forced labour exists in India (including the Native States). The systems known as begar and Kamiauti really do come under the category of forced labour and are liable to great abuses. A detailed description of these systems is not attempted here and I would content myself with referring the Commission to " Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Hazaribagh (1908–1915) by Mr. J. D. Sifton, I.C.S." and to the observations on the Kamiauti system made by the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture in their Report (pages 434–35).

I should mention here that the employment of compulsory labour for public purposes is, of course, unobjectionable. At present it is confined to cases of emergency such as forest fires or imminent danger from floods to irrigation works. The clearance of silt deposits in certain canal tracts in the Punjab, and the upkeep of roads in certain parts of Bihar and Orissa, are other instances where under statutory obligation the village labour is employed. Personally I would like to extend this practice more widely than at present and thereby utilize the leisure of rural adult population for the benefit of their own community-life.

Conclusion.—It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that the Royal Commission on Agriculture is followed by a Commission to enquire into the existing conditions of labour. I am in entire agreement with the view that constitutional changes could not solve the fundamental problems of the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of India. The Agricultural Commission endeavoured to indicate the broad principles on which an agricultural policy for India should be based, and I am confident that Labour Commission will succeed in recommending ways and means by which the disruptive forces in the country may be counteracted by a new orientation of industrial relations. The ideal here is not merely to secure a fair deal for the humblest worker, but to make him an essential partner in the development of industrial regime in India.

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ROYAL COMMISSION
ON
LABOUR IN INDIA

EVIDENCE

Vol. V.—Part 2.

BENGAL
(excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

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ORAL EVIDENCE

Terms of Reference.

"To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations."

Note.—"Industrial undertaking" for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows :—

"For the purpose of this Convention, the term 'industrial undertaking' includes particularly :—

"(*a*) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.

"(*b*) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.

"(*c*) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.

"(*d*) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand."

* * * * * * * * * *

The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture.

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LIST OF SUBJECTS.

I. Recruitment.

(1) *Origin of Labour.*
- (i) Extent of migration.
- (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
- (iii) Changes in recent years.

(2) *Contact with villages.*
- (i) Extent and frequency of return.
- (ii) Extent of permanent labour force.

(3) *Methods of recruitment.*
- (i) Existing methods.
- (ii) Possible improvement.
- (iii) Public employment agencies.
  - (*a*) Desirability of establishing.
  - (*b*) Possibility of practical schemes.

(4) *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*

(5) *Recruitment of seamen.*
- (i) Existing practice.
- (ii) Effect of changes introduced in Calcutta.
- (iii) Suggestions for improvement.

(6) *Recruitment for Assam.*
- (i) Need of retention of control.
- (ii) Administration of present system.
- (iii) Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.
- (iv) Defects of existing Act and system.
- (v) Possible substitutes.

(7) *Unemployment.*
- (i) Extent and character.
- (ii) Extent to which caused by—
  - (*a*) Retrenchment or dismissals.
  - (*b*) Voluntary retirement.
  - (*c*) Other causes.
- (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
- (iv) Unemployment Insurance.
- (v) Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.

(8) *Labour "turnover."**
- (i) Average duration of employment.
- (ii) Extent of casual employment.
- (iii) Absenteeism.
  - (*a*) Extent, character and causes.
  - (*b*) Seasonal or otherwise.
  - (*c*) Time and wages lost.

(9) *Apprentices Act*, 1850.
Value of.

* This word should be read as indicating generally the changes in composition of the labour staff of an undertaking.

II. Staff Organisation.

(10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*

(11) *Selection of managing staff.*

(12) *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*

(i) Methods in force.

(ii) Facilities for training and promotion of workmen.

(13) *Relations between staff and rank and file.*

(i) Relations generally.

(ii) Value and defects of system of employing jobbers.

(iii) Works Committees: their constitution, extent and achievements.

(iv) Works Councils and Industrial Councils.

(14) *Timekeeping, piecework, contract and attendance registers.*

(i) How and by whom kept and checked.

(ii) How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.

(15) *Contractors as intermediaries.*

(i) Extent and character of work given on contract.

(ii) Extent of sub-contracting.

(iii) Control exercised over working conditions.

(iv) Effects.

III. Housing.

(16) *Extent to which housing is provided.*

(i) By employers.

(ii) By Government or other public agency.

(iii) By private landlords.

(iv) By workers themselves.

(17) *Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.*

(18) *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*

(i) In relation to workers' demands.

(ii) In relation to best type from health point of view.

(iii) Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.

(19) *Utilisation by workers of accommodation available.*

(20) *Rent-rates in various classes.*

(21) *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing.*

e.g. Subletting;

Occupation of employers' houses by tenants in other employ;

Eviction.

(22) *Moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions. Improvements tried and suggested.*

IV. Health.

(23) *General health conditions of workers.*

(i) Figures of mortality.

(ii) Birth rate and infant mortality.

Methods of registration.

(iii) Working conditions—
  (*a*) at work places ;
  (*b*) at home.
(iv) Dietary.
(v) Physique.
(vi) Effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities.
(vii) Relation between housing and mortality.

(24) *Extent of medical facilities provided.*
(i) By employers.
(ii) By Government.
(iii) By other agencies.
(iv) Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.

(25) *Extent to which medical facilities are utilised.*
(i) Generally.
(ii) By women.

(26) *Sanitary arrangements,* (a) *at work places,* (b) *at home.*
(i) Latrines.
(ii) Drinking water.
(iii) Bathing and washing.

(27) *Extent and nature of official supervision.*
(i) Work of Boards of Health in special areas.
(ii) Inspection of plantations.
(iii) In mill and other industrial areas.

(28) *Suitability of existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules*
(i) Control of temperature in factories.
(ii) Control of humidification in cotton mills.
  (*a*) Nature of action taken by Local Governments.
  (*b*) Results.

(29) *Disease.*
(i) Prevalence of industrial diseases.
(ii) Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm and other tropical diseases.

(30) *Sickness insurance.*
(i) Suitability of International Labour Convention.
(ii) Possibility of introducing other systems.
(iii) How to meet difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicine, paucity of medical men, migration of labour, finance.

(31) *Maternity benefits.*
(i) Extent and working of existing schemes (including allowances given before and after childbirth).
(ii) History of central and provincial Bills.
(iii) Possibility of legislation.

V. Welfare (other than **Health** and **Housing,** but including **Education).**

(32) *Extent of welfare work.*
- (i) By employers.
- (ii) By other agencies.

(33) *Employment of Welfare Officers and workers.*

(34) *Nature of other Welfare activities,* (a) *by employers* (b) *by other agencies.*
- (i) Provision for refreshments, shelters and crèches.
- (ii) Provision for physical culture, recreation and amusements.
- (iii) Other activities.

(35) *Results achieved.*

(36) *Provision of educational facilities by employers—*
- (i) For adult workers.
- (ii) For half-time workers.
- (iii) For workers' children.
- (iv) Extent to which used.

(37) *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*

(38) *Co-operation.*

(39) *Possibility and desirability of a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund.*

VI. Education.

(40) *Facilities for general education in industrial areas.*
- (i) Of children not in employment.
- (ii) Of children employed in factories.
- (iii) Of adults.

(41) *Facilities for industrial and vocational training.*

(42) *Effect of education on standard of living and industrial efficiency of workers.*

VII. Safety.

(43) *Existing regulations in factories, mines, railways and docks.*

(44) *Incidence of accidents in factories, mines, railways and docks.*

(45) *Causes.*

(46) *Accident prevention* (including " Safety First " propaganda).

(47) *Accidents in non-regulated establishments.*

(48) *First-aid and medical relief.*

(49) *Stringency of inspection and enforcement of regulations.*
- (i) In industry generally.
- (ii) In seasonal industries.

(50) *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*

VIII. Workmen's Compensation.

(51) *Workmen's Compensation Act.*
- (i) Extent of use.
- (ii) Comparison with extent of possible claims.

(iii) Effects on industry.
(iv) Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.
(v) Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.

(52) *Desirability of extending Act to other occupations.*
Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers who might be so covered.

(53) *Suitability of provisions relating to—*
(i) Scales of compensation.
(ii) Conditions governing grant of compensation.
(iii) Industrial diseases.
(iv) Machinery of administration.
(v) Other matters.

(54) *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers' Liability Act,* 1880.

IX. Hours.

A. Factories.

(55) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
(i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
(ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
(iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

(56) *Days worked per week.*

(57) *Effect of 60 hours restriction—*
(i) On workers.
(ii) On industry.

(58) *Effect of daily limit.*

(59) *Possibility of reduction in maxima.*

(60) *Intervals.*
(i) Existing practice—
(*a*) In relation to fatigue.
(*b*) In relation to workers' meal times.
(ii) Suitability of the law.
(iii) Suitability of hours during which factory is working.
(iv) Number of holidays given.

(61) *Day of rest.*
(i) Existing practice.
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2	Dr. (Miss) Headwards			
3	Mr. W. J. Herridge	Manager, Calcutta Claims Bureau (also representing the Calcutta Accident Insurance Association, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Bombay Accident Insurance Association and the Madras Accident Insurance Association).	191—197	8—15, E.-87.
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13	Mr. F. C. Griffin ..	Chief Engineer, Public Health Department.	..	27—29, E.-298.
14	Mr. K. C. Banerji ..	Executive Engineer, Presidency Division.		
15	Mr. G. A. Young ..	General Manager, Indian Iron and Steel Company, Limited.	197—201	29—45, E.-327.
16	Lieutenant-Colonel B. H. Brown	Superintendent, Ishapore Rifle Factory.		
17	Mr. R. T. Dunderdale.	Superintendent, Metal and Steel Factory, Ishapore.		
18	Mr. A. W. Connolly	Works Manager, Rifle Factory, Ishapore.		
19	Mr. R. C. Frain ..	Works Manager, Metal and Steel Factory, Ishapore.	201—208 208—214	45—53, E.-563.
20	Lieutenant-Colonel E. W. Sewell, I.M.S.	Medical Officer to the Factories and Estate.		
21	Mr. K. K. Chakravarty	Labour Bureau Supervisor, Rifle Factory.		
22	Mr. G. R. Dain ..	Agent, The Calcutta Tramways Company, Limited.	215—224	54—63, E.-698.
23	Mr. Prohlad Chandra Roy	Vice-President, the Press Employees' Association.		
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25	Mr. R. N. Neish ..	Manager, Titaghur No. II Jute Mill.	..	75—76, E.-1019.
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42	Mr. J. R. Farquarson	Manager, Calcutta Branch of the Burma Shell Oil Company.		
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50	Mr. J. A. Murray ..			
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52	Mr. R. P. Adams O.B.E., M.I.Mech.E.	Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.	309—330	177—198, E.-2606.
53	Mr. J. B. McBride, A.M.I. (Mech.) E.	Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
54	Mr. R. C. Parsons ..	Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
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58	Mr. F. C. Griffin, M.I.C.E., M.I.E.	Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, Bengal.		
59	Dr. M. E. Sufi, B.A., L.R.C.P.&S.,D.P.H.	Assistant Director of Public Health, Vaccination and Vital Statistics, Bengal.		
60	Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.	Assistant Director, Public Health for Industrial Hygiene, Bengal.		
61	Dr. B. C. Mukharji, M.B., D.P.H.	Inspector of Septic Tank Installations, Calcutta.		
62	Dr. A. C. Ray Chaudhury, D.P.H.	Diet Survey Officer, Public Health Department, Bengal.		
63	Mr. C. W. Gurner, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Local Self-Government Department.	..	213—219, E.-3215.

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67	Mr. J. A. Beale ..	Sub-Divisional Officer, Asansol.		
68	Khan Bahadur Tasaddak Ahmed.	Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.		
69	Rai Sahib Sushil Kumar Ganguly	Officiating Registrar, Co-operative Societies.		
70	Mr. R. P. Adams, O.B.E., M.I. Mech. E.	Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
71	Mr. J. B. McBride, A. M. I. (Mech.) E.	Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
72	Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Kt.	Chairman, Calcutta Port Commissioners.		
73	Mr. W. A. Burns ..	Traffic Manager, Calcutta Port.	348—356	245—260, E.-3599.
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76	Mr. E. C. Benthall	Representatives of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	357—362	280—296, E.-4050.
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79	Captain R. Liddle ..	Marine Superintendent, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited.	362—365	296—309, E.-4255.

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81	Mr. U. M. Bose ..	Representatives of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.	365—375	310—320, E.-4423.
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84	Mr. L. M. Snelgrove	General Manager, The Oriental Gas Company, Limited, Calcutta and Howrah.	378—379	..
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1	Mr. K. P. Banerjee	Representatives of the Eastern Bengal Railway Indian Employees' Association.		510—530	314—331, K.-2970.
2	Mr. J. N. Gupta ..				
3	Mr. P. Chakraborty				
4	Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union	..		530—532	..
5	Mr. Cameron ..	General Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.	Representatives of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Employees of Railways	618—634	332—343, K.-3174.
6	Mr. Bastien ..	of the E. B. Railway.			
7	Mr. Powell ..				
8	Mr. Rigg ..	of the E. I. Railway.			
9	Mr. Lardner ..				
10	Mr. Martston	of the B. N. Railway.			
11	Mr. Backman ..				
12	Mr. Wilson ..	of the E. I. Railway (O. and R. Section).			
13	Mr. Atkinson ..	Travelling Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.			
14	Mr. P. H. Maflin, O.B.E., M.C.	Agent.	The Eastern Bengal Railway.	1—358 (Joint Memo.)	343—372, K.-3287.
15	Mr. I. St. C. Pringle	Deputy Agent. ..			
16	Mr. A. H. Joscelyne	Locomotive Superintendent.			
17	Dr. H. Suhrawardy	Chief Medical Officer.			
18	Mr. H. N. Parker ..	Officer on Special Duty.			
19	Mr. H. A. Outhwaite	Statistical Officer.			
20	Mr. V. P. Bhandarkar	Welfare Officer. ..			
21	Mr. D. Ghose ..	Assistant Traffic Superintendent.			

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22	Mr. Surendra Nath, M.A., LL.B.	Acting President.	Representatives of the East-Indian Railway Union, Moradabad.	461—477	373—388, K.-3570.
23	Mr. Hikmatullah, Bar-at-Law.	Chief Legal Adviser.			
24	Mr. H. S. Bhatnagar	General Secretary.			
25	Mr. K. N. Pandey	Asst. Station Master.			
26	Mr. G. L. Colvin, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	Agent. ..	The East Indian Railway.	1—358	389—425, K.-3788.
27	Mr. F. E. Robertson	Chief Operating Superintendent.			
28	Mr. R. L. Ray ..	Chief Mechanical Engineer.			
29	Mr. A. V. Venables	Chief Engineer..			
30	Dr. A. K. H. Pollock	Chief Medical Officer.			
31	Mr. E. Cameron Ker	Deputy Chief Accounts Officer.			
32	Mr. A. O. Evans ..	Deputy Agent ..			
33	Mr. M. Robertson ..	Secretary to Agent.			
34	Mr. H. Lancaster ..	Manager, Giridih Mines.			
35	Mr. F. C. Badhwar .	Employment Officer, Lillooah.			
36	Mr. C. S. Whitworth	Chief Mining Engineer (Railway Board).			
37	Mr. Santi Ram Mondal	Representatives of the East Indian Railway Labour Union, Lillooah.		477—486	425—430, K.-4196.
38	Mr. Ram Autar ..				
39	Mr. Atal Behary Santra				
40	Mr. S. N. Shaw ..				
41	Mr. Ismail ..				
42	Mr. Ali Mohammad				
43	Mr. K. D. Chatterjee.				
44	Mr. Hardin Shaha				

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46	Mr. J. C. Mitter ..	General Secretary, East Indian Railway Union, Khagaul.		489—497	..
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48	Mr. V. E. D. Jarrad	Agent.	The Bengal Nagpur Railway.	1—358	431—458, K-4274.
49	Dr. Mozumdar ..	Medical Department.			
50	Mr. Bazaz ..	Engineering Construction.			
51	Mr. Chakrabartty ..	Engineering Open Line.			
52	Mr. Khanna ..	Commercial Department.			
53	Mr. Faroque ..	Transportation Department.			
54	Mr. Chowdhury ..	President, Urban Bank.			
55	Dr. A. Martin-Leake, V.C., F.R.C.S.	..			
56	Mr. Kanshi Nath Mutta	Representatives of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur.		532—546	459—487, K-4613.
57	Mr. W. V. R. Naidu				
58	Mr. P. Ramachandra Rao				
59	Mr. Somayajulu ..				
60	Mr. A. N. Bose ..				
61	Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy	President, Muslim Welfare Committee, B. N. Railway, Kharagpur.		546—549	

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR IN INDIA.

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SIXTY-SEVENTH MEETING

(PANEL No. II.)

CALCUTTA

Monday, 3rd February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. *Joint Secretary.*

Mrs. A. COTTLE, C.B.E., and Dr. (Miss) HEADWARDS, Representatives of the Bengal Presidency Council of Women.

E-1. *The Chairman :* How is the welfare work which your Council undertakes related to the general work of the Council of Women? Is it a sub-department of the Council of Women?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) The welfare work mentioned in our memorandum is wholly undertaken by the Calcutta Red Cross. But the welfare department of the Red Cross is one of affiliated societies to the Bengal Council of Women.

E-2. Have the branches of welfare work which are described in the memorandum been worked out by your Red Cross Society, or does the initiative come from the industrial concerns, who invite your assistance in the work?—*It has originated from the Red Cross. We have drawn the attention of industrial and other bodies to the fact that benefit would accrue to their employees if they took up such work and followed our advice.*

E-3. With regard to finance; what is your relation with the welfare centres at the mills?—The welfare centres at the mills are at present self-supporting. The mills only come to us for advice or for assistance with regard to securing workers and on other points.

E-4. The control, both as to finance and as to management, rests entirely with the mills themselves?—Yes, at present, but one centre is being erected at two mills in connexion with which the Red Cross is going to make a grant towards the working expenses.

E-5. It is stated in the memorandum that "all these welfare centres are run under the auspices of the Bengal Branch, Red Cross, Health Welfare Department?"—They are under our auspices. We give them advice and help in any way we can.

E-6. As to the supply of workers, you speak of having approached the Council of Women when you were in need of voluntary workers?—Not in connexion with the industrial welfare centres. That has reference to the city welfare centres, of which we have five.

E-7. In the case of the mill centres, I take it that the workers are *paid*?—Yes.

E-8. You say that these welfare centres are conducted by qualified health visitors?—Yes. At the clinics which exist at present there are women who have been trained in England and who have got the requisite qualifications.

E-9. At the clinics in the mills or at those under your auspices?—At the clinics in the mills which are under our auspices. We have organized these clinics. We have instructed the mills as to the best way in which to build their welfare centres. The mills have always submitted the plans to us for our approval. The same thing applies to the equipment, the method of running, the kind of registers to keep, and so on. Also their health visitors come to us whenever they need advice.

E-10. Do you undertake any work for the training of health visitors?—Yes. We have a training school for health visitors in Calcutta which has been running for five years.

E-11. Do you find an adequate supply of Indian women coming forward to be trained in that work?—We have always had as many applicants as we can accommodate and as we can place out afterwards. We have only accommodation sufficient for five people.

E-12. We have become aware of the difficulty of getting trained and qualified health visitors in other places which we have visited. Is your work confined to the Presidency?—Yes. We find that we must so confine it for the purpose of supplying the necessary demands in Bengal. We have many applications from other parts of India for students to be trained at our school, but, as we want to supply the centres in our own province, it is rather hopeless to have people who cannot speak Bengali. We have had some splendid Indian women from the South of India, but after they are trained we find the money has been wasted, because we cannot place them in our clinics owing to their lack of knowledge of the local language. In some instances these women have been so eager to work with us in Bengal that they have studied Bengali. We have now two such women who are very capable indeed.

E-13. You say that the number you are able to train at any one time is not more than five?—That is so. If our financial resources were larger, we could take a bigger building and train considerably more people.

E-14. In the memorandum it is stated "women receive maternity benefit and are exempted from work for four weeks before and after confinement." From whom do they receive this payment?—That has reference to the industrial welfare clinic of Kankinnarah which was opened in 1926.

E-15. The mill pays the benefit?—Yes.

E-16. Does the same apply to the instruction of the indigenous *dais*?—Is that being done in the mill centres by the mills themselves?—Yes.

E-17. *Miss Power:* It has been suggested to us in some of the evidence that certain mill crèches which have been started have not been a success owing to caste prejudices and other difficulties. It would be interesting if we could be told why this has been so, and whether in addition there has

been any defect in the organization of the crèches?—We feel that the establishment of crèches is a most essential part of welfare work, but we have to go very carefully. We find that the women need educating up to the advantages of these things. The women are now used to the welfare centres; they are used to health visitors, and they are now recognizing the advantages which they obtain from attending these centres. Therefore we are now very seriously thinking of organizing crèches in these welfare centres; in fact, it is a part of the work which will be undertaken this year.

E-18. Would you be in favour of the compulsory inauguration of crèches in all mills where over 500 women are employed?—Certainly. I think it is a most important work.

E-19. Would you also be in favour of following the Bombay plan of having a woman officer (a Government official) whose concern it was to assist in the inauguration of these crèches and to advise the employers as to the best way in which they should be run?—I hesitate to give an opinion on that point. If our welfare workers are trained women and understand crèche work, I do not realize the difficulty of their organizing it themselves.

E-20. Dr. Headwards, what do you feel about the presence of infants and toddlers in the mills from the health point of view. Do you feel that they should be compulsorily excluded?—(*Dr. Headwards*) Yes. I think the effect of the noise and the dust and the possibility of the danger of accidents is too great to admit of them going into the mills.

E-21. Do you think, if there were compulsory crèches, it would be reasonable to allow employers a certain number of years' grace before they were prosecuted, for instance, for allowing these children to be in the mills?—I think that is very necessary. You want to have a certain period in which to educate the mothers up to the necessity for leaving their children in the crèches. I do not think you will be able to get them to do so immediately, even with the confidence which they have in the welfare worker. I certainly think that a period of time should elapse before there were any prosecutions undertaken in regard to this matter.

E-22. If there were crèches in all the larger mills, how long do you think it would be before the mothers could be educated up to leaving their infants and toddlers in the crèche?—I should say five years.

E-23. Do you know of any mill where these children have already been excluded?—Yes. The Reliance Mill in Kankinnarah will not allow children in the mill except in the sewing department.

E-24. If there were a movement for inaugurating compulsory crèches, would you be in favour of their being run by the municipalities, or would you be in favour of their being run by the mills?—I think they should be run by the mills. I also think—and here I disagree with Mrs. Cottle—that a group of crèches should be under the direct supervision of the health visitor appointed by the mill and that they should also be under the control of a woman doctor.

E-25. Should that woman doctor be a Government official?—My idea is that she should be an official appointed by a group of mills. If a group of mills in one area had welfare centres in each of their mills, I think that each mill should pay a certain proportion towards this woman doctor's salary. I think the group of mills should be responsible for the woman doctor.

E-26. On the subject of maternity benefit, do you think this also should be compulsory, or should it be left to gradual voluntary effort?—It should be compulsory.

E-27. Would you have the benefit paid in cash or in kind, or a combination of both?—I think payment in kind is the ideal, but it is impracticable at present. At present I think it should be paid in cash.

E-28. What length of time before and after child-birth, do you suggest, should be the obligatory period of absence?—It is two months in most of the mills and I think that is a fair period.

E-29. What do you think should be the qualifying period of employment?—Twelve months.

E-30. Do you think it would be possible for the system to be built up on a contributory basis?—That would be the ideal later on. I do not believe

in giving away too much for nothing. I think that, if a woman contributed, say a pice in the rupee, towards the benefit, she would appreciate it more; but I have not sufficient experience in the matter of wages to know exactly what it would mean to the woman to have to contribute something.

E-31. On the subject of children of the age of from 15 to 17 years, you know that there is not in this country any class of "young persons." A good deal of the evidence suggests that there is considerable abuse in respect of this class of child who has to jump straight from six hours to eleven hours work, very often without any medical examination to ascertain whether or not he is fit. There is also the difficulty that many children who look older than their years, and who are actually under age, are taken on as legally capable of working the full eleven hours. Would you suggest any form of medical examination of a child before it is moved from the six-hour working day to the eleven-hour working day?—Yes. I do not think that some of these children, when they reach the age of 15, are strong enough to go straight on to the longer shift. I think there should be some method by which these children should be examined from a preventive point of view at occasional intervals between 12 years of age and 15 years of age. If they are found fit at 15, then they might be given a shift between the six-hour and eleven-hour period.

E-32. Have you any views about the present working day, both for young children and for adults? Do you feel that the six-hour day is suitable for young children and that the eleven-hour day is not too long for the older children and adults?—I think the eleven-hour day is very long, but I would rather not give evidence on that point because it does not come within my province.

E-33. Would you be in favour of the appointment of women factory inspectors?—Yes, very definitely so, but they would want to have additional qualifications to the men factory inspectors. For instance, the men factory inspectors have to be engineers, whereas if women are appointed you would want to choose them more from a human and personality point of view.

E-34. *Miss Sorabji:* Mrs. Cottle, how many clinics in how many mills have you control of?—At present we have under our auspices two—the Kankinnarah Mill and the Reliance Mill.

E-35. How many of your workers are employed in those clinics?—There is a health visitor in charge of each clinic, and she has under her untrained workers such as *ayahs* or *dais*. These workers are paid by the mills.

E-36. Do you consider yourself responsible for their equipment?—Yes.

E-37. How many of the workers which are supplied by your Council are Indian women?—Both these Health Visitors to which I have just referred are Europeans.

E-38. Do they know Bengali?—No; they know Hindustani and Urdu.

E-39. Have they any experience of Indian customs, castes and conditions?—Yes, one of them was born in India, and was here until 1917 when she went home to take her welfare training and then returned. The other lady has had eight years' experience of welfare work in the Punjab.

E-40. Experience in mills?—No, not in mills.

E-41. How many trained Indian women have gone from your school to industrial areas in or outside Calcutta?—None.

E-42. In your opinion, is personal contact with the women and children whom you serve in your clinics essential to success?—Yes.

E-43. How would you propose to establish that contact?—In carrying out her daily duties the Health Visitor comes in constant contact with the people whom she serves.

E-44. Do you mean to say that an English or Indian worker can call upon an Indian woman?—Yes, they do so. They visit the women at their homes. Of course, they have to be very tactful to gain the confidence of the women, but I think in all cases they have done so. They visit the homes of the women every day after having met them in the mill clinic.

E-45. Then would you propose establishing this contact with the women through the clinic?—Yes.

E-46. Dr. Headwards, in relation to the answer which you gave just now about women factory inspectors, I want to discover whether the sort of work that might be useful in this connexion would be a sort of combination of duties. Would it, in your opinion, be wise to appoint a woman welfare worker or "an adviser to women and children" who would pave the way for the necessary personal contact, who would advise as to health and maternity and education, who would report to the authorities as to the genuineness of maternity benefit cases, and who would also see that the benefit was applied?—(*Dr. Headwards*) I think part of the duties you mention are primarily those of the health visitor. The type of woman I had in mind when I referred to a woman factory inspector was an industrial welfare worker, who would work in co-operation with the health visitor, and also act as a medium of information between the authorities and the workers, and, if necessary, the health visitor. I would like the two to work together.

E-47. What I want to consider is whether it might not be a better way of tying all this work together and getting continuous and reliable information, if there were a person whose duty it was not to attend to the physical needs of the women in their houses but who would simply be a collector of information and an establisher of contacts. Would it not be more advisable to keep the advisory part of the work separate from the actual practical work of the health visitor and the clinic attendant?—I think the one should supplement the other. One of the conditions on which our health visitors are appointed is that they do not go into, or interfere with the conditions of, the mill.

E-48. Do they go into the mill area?—They visit the *bustis* and the mill lines but they do not go into the factory itself. The proposed woman factory inspector or advisor would be a woman who would go into the mill.

E-49. Do you agree that there is an opening for a woman who was not a health visitor but who could make contact between the mill authorities and the other interests concerned?—Yes, I think that is a most important point.

E-50. If such a person were appointed, should it, in your opinion, be a Government appointment entirely, or should it be an appointment, the salary of which was paid partly by the mills and partly by Government, or should it be a social service society's appointment, with special liberty granted by Government to enter the mills and make report to Government?—*I think it ought to be a society appointment at the moment because it is important to get the right type of woman and you would be more likely to get the right type of woman if the appointment came through an individual society.*

E-51. But could not Government go to the individual society and ask for a suitable woman?—That is true.

E-52. If a person were appointed and paid by Government, do you think she would be less acceptable to the women workers than if she were nominally appointed by Government but really came from a philanthropic society?—I have not thought about that.

E-53. Mrs. Cottle, have you any arrangements at your centre for training workers in the subject of prevailing beliefs and superstitions about health and disease among Hindus and Muhammadans?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) Yes, that is one of the subjects in the syllabus.

E-54. Is there anybody who lectures on that subject?—Yes, we have one of the doctors from the Tropical School of Medicine.

E-55. We have it in evidence that there are women who come with men from areas outside Bengal, who are not their wives, and who live very often with these men, and who work under their protection at the mills. I will read you extracts from the evidence of the Assistant Director of Public Health and from the memorandum of the Government:—

> "There is practically open prostitution near the workers' houses, and most of the workers do not bring their womenfolk for these reasons."

"There is a great disturbance of sex, as there are fewer women, and no privacy is possible in the present condition of housing. Among female workers one out of every four owns to being a prostitute."

Can you suggest a remedy?—It is very difficult to do so. It is a condition which exists. There is nothing done to prevent it. Caste prejudices prevent the men bringing their wives from their own homes. I am afraid I cannot give you an opinion as to how this can be stopped.

E-56. Can you suggest a remedy, Dr. Headwards?—(*Dr. Headwards*) The only thing I can suggest is that if at present the housing conditions are bad, better accommodation should be provided so that the men can bring their wives and have more privacy.

E-57. Have you any information why these women seek the protection of these men?—No.

E-58. If it is a fact that these women seek the protection of the men because there is an overwhelming proportion of men over women, would it not in your opinion help if lines for single women were opened, and a ring were formed round those lines, and it was said "These are the single women quarters". Do you not think that would protect these women?—I do not know, but I think it would be difficult.

E-59. Would you advise that these protected women, when they have children, should receive the maternity benefit?—I think all women should get maternity benefit.

E-60. *Mr. Tassie:* If a lot of mills decided to start clinics, how soon could you start them with suitable women?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) That is the difficulty. We have to have a special kind of health welfare worker for the mills. If we knew that the mills were going to start clinics, we should set about getting the best kind of women. For clinics in the mills it is best to provide women who have had a training at home, but at the same time they must be women who know something of India, the people and the language.

E-61. How long does the home training take?—From a year and a half to two years. When I go home this year I am approaching one of the training colleges to keep me in touch with women who have gone there from India, and who have a knowledge of India and the people, and to let me know when they are qualified to take up work.

E-62. At present you cannot train them out here?—Yes, we can train them, but we have not the class of people who feel that it is worth their while to be trained for welfare work. We are quite in the pioneer stage.

E-63. It would probably take you some time before you could staff all the clinics at all the mills, if the mills decided to establish them?—I have had three applications from Europeans to be trained this year at the training school, but the difficulty is that we have had no application from mills for these women, and, having trained these women, if there are no posts for them they are disappointed and go back to their old profession of midwives. If we knew that about a dozen mills were anxious to establish welfare centres, I am quite sure that by the time those welfare centres were built we should have the women ready for them.

E-64. If a welfare centre is established you would require also accommodation for the lady in charge of it—a flat or a house?—Yes, and if the work increased accommodation would be necessary for her assistant. I worked out a scheme in 1926 by which a medical woman should be responsible for a group of mills in a limited area—say six mills. She should be supplied with a residence within easy reach of the mills, together with furniture, each mill bearing its proportion of the cost of salary and expenses. She would devote her time to the mills, visiting them at least once a week in order to supervise the clinical work and the whole arrangements, and also attending to the ante-natal work, crèches, etc. We have at present four mills in the Kankinnarah district. If we could only get two other mills there we could begin our group, and have our medical woman responsible for that group of mills at once. If we could get a group of six mills, it would cost very little—not very much more than about Rs. 150 a year for equipment, and Rs. 100 a month for salary. If we could get that group, we could start at once, with immense benefit to the mills and to the efficiency of the workers in every respect.

E-65. *Mr. Ahmed:* You say that "The Bengal Provincial Branch, St. John Ambulance Association, carries out extensive propaganda by means of instruction to the employees of Mines, Railways, Docks, Tramways, etc., and the general public in first-aid and prevention of accidents". How do you come in contact with the people working in Mines, Railways, Docks, Tramways, etc.?—With regard to the Docks, we are at present instructing a class of about 22 men in first-aid, and we are in touch with the Docks management with regard to the provision of proper equipment.

E-66. Are you not in contact with the Dock Labourers' Union?—No, only with the Commissioner.

E-67. Do you think that is the best method of achieving success in your efforts in this direction?—I think we have achieved success with regard to our St. John Ambulance work.

E-68. *Sir Victor Sassoon:* You say you have been training these helpers for five years?—Yes.

E-69. How long does the course take?—For the English course eight months; for the Vernacular course six months. The syllabus is abridged for the Vernacular course.

E-70. You have stated that only two of these health visitors are employed by the mills. What happened to the others?—These two were not our students; they had their training in England but our students supply the welfare centres in districts in Bengal.

E-71. Are any of your workers in industrial areas?—Not those who are trained by us.

E-72. You suggest that the maternity benefit should be paid in cash and not in kind, but at the same time you foresaw the difficulty that the woman might receive the cash and then go off to work in another mill. I take it you would only give cash subject to the control of the health visitors. Another point you made was that although you thought that if there was any sickness insurance benefit it should be contributory; you did not see how that would help at the beginning. Do you not think it would rather be difficult to give something for nothing in the beginning and then ask them to pay some share?—(*Dr. Headwards*) In Calcutta when we started we were too lavish and gave things for nothing. It was a means to an end. We had to attract the women to come. So we gave them medicine and milk free. After five years of work they now pay something for the milk—one pice. My suggestion was meant as an attraction for them to come in in the beginning.

E-73. Is there not rather a difference between your doing it and an industrial employer doing it? If a mill started giving something for nothing do you think that the worker would later on pay some share for receiving something? Would that not rather be difficult?—It would be rather difficult.

E-74. *The Chairman:* I gather that one of the difficulties of extending your work is that you are not sure that the women you train in large numbers will find employment as health visitors?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) That is one difficulty.

E-75. Supposing the Jute Mills Association as an Association was to develop the policy of welfare work throughout the industry would that give you courage to greatly expand your training?—That would help for the reason that if we can place our women in the mills there would be something for them to look forward to. In the mills they receive a much better pay; their prospects are better. The mills that we are connected with are very generous in dealing with health visitors. They give them a salary with monthly allowances and a bonus paid every six months. They give a six months' holiday and passage to and fro to England. During the holiday they give the pay minus the allowances. A good many women could be encouraged to take the training because the pay and outlook is more attractive.

E-76. You are speaking now of women trained in England?—Yes.

E-77. Is it not clear that if anything like general welfare work is done by women it must be a case of Indian women trained to work in India in the main?—Yes.

E-78. Supposing the Jute Mills Association looking at the industry as a whole were to adopt a general policy of doing welfare work would your Association feel itself able to supply the demand?—Not immediately but in the course of a short time?

E-79. Do you say that there should be Indian women for these posts?—I think the Senior Health Visitors of Mills should be European women either trained here or in England. The assistants could be Indians but they should also be trained.

E-80. Would your society welcome the co-operation of the industry as a whole if they were enabled to take a share with you in the control of the training of women whom they afterwards were going to employ?—I think it would be a great advantage to us and to them also.

E-81. You spoke of salaries to Health Visitors at Rs. 100 a month?—They command higher salaries than that. They get Rs. 150 a month with annual increments of Rs. 10.

E-82. Are those cases of Indian women?—That depends on the standard they pass. If they pass a grade in the English course, they may expect to receive Rs. 150 a month.

E-83. Is it your experience that certain attempts at welfare work had come to grief because the salaries paid were too low and the quality of women attracted was not sufficient for the work?—That is so. One of the mills wanted a Health Visitor on Rs. 40 a month.

E-84. Is it your considered view that women of high quality are required to make this kind of work a success?—Yes, they must be educated.

E-85. It is no good pretending that real welfare work is being done on salaries such as you have just described?—You cannot get women of ability to do it.

E-86. You cannot get the right sort of women?—That is so.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. W. J. HERRIDGE, Manager, Calcutta Claims Bureau (also representing the Calcutta Accident Insurance Association, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Bombay Accident Insurance Association and the Madras Accident Insurance Association).

E-87. *The Chairman:* Mr. Herridge, I understand that you are the Manager of the Calcutta Claims Bureau which deals with claims for workmen's compensation?—That is so.

E-88. You have shown in your memorandum the large number of insurance companies for whom you act in dealing with claims for workmen's compensation?—That is so. My office is like a central "Clearing Station". As soon as an accident happens, it is reported to the insurance company by the employer and the insurance company sends the papers to the Bureau which handles the claims from that time till it is finally settled.

E-89. You tell us that your Bureau was set up by most of the leading insurance companies in the Calcutta area which you now cover?—There are two companies with some volume of business still outside the Bureau. We cover approximately 85 per cent of the insurances effected in this area.

E-90. It is your opinion that the organization which you have established has led to much more rapid disposal of the cases than if they were dealt with individually by the various companies?—I do not think there is any doubt about that. Individual companies could not handle them in the same way in which we handle them; they could not have the consolidation of experience which we have and they could not move about with the same rapidity with which the representative of a special office can do.

E-91. Is it your opinion that the wider experience that is possible by concentrating work in a single office leads to less litigation?—Yes, we think so.

E-92. Can you tell us anything about the rates which are charged in India for Workmen's Compensation Insurance in some of the main industries —in jute and coal, for instance?—I have not the full details with me at present. Generally speaking, most of the larger industries are subject to what we call "Special Rates"; that is to say, if a particular employer has

an annual wages roll of Rs. 1,00,000 or over, we subject his risk to a " Special Rate " which is based entirely on past experience. It is adjusted year by year in the light of past experience. For concerns which have a wages roll of less than a lakh of rupees we have what we call " Book Rates." Those " Book Rates " are drawn up and controlled by the Accident Insurance Associations of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. All smaller concerns have to work to those " Book Rates " and there is no variation year by year.

E-93. Are the rates in all cases based on the wages list and not on production?—Yes. It is so many annas per Rs. 100 of the annual wages roll.

E-94. Do you deal with cases in the coal industry?—Yes. Most of the insurances in the Jharia and Raniganj coalfields are placed in Calcutta. These claims are also handled by us.

E-95. You are sure that the rates are not based on tonnage?—I am positive that they are based on the annual wages roll. That is the predominant feature of all Workmen's Compensation Insurance. It is so many shillings per hundred pounds in England and so many annas per Rs. 100 in India. We have closely followed English precedent in these matters.

E-96. In your memorandum you have dealt with the question of the possibility of extending the Act to other occupations and we shall take note of your suggestions in that respect. But there is one point which is not covered in your memorandum and that is the possibility of paying compensation in the case of fatal accidents and permanent total disability although there might have been alleged some disobedience on the part of the labourer?—That was not specifically mentioned as one of the subjects on which evidence would be taken. Therefore we confined our remarks to the specific questions raised in the list.

E-97. Have you any experience of the claims which have been barred in that way?—Yes, cases have arisen like that.

E-98. Would you care to give the Commission your opinion as to whether the English practice should be followed?—We are quite aware that the 1923 amendment of the English Act brought every accident within the terms " arising out of and in the course of " employment provided it occurred while the labourer was doing something in furtherance of, for the purpose of and in connection with, the employer's trade or business. We are quite aware that in England this principle is in vogue. Most probably there would be no great objection to the same principle being adopted in India in the case of the fatal and more serious accidents, i.e., accidents which result in permanent partial disablement of 50 per cent or more. We feel, however, it would be premature to introduce this provision for the minor accidents involving both temporary and permanent partial disablements.

E-99. My question only applied to death and permanent total disablement?—I think there would be no great objection to it because we know it would be following English precedent.

E-100. In your opinion, would that add seriously to the total amount of compensation?—It would not add seriously. On the other hand, it would reduce litigation to some extent although the cost of litigation is very small here because all the contested cases are conducted by our Bureau in the case of employers insured with our members and we do not have to pay any legal expenses in that connection.

E-101. *Mr. Clow:* Dealing with the payment of compensation to lascars you say that " it is within the rights of these companies to withhold payment of compensation in certain cases, especially in the case of death." Would you explain that?—I have seen a copy of the agreement entered into between the shipping companies and the lascars. It is an agreement between the shipping company and the actual lascar and not with the dependents of the lascar. As I read it, in the event of the death of the lascar the agreement immediately expires and is no longer of any consequence.

E-102. Is it not an agreement to pay compensation to the man or to his dependents if he is killed?—I do not think the agreement specifies payment of compensation to dependents; it only specifies payment of compensation to the lascar himself.

E-103. That is a difficulty which could be easily remedied?—It is at the moment a difficulty. Moreover, it is a moot point whether the dependents could enforce an agreement between the shipping company and the lascar.

E-104. Do you know of any case in which a shipping company has attempted to shift its responsibility on this ground?—I have not handled many of these claims, but I understand that in one or two cases shipping companies have questioned the authority of the Commissioner to handle these matters. For example, a dispute arose in regard to the amount of compensation payable in one case and the shipping company questioned the authority of the Commissioner to intervene.

E-105. In your analysis of the disposal of cases by your Bureau, you say: "Cases in which no compensation was due (disablement less than 10 days)—40 per cent." Does that include only cases falling within the waiting period?—Yes.

E-106. Under the next heading, which covers a good many subjects, what percentage roughly represents cases in which workmen filed no claim at all?—In the beginning it was rather a high percentage but it is not so at the present moment. I should think that in 1924-25 it was probably 15 per cent. Nowadays cases are few and far between where a workman does not file a claim owing to his returning to his village or being unaware of his rights.

E-107. By using the phrase, "workmen returning to their villages without notice" you do not mean cases where workmen's claims were defeated because they failed to give the prescribed notice?—No. That phrase covers cases where the workmen went back to the village and made no claim. Probably he was paid an instalment of half-monthly compensation or no compensation and after two or three weeks he returned to his village and the case was never re-opened.

E-108. In how many cases has the compensation been refunded to you because no dependents were found?—I have known only of two cases in Bengal since 1924 and probably there are a few more. Very few cases of that nature arise. But that is probably due to the fact that most of employers do not deposit compensation until they have heard that there are dependents.

E-109. Otherwise you think there would be a substantial number?—There would be a large number of deposits returned for this reason if compensation was deposited for every fatal accident. As we read section 8 of the Act, with its recent amendment, we do not think that compensation should be deposited as soon as a fatal accident occurs. We understand it to mean that the compensation *when payable* shall be deposited with the Commissioner. We maintain that it is not payable until some claim has been made, either orally or in writing on the employer by the dependents.

E-110. Do you mean claim or notice?—When the dependents come forward and ask verbally or in writing for compensation we, in the Bureau, immediately arrange to deposit the compensation.

E-111. You are aware of the proposal which has had a good deal of support that it should not be necessary for the employee to approach the employer?—We are in favour of the whole of section 22 being omitted so far as dependents are concerned. We have no objection to the dependents proceeding direct to the Commissioner. In the case of dependents the whole of section 22 may be omitted, but not for non-fatal accidents.

E-112. But that section relates both to fatal and non-fatal accidents?—In the case of fatal accidents we are prepared to go further and inform the Commissioner whether or not liability to pay compensation is admitted or not.

E-113. In your letter to the Bengal Government you suggest that the Commissioner might initiate proceedings in fatal accident cases. Do you not think there is considerable danger in that?—I do not think so.

E-114. The Commissioner would to some extent have to form an opinion on the case before he heard evidence?—In Bengal, the Commissioner has sometimes initiated proceedings himself. By that I mean that, if there is an accident anywhere, he immediately asks the employer over the telephone, or by some other means, whether he admits liability for that accident or not.

E-115. That is a very different thing to initiating proceedings which, *I take it, would* mean that he actually institutes the suit himself or urges the dependents to do so?—If, after the employer has sent a formal notice to the Commissioner of a fatal accident, it is followed up at an interval of a month or so by a statement whether liability is admitted or not, we should have no objection whatever to the Commissioner initiating proceedings after he has received this statement regarding liability.

E-116. Even in a case where the liability is contested?—Even in cases where the liability is contested.

E-117. Would you not be putting the Commissioner in a very difficult position in empowering him to invite the dependents to incur a considerable amount of expenditure in instituting a suit which might ultimately fail?—The proceedings under the Act are very short and simple and most dependents could institute a suit for a very nominal fee of about Rs. 5.

E-118. I notice you are against Inspectors of Factories and Mines taking part in this?—Yes.

E-119. I should have thought that this would be less objectionable than utilizing the Commissioner?—We feel that Inspectors of Factories and Mines ought not to interest themselves in payment of compensation. Their reports are valuable from a purely technical point of view and are regarded as impartial evidence. Frequently, Inspectors of Factories and Mines are asked to give evidence in compensation cases based on their inspection after the accidents. Their duty should be limited merely to the technical side of making inspections and they should not be saddled with the responsibility of urging the dependents to make claims or even initiating proceedings themselves.

E-120. It would be a little difficult for the Commissioner to avoid the suspicion of bias one way when he invites the dependents to make a claim, or of bias against the workmen in cases where *prima facie* he thinks there is no ground for instituting a suit?—I do not think there would be any very great difficulty in practice. In the Jharia coalfield Mr. Thadani has already done that. As soon as an accident occurs he in his capacity as additional Deputy Commissioner gets notice of it. He then sends a notice to the dependents, care of the employer informing them that they are at liberty to claim compensation if it is not paid by the employer.

E-121. We are aware of that. But in a contested case parties might feel a little doubt about the Commissioner's impartiality if the case had been started at his instigation?—If my suggestion were followed, the Commissioner would already have in his possession a copy of the employer's statement admitting or denying liability for compensation. I do not think there would be any great difficulty; in fact we are quite prepared to agree to the proposal as regards fatal accidents only.

E-122. Would a trade union be a better body as regards pursuing claims? Do you know anything as to how far they have done that here?—We find that the activities of trade unions are very spasmodic. Many of them seem to exist merely on paper. They have waves of prosperity and then die away again. Trade unions have not been active in Calcutta.

E-123. Do you know the reason why?—Probably because the unions themselves are not firmly established. They have no officials sufficiently capable at the moment of handling workmen's compensation claims.

E-124. You refer to the desirability of appointing a medical referee. Have you many cases in which the question has turned on a difference between the medical officers?—I cannot say we have had many, but there have been a number, not particularly in Bengal but quite a number in the Jharia coalfield. One of the medical officers of the Dhanbad Charitable Hospital has been called on numerous occasions in the capacity of a medical referee although, of course, he holds no official jurisdiction as such.

E-125. As a referee between two other medical officers?—Yes, it would be a good idea if some medical officer were appointed as such for each particular area. It would probably reduce litigation to a certain extent. I find there have been numerous claims in the Jharia coalfield where the extent of permanent disablement has had to be decided.

E-126. Would you make the finding of the referee binding on the Commissioner in respect of the point referred to?—As regards the extent

of disablement, yes. It is only a medical officer who will be in the best position to say what is the extent of disablement due to an injury. It is a medical question more than a legal question. I think it would be desirable if the Commissioner was guided by the views of medical officers in such matters.

E-127. Would you make, for example, the referee's decision binding where the two medical officers differed as to whether certain injuries had been caused by an accident or not?—Yes, that also could apply.

E-128. *Mr. Ahmed*: Mr. Herridge, you know that the seamen sign an agreement with the shipping companies before they go out to sea?—Yes.

E-129. Would it not be convenient to you and facilitate payment of compensation to dependents if a list of dependents of the seaman was specifically mentioned in the agreement?—It would facilitate matters, but at present I am not at all sure that the agreement is legally maintainable as between the shipping companies and the dependents of the seaman.

E-130. The seamen have some belongings with them and they might have to be distributed. If compensation was to be paid to the dependents would it not facilitate matters if a list of dependents was entered in the agreement itself?—I dare say it would.

E-131. You say that there are some international difficulties in the payment of compensation to dependents. What are they?—A very large number of these Indian seamen serve in ships registered in England and foreign countries where the Indian law with regard to compensation does not apply. But recently the shipping companies have agreed to pay compensation to the lascars on the lines of the Indian Act. They do that under the agreement with the Indian seamen themselves. But I do not think that the dependents would be able to enforce their claims in a court of law. I remember a case arose in Bengal here in which a particular shipping company, in spite of the agreement, questioned the jurisdiction of the Commissioner to dispute the amount deposited.

E-132. Suppose an accident occurred three miles off the Indian coast, where would the Indian seamen get his compensation?—I do not think he would be legally entitled to compensation.

E-133. Would it not be desirable that the conditions of service of these seamen were clearly stated so that insurance companies might insure them and pay them compensation?—Certainly we are prepared to insure them.

E-134. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You have stated that some of the trade unions in the jute industry are functioning spasmodically. Have not the Kankanarrah Labour Union representing the jute workers in Bengal sent you representatives and got things done by you?—Yes, probably on ten occasions in the last 5½ years.

E-135. Whenever there has been an occasion for the union to interfere has it not done so?—I find that the local pleaders are more active than representatives of the trade unions.

E-136. Did not Mr. Latafat Hussain of Kankanarrah Labour Union approach you a few days ago in connexion with workmen's compensation?—I have met that gentleman several times in my office.

E-137. Would it not be then wrong for you to say that so far as workmen's compensation was concerned the union had not functioned as they should have?—I still maintain that they function spasmodically. The trade union, to which you have referred, covers a very small area of Kankanarrah. I do not think they cover the other side of the River, or Howrah or Budge Budge. It does not cover the engineering workshops. It covers, as I understand, one or two mills only, and deals only with Muhammadan employees.

E-138. We have two general secretaries one of whom is a Hindu and he has been interesting himself in the case of Hindu claimants as well?—I have seen the gentleman myself on one or two occasions but by no means regularly.

E-139. Whenever there has been an occasion for us to intervene we have done so. In the light of that would you modify your statement?—In the last 5½ years I have seen them on 10 or 11 occasions. I consider that very infrequent.

E-140. Do you know of many cases where claims have been refused on the ground of wilful disobedience on the part of the victim of the accident?—Yes, I know that there have been cases of that nature.

E-141. In many of these cases in jute mills have you not found that it was the *sardar* or the supervisor who asked the worker to clean the machine while in motion or do such other dangerous things which were not authorised by the employers?—I cannot say I know that.

E-142. Otherwise are we to believe that these workmen who have been refused compensation on the ground of wilful disobedience were so callous of their safety that they wilfully disobeyed safety regulations and courted death or permanent disablement?—In a large number of cases I think they have wilfully disobeyed the rule.

E-143. *The Chairman* : I understood you to say in reply to me that from your experience you would rather favour an amendment of the Act which would bring in any claim in such cases?—Yes, I still say that we are quite prepared to favour such an amendment.

E-144. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: The labour union has investigated many such cases and found that ignorant workers have been ordered by the supervisors or the *sardars* to do a dangerous thing and that it was, more often than not, not due to wilful disobedience on the part of the worker.

The Chairman: I am aware of the difficulty; that is why I put that question in the very beginning.

E-145. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You give statistics of claims disposed of. You have a column, " Filed as ' No claim ' " which accounts for 20 per cent of the cases. Do all these cases come under the waiting period rule?—40 per cent of them come under the " Waiting period." No compensation was due in those cases. The larger employers especially the jute mill and colliery employers report to us even trivial accidents on a post card which we have prescribed for this purpose.

E-146. *The Chairman*: That is to say the insurance companies insist on that being done?—That is so. Although they would probably not report to the Factory and Mines Inspectors they report to us. As we have a special post card, it is a matter of a moment or two to fill it up and send it to us. Consequently it is recorded by us as an accident. Nothing happens unless the man is disabled for more than ten days in which case a detailed claim form is sent, upon which we make arrangements to pay compensation.

E-147. *Ray Chaudhuri*: Why do you say that it is not possible to adopt the minimum scales of compensation recommended by the International Labour Conference?—The recommendations are far-reaching and the time is not yet ripe for such legislation especially as regards lump-sum payments for death or permanent disablement. They have recommended 2/3 of the amount of pay which the man is likely to earn throughout the balance of his expectation of life. That is a recommendation which we feel is rather utopiah.

E-148. Why do you say it is utopian when it has been recommended by a body of practical business men?—It is not yet adopted in any other big industrial country.

E-149. But your ground is that it is unsuitable to India?—It would be too expensive to the employer to pay that amount. It would almost double the present rates of compensation.

E-150. During the last five years what was the total number of claims paid for death or permanent disablement?—Since 1st July 1924 up to 31st December 1929 the total number of claims dealt with by our Bureau, I mean the number of accidents reported, is 21,684. Out of these, 848, or 4 per cent were fatal accidents and the balance, 20,836 or 96 per cent, were non-fatal accidents. The average cost of claims paid from 1st July 1924 to 31st December 1929 was Rs. 667-4-3 in the case of fatal accidents. That represent approximately thirty months' wages at the rate of Rs. 20 a month. The Act lays down thirty months' wages as the amount of compensation payable for fatal accidents.

E-151. What would be the cost per claim if the recommendation of the International Labour Conference was adopted?—I cannot say, because it would depend upon the age of the deceased at the time of death, which figures I have not got.

E-152. At the present rate you have paid about Rs. 4¼ lakhs for 848 fatal accidents. Suppose the amount of compensation was doubled, it would come to Rs. 9 lakhs. And Rs. 9,00,000 spread over the whole of the industries insured with you would be a very small amount?—If you increased the compensation payable for fatal accidents you would have to increase the compensation payable for permanent and temporary disablements also. There would then be a general all round increase.

E-153. Have you figures regarding permanent disablement claims?—I have figures of average cost of permanent disablement cases, both permanent partial and permanent total combined. It is Rs. 285-15-11 per claim.

E-154. Taking your average costs of fatal accident claims and permanent disability claims and also the number of accidents during the last few years it would not materially increase your expenditure seriously if the rates of compensation were doubled?—We should have to double the premium if the compensation rates were doubled.

E-155. Assuming that the premium is 4 annas for Rs. 100 wages paid, by how much would it have to be increased if the rate of compensation for fatal accident cases was doubled?—I am afraid I cannot say. The question of costs does not really concern me. My Bureau has nothing to do with the underwriting side. It deals only with the settlement of claims when the insurance companies have written the business. Necessary increases in the premium would have to be made in conformity with any increases in the scales of compensation.

E-156. *Mr. Hussain:* Are there not some machines in the jute mills which cannot be cleaned when they are stopped?—I think all machines are supposed to be completely stopped before they are cleaned.

E-157. But there are some machines which cannot be cleaned when they are stopped?—For instance, there are machines called the 'Breaker cards.' They run for a little time after they are put off; their momentum still continues for a minute or two. But before they come to a standstill the workmen begin to clean them and are injured in doing so. I have known of cases of that kind. I understand that is prohibited also.

E-158. In that case if a person is injured while cleaning the machine, is he not entitled to compensation?—If he cleans the machine when it is just moving and before it has completely stopped, the employer would probably refuse to accept liability on the ground that the workmen had broken a rule. The workmen, I understand, cleans the machine before it has completely stopped in order to facilitate his work, but it is not permitted. It is easier to do it that way but it is not permitted.

E-159. Is it a fact that you proceed with your cases on the basis of the report given by the mill managers?—We proceed in the initial stages on that report; and, subsequently, if necessary we ourselves visit the mill or the factory and make enquiries.

E-160. Have you any experience of workers in jute mills being pressed by the *sardars* to clean the machines while they are running so that production may not suffer?—I have heard such allegations made in the court by workmen; I cannot say whether they are true or not.

E-161. Is it a fact that compensation will not be granted if the injured person is not in a position to cite witnesses?—If he cannot get witnesses he will not be able to substantiate his case. The same also applies to the employer. If the case comes on several months after the accident, in view of the migratory character of the workmen, it is not possible for the employer or the injured workmen to have the assistance of witnesses who were on the spot.

E-162. Do not the workers on the spot fear to give evidence against the employers?—I do not think there is any truth in that. Mr. Lethbridge usually holds his enquiry into contested cases in the jute mill itself so that, if the applicant wishes to call for any man as a witness, Mr. Lethbridge will order the manager to produce that man at the hearing in the mill.

E-163. Is it a fact that they only get compensation after 10 days?—That is as laid down in the Act. Nothing is payable for the first ten days.

E-164. *Miss Sorabji* : In your memorandum, you deal with the desirability of extending the provisions of the Act to other occupations. Do the gully pit boys who enter the manholes of sewers for the purpose of cleaning them come under the provisions of this Act?—I think they come already under schedule II, clause VIII, of the Act as persons who are employed 'in the upkeep of the sewer'.

E-165. *Mr. Clow*: Would that come under 'upkeep of the sewer' or of the sewage system?—I think so.

E-166. *The Chairman* : Has there been a case like that?—Not to my knowledge. If I were handling a claim in that connection I would bring it under the category of 'upkeep of the sewer'.

E-167. *Miss Sorabji* : I gather that the employers are sufficiently well informed of the liabilities under the Act through the Insurance Companies. Are you satisfied that the workmen also are equally well informed?—I cannot say they are equally well informed. I have reason to believe that employees in larger industrial centres do know that there is a Workmen's Compensation Act and that they are entitled to get compensation in the event of an accident. I am not sure of that as regards smaller isolated places.

E-168. I notice the phrase 'natural percolation' is used. Would not propaganda among these people who are unacquainted with these matters be a good idea?—Yes, I think it would be.

E-169. How do you suggest that this propaganda should be done?—By trade unions, if and where they exist.

E-170. Where no unions exist could not the local Commissioners publish vernacular pamphlets dealing with this matter?—Yes, that might be done.

E-171. Would you consider that there is a great opportunity for what I might call constructive propaganda in relation to all these matters?—The propaganda that is being done at present is largely what I might call destructive. Do you not think that a case might be made for constructive propaganda, and would you be prepared to suggest how that could be done?—I think it should be done. We have done what we can to educate the employer; of course, we cannot educate the employee. Therefore some steps may be taken to do that.

E-172. *The Chairman*: In your memorandum you refer to a suit claiming full wages, in addition to workmen's compensation, for the period of disablement, but you do not tell us what happened to the suit?—I personally handled this matter, and it is still *sub judice*. It is filed in the court of the Second Munsif, Sealdah, and no decision has yet been arrived at. There have been many postponements—I think there were at least ten—by the applicant on the ground that he is not ready, and there is also the general delay which takes place in the civil courts as opposed to the Workmen's Compensation Court. The case is still not decided; it is actually fixed for the 7th of this month.

E-173. Do I take it that the man who had the accident had already received his compensation under the Act?—I personally settled his claim. He was an employee of a local paper mill in Titaghar and he had lost the sight of his eye due to an accident. He was under treatment for about six or eight months before it was definitely known that his eye-sight was completely lost. As soon as it was known, and he had been examined by the Professor of Ophthalmology in the Medical College Hospital. I registered an agreement between him and his employer for payment of the lump sum compensation due for the loss of his eye-sight. He was paid some Rs. 690 and odd; he gave a receipt for it and that was complete. But two months later he instituted this suit before the Second Munsif in Sealdah, claiming the full wages due to him from the date of his accident in February 1928 until the lump sum settlement was made in September 1928. He had not been working during this period but he had been under treatment for his injury. He claimed to be paid the full wages due to him for that period on the ground that the relations of master and servant were still subsisting. We hope to be able to defend the claim on the analogy of a case in England, namely, *Elliott* v. *Liggens* (1902) (2 K.B., 84) in which it was laid down that a workman who has received or is receiving compensation cannot sue for any of his wages during the period of incapacity.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. M. H. B. LETHBRIDGE, Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal.

E-174. *The Chairman* : I understand that you are the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in the Presidency of Bengal?—Yes.

E-175. And you have held that post practically from the beginning of the Act?—Yes. I joined in October; the Act came into force in July; temporary arrangements were made for a few weeks.

E-176. Am I right that you went to England?—Yes; I read in Chambers with Mr. Duckworth, a barrister, for six months.

E-177. Therefore you have experience both of the English and of the Indian Acts?—Yes.

E-178. Will you tell me with what staff you cover this large area in the Presidency of Bengal? You deal with all the cases, I take it, of claims under the Act?—Yes; I have only four clerks.

E-179. You have no deputy?—No.

E-180. Do you deal with the whole matter in Calcutta or do you travel about and deal with the cases as they arise on the spot?—Whenever the question arises how the accident happened, and it is necessary to see the machine, then I always go to the scene of the accident. Apart from that I try cases in Calcutta. For example all jute mill cases involving only medical questions are tried by me in my court-room in Calcutta. But if any question arises rendering it advisable to go to the scene of the accident, then I go to the jute mill. I go once a month to the Asansol colliery area and dispose of the cases that come up there, and to other places as cases arise. I occasionally go to Dacca and to Chittagong, and once or twice to Darjeeling. In the case of Asansol there are many good contested claims, but in the case of Chittagong it is mostly distribution proceedings. I cannot go to Chittagong for such cases often because my work is too heavy, and the usual procedure in such cases is to get the deposition of the parties concerned and witnesses recorded by the Sub-divisional Officer and make an award on that. That is the only way of managing the work in an area of this size.

E-181. Have you found, in your five years' experience, any difficulty in administering the Act single-handed?—I do not think there has been any serious difficulty.

E-182. Is that because a large proportion of the claims are paid without any contest at all more or less automatically?—I think that is probably the reason. There is very little litigation, and a great many of the cases which are contested are compromised.

E-183. I notice you pay a tribute to the persons who drafted the Act, that in the case of India it has worked with much less litigation and with much greater smoothness than the corresponding Act has done in England. I suppose that is because the Act has been made much more simple than the English Act and is adapted purely to the conditions of India?—I think it is largely due to the arbitrary features of the Act. Many points are not open to dispute.

E-184. But in your view that has been an advantage to both the parties, the workman and the employer, although it may have been a disadvantage to the legal fraternity?—Of course, in the case of the workman, it is a mixed advantage, but decidedly an advantage on the balance.

E-185. We have your views in great detail put forward in a very interesting manner as to the extensions of the Act, which you think might take place, covering a large number of new classes of workmen who are at present not within the Act?—I think you are referring to the Government of Bengal's letter. I had no occasion to differ from it, but that part of the Government of Bengal's letter was not based on my personal report.

E-186. But supposing we had an extension such as is here indicated by the Government of Bengal, do you think that you would be still able through your existing office to carry out the administration of the Act, or would your office require to be strengthened?—I have not thought about that very much, but I think it is difficult to say without knowing the number of workmen who would come under the Act. I think a deputy would probably be required if very large numbers came under the Act.

E-187. I do not think we are informed here of the number of new persons who would be brought under the Act?—It is impossible to make an off-hand estimate, but those who are at present under the Act will probably be exposed to the greatest risk.

E-188. No doubt, they were first brought into the Act, but, on the other hand, as you bring in less organized industries and more scattered people, the administration will obviously cost more in proportion?—Yes; on the other hand, I should not say there would be a proportionate increase of claims.

E-189. Perhaps not. There is one question I particularly wanted to ask your opinion upon, and that is the question of the fatal accidents and accidents producing permanent total disablement. At present those cases are governed by the provision of wilful disobedience to orders?—There are three forms of misconduct disqualifying for payment of compensation.

E-190. In your opinion, will there be any danger in bringing that to correspond to the present law in England so that those cases should not necessarily be excluded from compensation?—Do you suggest only that those exceptions should not disqualify in case of fatal accidents and those producing permanent total disablement, or do you suggest that a new proviso on the lines of sub-section (2) of section 1 of the 1925 Act at Home should be introduced? If it is the latter, it will further complicate the matter. I take it that your question is only whether those forms of misconduct should not disqualify in the case of fatal accidents and permanent total disablement. I do not think it would be dangerous. From the experience I have had, I do not think it would lead to bad results.

E-191. You would not take any objection to amending the Act in that direction?—As a matter of fact, I had actually suggested it. Of course, there are objections, but I think the advantage would outweigh them. If there is a case for the exceptions at all then there must be a case to extend them to serious accidents as well, but I think the advantage of excluding those accidents would outweigh this.

E-192. *Mr. Clow:* Arising from what you have just been discussing, the English Act, as I understand it, differs really in three particulars. In the first place, instead of specific exceptions it refers to serious and wilful misconduct; in the second place, it provides that in certain cases the exception has no effect; and, in the third place, it actually modifies in certain cases the fundamental phrase "arising out of and in the course of employment" by a fresh sub-section?—It is rather a difficult sub-section; it was introduced in 1923.

E-193. Which precisely of these changes do you regard favourably from the point of view of the Indian Act?—I would bring it only into line with the 1906 Act and no further.

E-194. The second of the three points that I mentioned?—Yes, but I would certainly not change the wording of the exceptions; it is much better to have specific exceptions than to have vague phrases. I think that the exceptions should not apply in the case of death and permanent total disablement. I would also go one step further and say that it should include permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent or more of permanent total.

E-195. As regards the Employers' Liability Act, you have given us a note on the subject of legislation on the lines of the British Act, 1880, in which you say "it is doubtful whether there is any pressing need for legislation on the subject". Apart from the question of urgency, do you think there is any need at all?—I have no personal experience. In my note I was really discussing other peoples' opinions in the matter. There is very little to go on. The only reason why I think that there is no pressing need for legislation is that this question has hardly come up in this country, as far as I can see.

E-196. The point is this. Even supposing the civil law were altered in the manner suggested, do you think the average worker would be inclined to take advantage of it? Does the workman at present file a civil suit for damages at all?—Not, so far as I know.

E-197. In your letter of 1st May 1929 to the Government of Bengal, you refer to the workmen employed in miscellaneous works, particularly in

docks. You say "The difficulty in this case is to frame a suitable definition". Have you anything further to help us to framing a suitable definition?—I am afraid I have not been able to help. The difficulty, of course, is to exclude all sorts of miscellaneous people; it would make the administration difficult.

E-198. You could include all persons employed within a certain area that is subject to, say, the port Commissioners; that would be too vague, I suppose?—All persons employed for that purpose within that area on loading and unloading or transport of goods. I do not know exactly what the area is.

E-199. Later on you say: "I agree that any wide extension of the definition of workman would be impracticable without a compulsory insurance". How would you answer the argument that this kind of liability should be a first charge on the industry and the question as to whether the employer will be able to pay the amount is immaterial? For example, why do you say "impracticable"? It is perfectly practicable surely to extend it to classes whose employers may not be able to pay; the only thing is that they may become bankrupt?—Legislation is not desirable that will not be able to achieve its object without making many bankrupts. Perhaps "impracticable" is not quite the right word.

E-200. You suggest an alteration in the scale of assumed wages which would have the effect of giving a man, whose wage was just over Rs. 12, about 66 per cent more than the man whose wage was just under 12?—The reason why I made that differentiation was that Rs. 12 is about the dividing line between the wages of women or youths and the wages of ordinary unskilled labourers.

E-201. Are you satisfied that this is true in every province?—I do not know about other provinces, but from one of the papers submitted to you I see that my figures are true for this province.

E-202. You agree that the minimum rates at present are too low?—Yes; I am very strongly of that opinion. The question as to how to remedy the defect is difficult, but I certainly think that the minimum rates are too low.

E-203. As regards the waiting-time, you suggest a reduction from ten days to seven, with no dating back. That, I understand, would increase the number of disabled claims by about 25 per cent?—I have heard that.

E-204. Any addition will consist entirely of persons who are disabled for more than seven and less than ten days?—Yes.

E-205. Do you think it is worthwhile doing this in view of the fact that the administrative cost might swallow up the whole of the compensation?—I do not see why persons who are disabled for just over a week should not get compensation.

E-206. In most cases it will be a small amount and hardly worth claiming?—Yes, but I think such persons should have the right of claiming compensation, if they wanted to.

E-207. What procedure do you follow with regard to distribution at present; when a number of dependants or relatives included within the definition of dependants appear before you, what is your next step?—I ask them whether there is any difference of opinion among them, and if there is not, I just take evidence of relationship with sufficient detail regarding dependancy to give me an idea how the amount should be apportioned; then I proceed to make the award. But if there should be a contest, then I proceed as in a contested case.

E-208. Commonly is there much disagreement between dependants?—No; very rare.

E-209. When a widow and a child are dependants, do you award all the amount to the widow?—If there is an aged father, I nearly always give him some, unless he has an adult son to support him; otherwise, I give all the amount to the widow. I omit the case of a widowed mother who, of course, usually gets a share.

E-210. If there is a widow and a child, do you award the whole of the amount to the widow or a portion is awarded to the widow and a portion to the child?—It varies considerably; it depends upon the standing of the family, and whether I think the widow is capable of looking after the interests of the child. It is a very difficult question I find how to deal with

the lump sum in the case of a widow, because if I deposited it in the savings bank and withdraw it every month for sending remittances, the result will be that in a certain number of years the whole capital will be exhausted and there will be nothing left. The amount is not enough to yield an interest which would be sufficient for the expenses of the widow.

E-211. I notice you suggest in one place pensions for widows?—I said that I should like to see it, but that it would involve other changes which in my opinion are impracticable.

E-212. That would involve a substantial increase in the amount of compensation?—It also goes further; you have got to alter the whole scheme.

E-213. Is it not possible to purchase annuities with the amount available?—But it may be much too small. The amount of compensation is Rs. 457-8-0 for the group getting Rs. 15-4-0 wages. Even if the whole of that would go to the widow you could not purchase much of an annuity for Rs. 457-8-0.

E-214. As regards the question of liability of contractors, I am not quite clear what your proposal is to meet the difficulty. Is it merely the insertion of this explanation?—That and also a change in section 12 (2), namely, substituting for " the contractor " the words of the British Act, " any person who would have been liable to pay compensation to the workman independently of this section ". That puts ultimately the liability on the direct employer.

E-215. You say: " Uusually the contractor is remunerated on the basis of outturn, but even this will not suffice to displace the strong presumption arising from the control exercised by the proprietor over the methods and conditions of the work and over discipline ". What is the presumption that you refer to?—Perhaps I should have said " inference ". If the proprietor controls the conditions of work of the workmen engaged by the contractor, he is, in law, the direct employer of these workmen.

E-216. Then you say at the end, as an alternative, " I do not see any necessity for giving the workman any election at all ". You recognize that it is less desirable?—That is my proposal.

E-217. In actual practice whom does the workman sue?—Almost always the principal.

E-218. Mining and engineering are the most important trades concerned?—Yes; also railways. There have been several cases of railway contractors. Real independent sub-contractors (for example, there is a list of sub-contractors posted up on a notice board outside the big Legislative Council building) are in a very different position to the persons I am considering here.

E-219. Dealing with the possibility of claims not being presented by dependents, I take it you merely suggest that the employer should inform the Commissioner, but that he should take no action whatever on the notification?—I think the Commissioner should intimate the dependents.

E-220. In all cases, or only when he thinks there is a *prima facie* case?—If there was no *prima facie* case, of course, he would not do so.

E-221. If the Commissioner has got to discriminate between cases which he thinks are *prima facie* good and *prima facie* bad the danger is that if a case is contested his decision might not be regarded as quite impartial as it should be?—I think that is inseparable from the position of the Commissioner at present. The Government of India expect him to help the parties with advice.

E-222. As regards non-industrial diseases, I am not very clear what your proposal regarding compensation is?—Perhaps I should explain how I came to write that paragraph. I had been getting together some notes with a view to producing an annotated edition of the Act, and was struck by the difference between the English Act and the Indian Act in this respect. I thought this analysis would be useful, but I have no very definite proposal to make myself.

E-223. You suggest that compensation should be payable, as in England, for exposure disease. Take the case of an employee working in a malarial district who contracts malaria?—That is gradual; it must be sudden. There must be something that can be called an accident. I do not think it will apply in the case of malaria.

E-224. This morning Mr. Herridge who gave evidence before us suggested that the existing agreement in respect of lascars might not be held binding as between the employer and the dependents on the ground partly of the wording of the present form?—If the agreement is in question it will be for the civil court to decide, because the Commissioner's jurisdiction cannot be extended by statute.

E-225. As a judge, do you think that the view that dependents are not entitled to compensation would be tenable?—I think it is very arguable. It is a very distinct danger, because it has been held that dependents' right is quite a distinct right from the workman's right.

E-226. It could be overcome if they are mentioned as dependents specifically in the present form of agreement?—They will have to be a party somehow. I suppose the workman could stipulate that his dependents should be paid; I think that would be quite feasible.

E-227. How long elapses, as a rule, between the time of the accident and the time the claim is made?—It varies very greatly. There are cases of workmen coming after two years and claiming, showing reasonable cause for not having come before. I suppose two or three months can be taken as the average.

E-228. After it comes to you how long you take to give your decision?—On receiving the claim I usually fix a date, a fortnight later for submission of a written statement by the employer and a week after that for hearing; in other words, it takes between three weeks and a month for the hearing of the case. The majority of cases are decided either on the day of hearing or at the most on the first adjournment.

E-229. *Mr. Joshi* : While replying to Mr. Clow, on the question of "Employers' liability", you stated that very few cases have so far been made, and that the workers have not shown any inclination to make use of this liability. Do you think that if sections were introduced in the Workmen's Compensation Act that will give some information to the workers about what is due to them, cases may arise in larger numbers?—I do not think so. Very few of the workers know the actual wording of the sections. They get to know their rights after hearing that other people have got compensation.

E-230. True. As there is legislation for workmen's compensation, and they are gradually learning about its existence, it is quite possible that if there are sections in the Act itself, the workmen will gradually begin to see the difference in this country too and choose whichever course is better for them. To-day the law is not definitely stated anywhere. If it is definitely stated in an Act in which they are interested, it is quite possible that they may begin to make use of it. There is a difference you recognize that when the law is not properly stated, naturally the workmen do not understand, but if the law is definitely stated in an Act and codified, there is a greater possibility of their making use of it?—Certainly, but I do not think that it will be of very great value to them. I think it is very much better for them to take the compensation even if it is less.

E-231. *The Chairman* : You do not think, generally, a scheme of compulsory insurance could be administered in India?—No.

E-232. And it has been turned down in England several times?—Yes.

E-233. *Mr. Joshi*: What are the difficulties that you forsee?—I am afraid I have not gone very carefully into the question.

E-234. On the question of industrial diseases that are found in Indian industries, was any inquiry made?—I have never had an application for compensation or for inquiry about any industrial diseases except lead poisoning. There are only very few cases of that and those are from the Bengal Government Press. I have never had any application or inquiry about industrial diseases that were not scheduled.

E-235. So far as you are aware, you do not know of any inquiry made by the local Government as to which diseases are found in industries like mining?—No. I have not heard of any inquiry.

E-236. You are in favour of the rates of compensation for the poorly-paid people being increased?—Yes.

E-237. Why are you against the rates for other people being raised?—Do you think that the rates are adequate?—I have not expressed myself against raising those rates. What I have stated is this: "In the case of

temporary disablement I think there is a fairly strong case for raising the compensation to two-thirds of the pre-accident wages. . . . If this is accepted the lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement will require to be proportionately enhanced". This is a very large increase all round. It is only "if it is not accepted, some special provision should be made for poorly-paid workmen".

E-238. As regards lascars, in the Bengal Government memorandum there are two methods: either he is excluded from the benefits of British legislation or some similar provision made here. Would it be possible to give the workman the choice between the two?—He has a choice at present. He can apply under the stipulation here and under the Act at home.

E-239. Under the Indian Act?—He is not under the Indian Act. He can take advantage of the stipulation.

E-240. The Bengal Government suggest that if he gets the benefits of the Indian Act he should be deprived of the benefits of the British Act?—I think that is a constitutional point.

E-241. There is no other difficulty except the constitutional difficulty?—If it is possible to legislate and bring them under the Indian Act definitely, I think that is the best solution.

E-242. *Miss Sorabji*: In dealing with question of attendance registers you suggest that the employer might keep a register of home addresses of his employees to facilitate reference in cases of workmen's compensation. Would you not include in it a list of dependents of the workmen also?—It is not practicable to do that.

E-243. *The Chairman*: I suppose dependents change frequently from time to time and there will be difficulty in keeping it up to date.

E-244. *Miss Sorabji*: Even a list of wife and children?—When children are over fifteen they are no longer in the list.

E-245. That is not my point. Suppose a man comes to work in an urban area leaving his relatives behind in the village. Would it not be of use to him if such a list were maintained?—It would be valuable if it could be maintained. But I feel that it is impracticable and employers are very strongly against it.

E-246. In regard to the payment of compensation to the widow what precautions would you take to see that the money reaches the right people?—It is invested. But if it is too small to be invested sometimes the widow asks for the whole sum to buy land. In such cases I refuse to pay the money unless I see the sale deed and the widow's interest is properly secured. I do that in some cases.

E-247. Have you considered the possibility of including in the Act a provision that some one should be appointed to advise these workmen and dependents about the possibilities under the Act?—I have not thought of that. Very often the best way of using the lump sum is to buy land; otherwise the capital will be spent soon. If the widow buys land with the money she can live on the proceeds of the land. In such cases what I wanted to do was to send the money to the sub-registrar instructing him to pay the money to the vendor after ascertaining that the minor's interest is secured. I made some enquiries to this end but found that the sub-registrar had no means of keeping large sums of money, and was not allowed to do so. But that difficulty could be overcome.

E-248. Could the Commissioner follow up every case like that?—The Commissioner cannot follow up every case.

E-249. Would not an outside person, on the analogy of the Lady Adviser to the Court of Wards, be of some use?—I do not think it would work. It is a very different thing to the Court of Wards. Here you have a much larger number of cases and people of an entirely different standing. I do not think it would be practicable.

E-250. Taking into consideration the characteristics of the Indian workman—his recklessness as to loss of life, the growing drug habit and his ignorance of machinery—should not something be done to prevent the consequences of serious and fatal accidents?—I think that the consequences of an accident to a workman are so great, even if he has got compensation he has to suffer so much in the case of serious accidents, that there would be quite a sufficient deterrent.

E-251. Would not propaganda on the lines of "safety first" propaganda in regard to the road be of some use?—I am not really in a position to say. I am sure the millowners have spread the knowledge of the rules as much as possible. The rules are posted in the mills.

E-252. But the illiterate workmen cannot read them?—Though they do not read them they know of them. One can tell that from the cases they put forward; they nearly always say that they did not disobey the rule, that they did not meddle with machinery in motion but that somebody else set it in motion and thereby caused the accident.

E-253. *The Chairman*: Propaganda, I take it, is not within your sphere? —Not within my sphere.

E-254. *Miss Sorabji*: There are diseases arising out of an accident; take, for instance, the case of the Glasgow Coal Company which paid compensation for rheumatism, a disease which arose out of an accident. But there are cases where compensation is not paid where the man has been careless in miscalculating the effect of the accident. Would you in such cases follow the English Act or would you follow your suggestion?—I would not allow compensation in any case which would be excluded under the English Act.

E-255. Then you would be more or less excluding carelessness and miscalculation. With regard to the extension of the Act to other occupations would you include the gully-pit boys who enter the manholes of the sewers to clean them out, under schedule II to section 8 and consider them as being employed "in the construction, inspection or upkeep of the underground sewer"?—They do not construct or inspect drains. They simply clear out the drains. They are counted among the sweeper castes.

E-256. Would you call them scavengers and put them under that section? —The only way to bring them in is to describe them as inspecting the drains.

E-257. I do not want to drag them in. I want to know if they are under the Act?—I could not say. I have never had an application from them.

E-258. Would you extend the Act so as to cover those people also?—I see Government recommends the inclusion of scavengers in certain circumstances.

E-259. *The Chairman*: We cannot ask you to give a judicial interpretation. Would you be in favour of clearing the matter up in an amended Act?—I should be glad if it was made clear.

Miss Sorabji: I simply asked your opinion in the matter because the last witness said that they come under the Act because they are concerned with the upkeep of the drains; and I want some amendment made in the amended Act to include these boys, if they are not already inside its protection.

E-260. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In your experience have you come across cases of workmen losing their lives while they go across the river in the company's boat to the jute mills on the other side? Have they been decided to be cases arising out of employment or not. We hear of a number of boats sinking every year and consequent loss of life?—The two worst cases which recently occurred were not contested. Liability depends on whether the workmen were compelled to use the means of transit provided.

E-261. The jute mills employ steam launches to tow boats that carry workmen to and from the workshop. The boats sink occasionally causing loss of life?—The question is, as I have said, whether the workmen were under proved necessity to use them.

E-262. In these cases the mills employ boats for business connected with their industry. Boat accidents occur and there is loss of life. Do you suggest to us any amendment of the Act to cover those cases?—It is difficult to say that because of these particular cases the Act should be amended. There are a larger number of drowning cases of workmen being brought across from one side of the river to the other to work in jute mills, and under the law as it stands the question depends upon whether there was "proved necessity" for them to use that means of transport, and in many cases it is possible for the employer to prove that there was some alternative possible means of transit, in which case the workman would not be entitled to compensation. I have not thought out the question as to whether or not an actual amendment in the law should be made on that ground. A large number of workmen are involved. It is a real question.

E-263. It is a question we ought to consider?—I think so.

E-264. That an amendment may be necessary on the point of " arising out of or in the course of employment "?—Yes. The law, as it follows from the English decisions, would not always cover these people.

E-265. You think there is a special case for consideration?—Yes.

E-266. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: I understand that a large number of claims are refused on the ground of wilful disobedience of some specified order?—Yes.

E-267. In a jute mill the supervisors or the *sardars* tell the workmen to clean the machines, and so forth. The cleaning of machines while the machines are in operation is generally prohibited, but when the order comes from the *sardars* it is taken as being just as much an order of the higher authorities. How do you distinguish between those cases?—I never remember a case in which the workman has been able to prove that the *sardar* gave him the order.

The Chairman: The witness has already said that he would favour an amendment of the Act which would disallow that counter-claim in the case of fatal accident—permanent disability—up to 50 per cent.

E-268. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Regarding the amount of compensation provided by the Act, do you not think some amendment is necessary in the case of the amount payable for fatal accidents?—I have suggested that the whole scale should be increased.

E-269. And the same for permanent disablement and any kind of accident?—Yes.

E-270. We have some figures from the Bureau officer showing that the cost of each fatal claim is about Rs. 667, and that there have been only 848 fatal accidents in the course of five years. Therefore any substantial increase in this scale would not be a material handicap on the industry, would it?—It would not appear to be, but I am not in a position to estimate that.

E-271. *Mr. Tassie*: Referring again to the matter of these drowning accidents, you said that if it could be shown that to go across the river was the only way, then the dependents of the drowned men would have a rightful claim to compensation?—Yes.

E-272. It is only where there is some other way of getting to the mills, say by walking—(the men probably take a boat because it is easier than walking)—that no claim can rest?—Yes.

E-273. Have there been many claims paid on account of these drowning accidents?—There were two accidents, each involving a considerable number of workmen, only this last year, and the claims were paid without any contest.

E-274. The employers have accepted their responsibility in most of these cases so far?—They have.

E-275. In other parts of India, in the tea districts and coal districts, there is not a whole-time officer similar to yourself. In Assam, for instance, there are district officers who fulfil your functions?—Yes.

E-276. Do you think it is difficult for a district officer to deal with claims promptly?—It is very difficult. I can only speak from correspondence I have had with them, but continually in some cases I have had the impression that they have not grapsed some essential point of the Act or have not been able to give very much attention to the matter. It is a very real difficulty.

E-277. Do you think it would be more advantageous if these other provinces, where there is a large amount of industrial employment and where claims are possible, had a whole-time Commissioner?—I think it would be.

E-278. If the Act were extended to cover other types of employment, such as plantation labour, it would be almost necessary for places like Assam to have a whole-time Commissioner, would it not?—Yes.

E-279. All you cover in a tea garden is the factory labour?—Yes.

E-280. If you had the whole of the garden coolies to deal with as well, there would be a great deal more work to do, would there not?—Accidents are rare among the garden coolies, but there would be a good deal more work to do.

E-281. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In the course of your experience have you found that lawyers are more and more appearing on behalf of dependents in accident cases?—They are appearing now more than they used to.

E-282. In your opinion is that a good thing?—If a workman has a difficult case it is hard for him to put it before the Commissioner without a lawyer. It is difficult for the Commissioner to act as counsel for the workmen.

E-283. Have you heard of cases where the lawyers have pocketed, in the way of fees, practically the whole of the compensation money?—I know they sometimes take a very large percentage. In some cases they go on the principle of taking nothing if they lose and a large percentage if they win.

E-284. *Mr. Ahmed*: Would not that difficulty be got over if your court was located near the other courts where lawyers practise?—I do not think that is necessary. I think too many lawyers would be a bad thing in cases like these. It might lead to the lawyers getting hold of the dependents and appearing in cases where there is really no contest and in which they have nothing to do, simply in order to get some of the compensation money—telling the dependents that unless they engage their services they will not be able to appear before the Commissioner at all.

E-285. Are you not aware that there is a society of lawyers who do not charge anything for doing this sort of work for the parties?—It has not been brought to my notice. Occasionally a lawyer has told me that he is working without fee.

E-286. With regard to an Indian seaman who goes from here to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, for instance, and from there to Liverpool and from there to New York, and finally comes back to Bombay by a round-about route, what remedy has he in regard to putting in any claim for an accident which might have happened to him *en route*?—There is a special clause dealing with that. As regards the actual claim, if he could not appear before me because he was on the High Seas, that would be amply sufficient reason for admitting his claim though six months had expired.

E-287. Would it not be better to amend the law so that he can claim compensation when he arrives here?—He can. There is no difficulty.

E-288. The limitation clause does not apply to him?—No. Even in the case of death there is no difficulty, and in the case of the workman himself the Commissioner has ample discretion.

E-289. Do you exercise your discretion always in his favour?—I do not remember refusing it in a case of that sort.

E-290. The law does not protect him. It is only the discretion of the Commissioner?—I do not think there is any occasion for any amendment. The law as it stands gives him sufficient protection.

E-291. The law as it stands gives him no protection. It is only the discretion of the Commissioner which gives him protection. Do you not think the law itself should give him protection?—The law enables the Commissioner to use his discretion.

E-292. *The Chairman:* I suppose that any hard and fast enactment might turn out to be worse for the workman?—It is possible.

E-293. The discretion is really in favour of the workman?—I think that is probably so.

E-294. *Sir Victor Sassoon:* In the case of a workman being seriously hurt, so that his illness lasted for a month for instance, would you favour the proposal that he should get his compensation dated right back to the first day, and not merely between the ten days and the month?—I would not object to that. It would dispose of the difficulty of malingering.

E-295. If he was going to be ill for a month it would be a serious case, would it not, and therefore there would not be the same danger of malingering?—I agree.

E-296. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri:* Have you received a considerable amount of assistance from Trade Union leaders from the jute-mill side?—At one time I received very considerable assistance, but it has been falling off lately. Sometimes there is considerable activity, and then it falls off.

E-297. You have had some assistance from them?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING

CALCUTTA.

(JAGATDAL.)

Tuesday, 4th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*,
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
C.B.E.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

TULSI, CHAMAR, and his wife TILASARI, Workers in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, were examined and made the following statement.

Tulsi: I come from Gorakhpur in the United Provinces. I have been working in this mill since one year. I have come with my wife and children. I have no land in my village. The supervisor told me that I could get employment in the mill and so I came here. I did not pay any money to the supervisor to get employment here. The supervisor does not belong to my village. I live in bazaar lines. I pay Rs. 1-8-0 a month as rent for the house. I am a sewer. My wife also works as a sewer. The child that my wife has in her arms was born since we came here. My wife did not get any payment when the child was born. My wife was away from work for four months. Though she wanted to come to work earlier she was not given work, and was turned away. After four months she was given work. I earn Rs. 4—5 a week while my wife earns from As. 8 to Rs. 3 according to the quantity of work done. We are indebted to the money-lender. How can we manage with three children if we do not borrow from the *mahajan*? I borrowed Rs. 100 while I was in my village, and since then I have repaid Rs. 40. I pay a monthly interest of As. 4 (4 *sic* pice?) per rupee. How can we go to the manager to ask for an advance? Before we came here we were agricultural labourers. We came here in October 1928, and the child is three months old. My wife had been working for a year when the baby was born. We would like to stay here and do not want to go back to our country. Myself and my wife together earn about Rs. 7 a week and we spend about Rs. 5 and save Rs. 2.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

HABIB, a woman worker in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I have come from Cowrah in Arrah district in Bihar and Orissa. I came here with my husband two years ago. No one brought me here. I was poor; all my folk came here and I also came. My husband is a line *sardar*. I have three daughters and two sons living; two of my children died. The child that I am carrying in my arms is one and a half years old. I did

not get any *khoraki* when this child was born. I did not go to work four weeks before, and four or five weeks after, the birth of the child. I worked in the mill for a year before the child's birth, but I did not get anything after the child was born. My husband used to get Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 a week but now he gets Rs. 10 or Rs. 11. I get Rs. 3-4-0 a week. We do not save anything. After meeting our expenses we send the balance to our old parents in our country; the balance may be anything from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a month. As we cannot manage with what my husband gets I go to work. If we eat we cannot have clothes, and if we have clothes we cannot eat; that is our position.

(The witness withdrew.)

NOOR MUHAMMAD, a line-sardar in the weaving section of the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I have been working in this mill for the last 22 years. I came here of my own accord. I was obliged to leave my home because the amount that my father and four brothers earned was not sufficient to support the family. I come from Arrah in Bihar and Orissa. My father is a retired telegraph line-man and gets a small pension. We do small weaving work at home, but that is not enough to support the whole family. I get Rs. 11 a week, I do not get any bonus on production. I brought my wife to cook my food, but she fell ill and went home. I live alone in the *busti*. I send money home to my wife. I was in debt but not now. I send home Rs. 20 or Rs. 25 a month. I get my food cooked by somebody or other and pay them something. The strike that we had last year was due to a demand for higher wages. All the workers joined the strike and I also joined it. I am a member of the Kankinnarah Labour Union.

(The witness withdrew.)

KALIL, a weaver in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Ghazipur in the United Provinces. I have been working here as a weaver for the last three years. I earn Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 a week. My wife, brothers and parents are in my country. I send them a monthly remittance of Rs. 16 to Rs. 20. I go to my country once in eight or nine months at the harvest time. If I take leave I get back my work after return from leave; I get leave up to eight or ten weeks. I did not pay anything to the *sardar* for getting my employment. I have been hearing that *sardars* take Rs. 5 or Rs. 10, but so far as I am concerned I did not pay anything. The reason why I came to work in the jute mills is that I was hard up in my country, could not get food and was becoming indebted. I go to my country generally in February, partly for harvesting, partly for attending to the repairs of my cottage and partly to see my family. I live alone in Calcutta. Four or five of us are in one room and I pay As. 5 as rent a month. My uncle was doing weaving work in this mill, and when he went home he helped to get me a job here. When I want to go on leave to my home I get a pass from the manager; I have got to apply for leave through the *sardar*. I do not pay anything to the *sardar* when I return to work after the expiry of my leave.

(The witness withdrew.)

SORJU, a line-sardar in the spinning section of the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Mungeli in Bihar and Orissa. I have been here since my boyhood, and am working in the mill for the last eight or nine years. My mother and wife are in my country while my brothers are here. I earn Rs. 9-7-6 a week. I send home Rs. 25 a month. I go home once in five or six years. I get leave for going home. I get my work after my return from leave. There is bribery in every department in the mills for job except in my department.

(The witness withdrew.)

KARU, a spinner in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Mungeli in Bihar and Orissa. I have been working here for the last ten years. I get Rs. 5-2-0 a week. I did not pay any *bakshish* to the *sardar* when I got my employment, nor do I pay him anything out of my wages. I have my wife, a daughter and a son here. I have no land in my country; I have only a thatched house. I have no cattle here. I had no accident here; I have the defect in my right eye ever since my childhood. I am not able to save anything now. I am indebted to the extent of Rs. 25. My wife does not work. I pay Rs. 1-4-0 as house-rent.

(The witness withdrew.)

RAI SYAMA CHARAN BHATTACHARYA Bahadur, Vice-Chairman, Bhatpara Municipality.

Mr. F. C. GRIFFIN, Chief Engineer, Public Health Department.

Mr. K. C. BANERJI, Executive Engineer, Presidency Division.

At the outset Mr. Griffin explained, in detail with the help of a map, the proposed drainage scheme for Bhatpara.

E-298. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr. Bhattacharya, what are you in the municipality?—I am the Vice-Chairman of the municipality. I have been on the municipal council for 30 years.

E-299. When was this municipality formed?—It was separated from Naihati in 1899. With the establishment of jute mills in this area this place has grown in importance. In 1891 the population of this municipal area was 11,764, in 1901 it was 21,464, in 1911 it was 50,414 and in 1921 it was 65,666—that is an increase of 450 per cent in 30 years. Since then four new jute mills have been started. The present population will be over 80,000 or in the neighbourhood of 85,000. The present area of the municipality is about 5½ square miles. It is 5 miles long and 1 to 1½ miles broad.

E-300. How many jute mills are there?—There are altogether fifteen mills. One is a paper mill, one generates electric power, one is a chrome tanning factory and the remaining twelve are jute mills which form one-fifth of the total number of jute mills now working in this province. The number of looms is 8,827; the number of labourers engaged in these mills is 50,728.

E-301. How many of these mills have *bustis* of their own?—Eleven out of the twelve jute mills have *bustis* of their own for the accommodation of their labourers with 7,370 rooms in them. These *bustis* may be described as mill villages, fitted with electric lights and having all the conveniences of life, with abundant water-supply, *pucca* drains, well-paved pathways and septic tank latrines with 1,123 seats in them. The sanitary arrangements of these *bustis* are excellent in every respect. But the case is different as regards private *bustis*.

E-302. How many of the workers actually live in these *bustis*?—I cannot give accurate figures, but I may say that the rooms are not sufficient for all the workers and that some of them live in private *bustis*.

E-303. Have you got a scheme for drainage and water-supply?—Yes. The congestion is very great in the neighbourhood of the mills. Up to 500 feet from the main road on either side it is very congested. Though there is vacant land beyond that nobody likes to go and live there. In order to encourage people to go and live in those places, the Town Improvement Scheme includes construction of broad and metalled roads and water-supply, besides electric light.

E-304. What will be the cost of your scheme and how do you propose to meet it?—The total cost of the Town Improvement Scheme which consists of sewage, water-supply and incidental town-planning schemes is Rs. 21,10,365. To meet this cost the Government of Bengal sanctioned a grant of Rs. 7,00,000 and the local mills have been generous enough to contribute Rs. 11,50,000 and the balance of Rs. 2,60,365 is to be met out of the municipal fund, and if necessary, by loan also.

E-305. Have you had any difficulty in acquiring lands for the purpose?—We have acquired only the exact width of the land that is necessary for the scheme, that is, for the drainage and the roads. There should be some more land for parks and open spaces.

E-306. Who prepared the scheme?—The Engineering department. (*Mr. Griffin*) A certain amount of land has been acquired for public parks also in addition to the road and drainage.

E-307. *The Chairman:* You have already acquired the land necessary for the scheme?—Only just the extent of land required for the scheme. The proper way of executing a scheme like this is to acquire a big width of land, make roads through it, develop it in all ways and then sell it. But the Bengal Municipal Act under which we are working does not give us power to acquire lands beyond what is actually necessary for the works themselves, that is, the roads and the sewers.

E-308. It does not give you power to acquire land for development and sale later on?—No.

E-309. Are there any general town-planning provisions in the Municipal Act?—No.

E-310. Would you explain to us exactly what alteration in the law, you think, is required to give you power to undertake a general scheme of improvement such as the one you contemplate?—(*Mr. Bhattacharya*) We should have power to acquire any land, make roads through them, develop them in all ways and then sell them. We want powers similar to those of the Calcutta Improvement Trust.

E-311. Have you no powers to buy land by private sale without resorting to the compulsory provisions of the Land Acquisition Act?—We can acquire land only for a public purpose. The extent of land is limited to what is actually required for the public purpose.

E-312. *Sir Alexander Murray:* When the late Kisori Lall Ghosai was alive, did he not offer you the land necessary for the road—about 50 or 100 feet?—Yes, he agreed to give the required land.

E-313. What happened afterwards?—His successor declined to give any land free of cost. We were thus compelled to reduce the width of the road to 50 feet.

E-314. And you have been compelled to acquire the land under the compulsory provisions of the Land Acquisition Act?—Yes.

E-315. How has the land appreciated in value since you began to acquire it?—The rent was Rs. 3 a *khatta* before, but now even though the roads have not been laid down and only the lines marked, the rent has risen to Rs. 10 a *khatta*.

E-316. *Mr. Clow:* When you pay compensation to the landowner for acquiring his land compulsorily, does the Land Acquisition Officer take into consideration the increased value of the rest of the landowner's land on account of the improvements you have effected?—No, he does not.

E-317. *The Chairman:* I take it that there are two things that you want by way of an alteration of the law. The first is: in determining the price to be paid for the land compulsorily acquired by you the Land Acquisition Officer must take into account the increase in the value of the remaining land of the particular landowner, part of whose property you are purchasing. That is the case in England, but you have no similar provision in India?—If that is done it would be quite fair to the parties concerned.

E-318. Then there is the second point. The definition of a public purpose in the Land Acquisition Act should be extended so as to cover the purchase of land for development and sale after development?—Yes.

E-319. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Is it not possible for the municipality to condemn a *busti* as insanitary and force the owner of the *busti* to make the necessary improvements?—Under the Bengal Municipal Act the Municipal Commissioners can prepare a plan for the improvement of a *busti*. They should then ask two Civil Surgeons for inspection of the locality and approval of the scheme. They can then call upon the owner of the *busti* to make the necessary improvements. If he failed to do that the Municipal Commissioners could carry out the improvements themselves and recover the expense from the owner.

E-320. Have you attempted to put those provisions of the Municipal Act into force?—We did that in the case of one *busti* in front of the Kankinarah Mills about 15 years ago. We contemplate doing that with regard to other mill *bustis* also. We have had a long correspondence with the *zamindar* of the *bustis*; he would neither do the thing himself, nor allow the Commissioners to do it.

E-321. Have you any power to open municipal markets?—Yes, we have. We have got no markets now. We have secured a plot of land for building a market. We have not till now proceeded with that because we have not enough money to spare. The market would require Rs. 30,000. We are now concentrating our attention on the big scheme. Of course, the market is only a speculation after all.

E-322. *The Chairman:* With regard to the difficulty of acquiring land for development, this is not the first time we have heard of that difficulty. Has any one introduced a Bill in the Council to remove that difficulty?—Sir Surendranath Banerji who drafted the Calcutta Municipal Act also drafted the Municipal Act for the province as a whole. Since his death on account of obstruction they have not been able to put this Act through. That draft Bill contained provisions that would get over most of the difficulties that are now put forward by me.

E-323. As a result of the increase in value of the land have you any power to levy increased municipal rates on the landowners?—The rates are revised every fifth year. The next revision comes off on the first of April next. I have taken up the matter already.

E-324. *Mr. Cliff:* With regard to the definition of 'public purpose', assuredly construction of workmen's houses is a public purpose. Who is standing in the way of acquiring land for construction of workmen's houses?—We cannot acquire land for constructing workmen's houses.

E-325. Do you know that the Holland Commission recommended that?—But that has not been embodied in a statute.

E-326. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri:* Even under the existing Act the municipality has powers to compel the owners to make the necessary improvements according to the standard *busti* plan, but they have not put those provisions into force?—No, we have not done that. But, as I said before, the municipality has no power to acquire lands for workmen's houses either under this Act or under any other Act.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

(PANEL No. II.)

CALCUTTA.

Wednesday, 5th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
MAULVI LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. G. A. YOUNG, General Manager, Indian Iron and Steel Company, Limited.

E-327. *The Chairman:* You have come to help us to-day with evidence with regard to the two large industries which are described to us in one case as Burn & Co., Ltd., Howrah, and the other as the Indian Iron and Steel Company?—No. I am not concerned with Burn & Co., Ltd., Howrah; only with the Indian Iron and Steel Company as representing Burnpur and Gua Ore Mines.

E-328. Then you are not able to speak on the first memorandum submitted to us?—I cannot speak on that.

E-329. Will you tell the Commission what is the position that you hold with regard to the Indian Iron and Steel Company, Burnpur?—I am in the position of the general manager and resident at Hirapur Works. That is my official position.

E-330. What does the memorandum dated from Hirapur Works, exactly cover in the way of your undertaking, and how many men are employed?—The memorandum dated Hirapur Works, October 1929, covers the men employed at the works in the production of pig iron, coke manufacture and by-products. We have there on an average about 2,800 men, and we employ somewhere in the region of 750 women. The men can be divided into three classes: the skilled class, the semi-skilled or unskilled class, and the coolie class. The men under the skilled class are nearly all employed on maintenance work, that is, they are the fitter class and the engineering class. The semi-skilled or unskilled class are employed on operating machinery such as crane drivers, ram drivers and any other machinery which has to be driven, but these men have no mechanical training, they are only there as drivers. If any part of the machinery breaks down it is the job of the mechanical gang to put it in order. The coolie class are mainly employed in handling materials. The raw material side is almost entirely handled by contractors. The women are mainly employed in cleaning up around the plant, and in no case are they employed on actual operation work.

E-331. You refer on the first page of your memorandum to Burnpur and Hirapur; are those two distinct?—Burnpur is the town and Hirapur is the works.

E-332. And the "Indian Standard Wagon Company": how is that related?—That is a different company under the same managing agency, but not under my control.

E-333. Then the memorandum we are dealing with is entirely the Iron and Steel Works which you have just described?—That is this particular memorandum, and I am also authorized to give evidence in connexion with the ore mines which supply iron ore for these works. That is a separate memorandum altogether.

E-334. In your memorandum you say that during August 1929 the number of hours lost due to absenteeism on account of sickness totals 7,400. Does that mean that in your register you keep a separate column for sickness absence as distinguished from other kinds of absence?—No, these figures were prepared for the information of the Commission and only deal with that particular month. We do not keep records separately in our muster roll. We simply prepared these figures in order to give an idea what the position was for that particular month.

E-335. We have been interested in what is called "absenteeism" and we find that different kinds of absences are all lumped together under one heading?—That is the case generally with our records. When a man is absent we do not record for what particular reason he is absent.

E-336. You do not record any difference in your register between absence with leave and absence without leave?—In regard to our labour there is no difference, but with regard to our permanent staff there is.

E-337. Then this figure is merely your own analysis of a single month?—Yes.

E-338. You state that the total absenteeism due to all causes is about 8½ per cent, but you do not tell us what proportion of that percentage is represented by sickness?—These figures were taken out while I was on leave. I returned to Hirapur Works on the 22nd November, but I took the opportunity of going into the figures which were given, and the true position is that the 8½ per cent which is given there is absenteeism on operation work only. Our labour is roughly divided into raw material handling and operation work.

E-339. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: No coolies are included?—No.

E-340. These are your skilled workers?—Yes, and semi-skilled. I took out the average for coolies employed on constructional work, and the average is 28 per cent in that particular department which we call our town engineering department.

E-341. *The Chairman*: The average absenteeism is 28 per cent?—Yes, that is among the coolie class.

E-342. On the same page you state that the absenteeism is fairly low on these works?—That refers to the operation works.

E-343. And you found it necessary to adopt a very strict attitude in dealing with absence without leave?—Yes, the reason for that is that our plant is a continuous process plant, and we have naturally to train men up to do specific jobs. There is a scarcity of labour, suitably trained, to do these jobs, and when we train these men we are put to considerable inconvenience if they do not turn up, and we favour, in promotion, men who are regular in attendance. That has the effect of bringing down absenteeism to a minimum.

E-344. With regard to the skilled men you find there is a response to a stricter discipline in the way of regular attendance?—Yes.

E-345. But on the other hand you mention a very high figure of absenteeism with regard to other labour?—Yes, the other labour is uneducated and the work on which they are employed is not important work in that the plant would not shut down if they did not turn out for their duty. They mainly clean up and handle materials from one point to another which in the case of necessity we can always do mechanically by cranes, so that we are not entirely dependent upon them.

E-346. You have not made a similar effort with regard to unskilled or coolie labour to get regularity of work?—We find it almost impossible because the coolie labour is drawn from surrounding villages and surrounding districts, whereas our skilled and semi-skilled labour are housed in our own town.

E-347. Further on, you tell us with regard to staff organization that workmen are trained, and as improvement is shown promotion is given and, as far as possible, when a vacancy occurs a man in a lower position fills the vacancy. Have you found a response from workers in that direction in ambition to rise in scale?—Yes, I make it a particular point to keep workers contented by giving them something to work for, and in all our departments we have arranged a regular scale of promotion. To give you an instance: in our coke-oven department we have actually working now a coke-oven foreman who came to us as a coolie. He is unable to read or write, and yet he carries out the duty of a foreman.

E-348. Therefore you would not hold with the proposition that illiteracy is a bar to promotion for a good workman?—I would say it is a bar in that where men are illiterate we have to provide educated men to work alongside them to do the clerical part of their work for them. All the records and all the instructions have to be written for them.

E-349. Again you tell us about your system of timekeeping which corresponds pretty closely to the method which prevails in most engineering works in England?—Yes, except that in England you are dealing with workmen who are educated, and therefore can put their time checks into an office, whereas we have to have a man really employed here to do that for them, that is, we have the timekeeper there to receive the time-check.

E-350. You make a reference to a labour superintendent. Would you mind telling the Commission exactly what are the functions of your labour superintendent?—The labour superintendent is in charge of all timekeeping, that is, all the muster rolls are under his charge in so far as booking of attendance goes and also the timekeepers in the various departments are directly under his control. He completes his muster rolls so far as attendance goes and he records the attendance and the rate of the man. The muster rolls are then sent to the accounts department, who is responsible for extensions and for the actual payment of money; so that the labour superintendent's duties are completed when he properly records the attendance and the rate at which the man is working in the works.

E-351. Has he anything to do with the engagement of labour or its promotion within the works?—The various departments send requisition for labour to the labour superintendent. He always has a certain number of men applying for work, and the system prevailing at present is that he gives a gate pass to the man applying for work, and the man then is allowed to enter the works and to proceed to the department requiring the services of a man of his qualifications. The department engages the man and sends him back with an engagement slip to the labour superintendent, who records the name of the new man on the register.

E-352. Has that system any effect in diminishing or abolishing bribery?—There are two systems of bribery. In large works where foremen have a number of men under them, where dishonesty is practised, it is the practice for those foremen deliberately to take bribes from these men, and if the men do not comply with the requests one might find that these men will be discharged. Then when the new man comes on, if he is the man engaged by the foreman, and if he is a dishonest foreman, he will take a bribe from the man he engages. I make it my particular duty to keep records of engagements and discharges in each department. These records are kept daily and they are placed before me every day, and I total them up weekly and I take averages out monthly and yearly, and whenever these records show any variation from the normal, I take it up immediately with the departmental manager concerned and he traces it down to the particular shift on which this engagement has been made. We generally keep a very close eye on dishonesty that may go on in that direction.

E-353. Do you consider that bribery prevails in your works as a consideration for employment?—No, I think the system I have introduced, and the fact that they know that I am carefully watching them, has kept it down to an absolute minimum.

E-354. At present your opinion is that there is no substantial evil in your works, due to the system that you have adopted?—Yes.

E-355. And the key of the situation is the labour superintendent?—No, the key of the situation is the fact that there is someone supervising it. They know that I am having these figures prepared, and occasionally when I make enquiries they know from which source they are coming. They come through me to the departmental manager and from him to the foreman, so that they are always kept uneasy as to whether they are getting away with any bribery that might be going on.

E-356. What sort of status does your labour superintendent hold and what salary is he paid?—Rs. 500 a month. He is a European. I might make it clear that this labour superintendent is only engaged in the actual work of recording timekeeping. He is not labour superintendent in the sense that a labour superintendent is at Home in charge of a labour bureau. We do not find it necessary to employ such an organization. We pay him a good salary and put a good man in the job so as not to make it worth his while to make money by various ways that might be open to him.

E-357. He has no concern with the general welfare?—No, except that a part of his duty is to receive instructions with regard to the allotment of quarters. When we allot quarters he is the man who actually sees that these particular quarters are allotted and occupied by the men to whom we allot them.

E-358. In your memorandum, with regard to land acquisition, you say "Our whole area including works and town is being acquired under Government land acquisition"; an acquisition of areas for quarters is, therefore, included in this. Does that mean that the Government is exercising its powers to acquire land for the purpose of your company?—Yes. The position roughly is this: that we went into this area as an industrial concern; we obtained certain leases from landlords in the districts. These leases only covered the landlords' rights and we had to acquire the surface rights in order to erect buildings and carry out our works. Our trouble commenced in endeavouring to acquire these surface rights, and we found that people did everything they possibly could in order to make money out of the company.

E-359. How is it that Government has taken action in this case to acquire land for your company, as I take it, both for industrial purposes and for housing purposes? We have had complaints from many other quarters that the Act is not available?—In our particular instance we are termed a Public Utility Company, and therefore it is covered by the Act as it is at present. We had to put up our reasons why we should be termed a Public Utility Company. These reasons were considered by the Collector in the ordinary course of going into our application, and the main reason that we put forward to show that we were a "Public Utility Company" was that we supplied electric power to the Indian Standard Wagon Company, and the Indian Standard Wagon Company had already been termed a "Public Utility Company"; therefore we said "if you shut us down, you shut down your Public Utility Company". We are in the position of suppliers of electric power. We are also under agreement to supply power to the Asansol Waterworks.

E-360. In your case it lay within the power of the Commissioner did you say?—Yes.

E-361. And who else?—It lay within the duty of Government. The application went through the Collector, who made his recommendations to the Commissioner, and the Commissioner passed our application to Government. Government considered what we put forward as reasonable grounds for terming our company a "public utility company" under the Act.

E-362. And then from that followed the extension from the industrial use to cover also the housing works?—Yes.

E-363. This is a case where Government has used its discretion to make the present Act work in the direction of providing land for housing of an industrial firm?—I would not say that ; I would say that our town is a part of our works really, as we have to house our labour there. Therefore, the point is that Government considered we were a "public utility company", and so the whole of our land came under the scheme.

E-364. On the question of hours dealt with in your memorandum you tell us that a large proportion of your labour works on 8-hour shifts?—Yes.

E-365. And daily labour has holidays on Sunday ; shift labour are let off one day in every 14 days?—Yes.

E-366. That complies with the present Act?—Yes.

E-367. Are you of the opinion that that one day in 14 is adequate?—Yes, I quite think so. It is the general system throughout the whole world.

E-368. To work 13 days out of 14?—In a continuous process plant such as ours, yes.

E-369. Dealing with the question of wages you tell us that you pay wages monthly on a daily rate, and that payments are made from the 10th to the 14th of the month following. Have you ever had applications from your workers to be paid at shorter intervals than a month?—No, we find this system of paying has worked admirably. Our system of paying is elaborate ; it takes a good deal of supervision, and we find that we have very few complaints.

E-370. You have no opinion to offer to the Commission as to any change for a shorter period?—The opinion I would put forward is that in our particular case, to adopt a weekly payment for instance would mean that payments could not be made in one common centre ; it would mean that payments would be going on at different points throughout the works at the same time, and I am perfectly convinced that it would be disliked.

E-371. Unless you divided it into departments and paid different departments on different days?—Payments are made in company's time and not on off-time, and the whole of our operation work would be continuously affected, whereas in this particular instance we are affected only three or four days in the month.

E-372. You have experience, no doubt, of English methods in a large works comparable to your own where wages are paid weekly?—Yes.

E-373. What is the difficulty you see in carrying out the same system here in India?—Mainly that workers at Home are educated and they can reason for themselves what the payments are. It would be a very hard job to deprive a British worker of his wages actually due, whereas unscrupulous people could get at uneducated Indian workers who are very often in the hands of money-lenders, not only official money-lenders, but other rogues in the districts who lend money with the idea of extracting large dues from them, and we, by having this system of paying, keep these people out of the area altogether, which it would be very hard to do if we had payments going on at different points. It would be impossible to supervise payments so thoroughly as we do at present.

E-374. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Do I understand that Government acquired land for you as being a public utility industry, and that the land required for the workmen's *chawls* was acquired as part of the industrial enterprise?—Yes.

E-375. With regard to the Land Acquisition Act, are Government the sole judge as to whether the land is required for a public purpose or not?—Government is the sole judge.

E-376. And Government exercise their discretion in acquiring the land not only for an industry but also for workmen's *chawls* on the ground that such was necessary in connexion with the industry?—Yes.

E-377. *Mr. Clow*: What intervals do you give to the shift labour employed in the Burnpur works?—It varies in different departments. In the case of the blast furnace department, the workmen 'cast' the furnace and as soon as that is finished they are allowed to sit back until the next operation, 'flushing' the furnace. When that operation is finished they are again allowed to rest.

E-378. There are no specified intervals?—No.

E-379. Is there any underground work in the ore mines?—It is all surface working.

E-380. You suggest that there should be greater restrictions on grog, opium and *ganja* shops. What restriction do you suggest?—We think that a better class of shopkeeper should be introduced who would be not so likely to exploit the labourers.

E-381. In your memorandum you state that you yourself exercise control over the shop buildings?—Yes, but the actual licences are granted by Government.

E-382. Is it not within your power to refuse to lease land for a grog shop?—The grog shop is established, and Government grant the licence. The actual licence-holder is chosen by Government.

E-383. Is the land on which the grog shop stands your land?—Yes.

E-384. So that when the lease expired it would be open to you to say that you were not going to lease it again if it were to be used for the purpose of a grog shop?—The labourers insist on having certain facilities. All we really intend to convey is that there should be every possible restriction put on the licence-holder so that he does not exploit the labourers. Labour will always have a certain amount of drink. The consideration is not to give it in quantities likely to do harm.

E-385. In other words, your firm is in favour of having grog shops?—No, we are not. We are in favour of having labour, and we cannot have labour without giving them these facilities.

E-386. You say "The company do not allow money lenders on the mines." Do you mean within the whole area?—Within the mines area.

E-387. But not where the workers live?—It is very hard to keep these people out. One of our rules is that money-lenders shall not be allowed within the area, but these people do come in.

E-388. You say that your company grants three weeks' leave per annum to skilled workers. Is that on full pay?—Yes.

E-389. You do not follow the same method at Burnpur?—No. The reason for adopting this method at the ore mines is that it is an unhealthy district. We are only now in the process of getting the district inhabitable. We are having to do a great deal of jungle clearing and having to provide a water-supply. We found that the water was contaminating the labour, and we have put in a water-supply from a spring on the hill side.

E-390. You do not give leave to the unskilled workers at the mines?—No. The permanent staff referred to here is really the maintenance and workshop staff. The others are miners. They are casual labour, coming and going as they please.

E-391. Is a large amount of work done on contract at Burnpur?—Very little of it is done by contract work. The only contract work is the handling, unloading and loading of all materials, and occasionally the handling of big iron into and out of stock.

E-392. What are the difficulties in the way of doing that work departmentally?—It is a question of facilities rather than difficulties. The contractor himself is a skilled man. Business in this country is very often carried out by the family. The contractor will very often bring into our area seven or eight really good supervisory staff which he can trust. We are quite content to pay our contract or a flat rate of so much per ton. We get a proper weighment and therefore we know that we are making a proper payment. If we tried to do such work in any other way than by contractors we should probably be defrauded in many ways.

E-393. On what period do the contractors pay wages?—They have a system whereby they advance money to labour. They keep the labour supplied either with funds or with food.

E-394. You have never advanced money to your own labour?—No, except under my sanction.

E-395. *Mr. Joshi*: You mention certain figures about absenteeism on account of sickness. How do you know whether a man is absent on account of sickness or for any other reason?—We have our own medical arrangements in the district. We have our own hospital and our own medical staff and the figure is arrived at by information supplied by the medical officer. If a man is not reported sick he is put down as being absent for some other reason.

E-396. You say 'each unit consists of one room'. What is the size of the room?—The cubicle content in the *khalasi* quarter is 1,113 cubic feet, and the size of the room is 10′ × 10′.

E-397. You say that you provide latrines for senior labourers. How do you judge seniority?—By the position held in the works.

E-398. Why do you not think it necessary to provide separate latrines in the quarters of the work-people in lower positions?—One reason is that I do not think they would ever use them. We have the greatest possible difficulty in getting them to use public latrines.

E-399. Have you ever made an experiment of providing latrines in the quarters occupied by people of lower position?—No.

E-400. How many such quarters have you?—There are 172 of these particular labour quarters. We have 700 odd units.

E-401. If you had made an experiment in this connexion with 100 units, you would have gained practical experience as to the use or non-use of latrines, but as it is, now you are only able to draw on your imagination.—Not at all. We have the experience of what happens inside the works where the conditions are as they are in England. We have had to put guards on the area to make the people use the public latrines. I am talking now about the coolie class.

E-402. You have said nothing about sickness insurance. Do you not think you would get your labour more contented if you made some provision for sickness?—We have provision for looking after a man when he is sick. We provide all the medical attendance free.

E-403. I am referring to the maintenance of a man during sickness on the lines of health insurance in Great Britain.—I do not think it is applicable to our type of labour, which is continually changing. Provision might be made in the case of the permanent staff which is resident permanently on the spot.

E-404. How do you differentiate between permanent and casual labour? Suppose a man works for eight months in a year, then goes home for four months and then comes back again, and continues like that year after year?—I would call him a permanent man.

E-405. What proportion of your labour is permanent in that sense?—It is impossible for me to tell you, but it is a very small proportion.

E-406. What proportion of your workmen come fresh every year?—It is impossible for me to say.

E-407. I take it that in regard to the class of workers who work for eight months in the year, then go home for four months and then return year after year there would be no difficulty in applying legislation for sickness insurance, would there?—I think there would be the greatest possible difficulty. You say that they work for eight months and then go home, but the chances are that they may never come back again.

E-408. I am referring to the class of people who do return?—How can we assume that they will come back.

E-409. By experience.—Our experience is that they do not come back.

E-410. We have heard from a large number of employers that they do. With regard to that class of worker there should be no difficulty in applying legislation about sickness insurance?—As far as our particular works are concerned, it would be very difficult to trace the movements of those workers who are not permanent.

E-411. If this difficulty is somehow or other surmounted, would your firm propose legislation for providing sickness benefits on other grounds?—Our firm is only too pleased to do anything which will add to the welfare of the workers. Anything which we think would add to the better efficiency and service of our men we would adopt.

E-412. You say that a large proportion of your labour is shift labour. What is the exact proportion of those workers who work an eight-hour shift?—I cannot say. When we say 'the majority' we mean by far the largest proportion.

E-413. You further say that the shift labour is let off one day in every 14 days. What is the difficulty in letting it off once every week, except that of cost?—We do not consider it necessary.

E-414. Is not a weekly day of rest considered necessary for most people?—We adopt the practice of the trade throughout the whole of the world.

E-415. Is there any difficulty in the process itself, except that of cost?—There would be considerable difficulty in changing round the system. When you give a man rest you have to provide a substitute for him.

E-416. Therefore it is a question of cost?—We would also have to train men who would be capable of taking the position while the other man is away.

E-417. *The Chairman*: I take it your difficulty is that you would require an increased personnel for the same production?—That is right.

E-418. Therefore the difficulty which you suggest lies in increased cost and in the difficulty of training an additional number of men to keep your continuous process in operation?—Yes.

E-419. When you give the one day's rest in 14 days, are the works closed?—No. The men change shift.

E-420. It is a change over, but the process still goes on even on the fourteenth day.—Yes.

E-421. *Mr. Joshi*: What is the legal contract of employment for daily rated men?—It is a daily contract.

E-422. You can discharge a man any day you like?—Yes.

E-423. Then is it to be wondered at that there is such a large percentage of absenteeism as 28 on the part of those people whom you may discharge any day you like?—But the other men are employed on exactly the same basis.

E-424. Is all your labour employed on the basis that you can dismiss them any day you like?—Yes. I am omitting the staff.

E-425. Do you agree with me that if men are engaged on the basis that they can be discharged on any day the management likes, absenteeism is bound to be larger than if the men were engaged on a monthly contract?—No, I do not agree. I have given the true reason for the absenteeism being high in the case of the Town Engineering Department, namely, that these are uneducated labourers who are recruited from the villages round about. They walk 6 or 7 miles to the works; they do work for a day or two days or three days, they get sufficient for their needs, and they then go off and remain away for a number of days until that money is exhausted, and then they come back again.

E-426. *The Chairman*: And presumably they have some work to do in their villages?—Yes, agricultural work.

E-427. *Mr. Joshi*: Have you sufficient work for all the people who come to your gates every day?—No.

E-428. Therefore some people are perhaps absent because there is no work for them?—If they do not turn up they may often find that there is someone else in their job.

E-429. Some proportion of absenteeism may be due to want of work?—Yes.

E-430. You state your view regarding the comparative efficiency of Indian and European workers. You know that there is a difference between the wages paid to Indian workers in India and those paid to European workers either in India or in Europe. Suppose one shilling is paid here in India, in Great Britain four shillings is paid.—I do not think your

figures are correct. I can give you many instances where, if you take into account all the amenities that are provided, the workers here are getting just as good wages as they are in England.

E-431. Will you give me an instance?—The men I am referring to are skilled men. Take for instance an electrical fitter. He gets up to Rs. 2-10-0 a day.

E-432. What would be the wage paid in Great Britain for that job?—I should not think the wage would be more than £2 a week.

E-433. That is 40*s.* for six days?—Yes.

E-434. It comes to between 6 and 7*s.* a day, while you pay here Rs. 2-10-0 which comes to about 4*s.* Suppose you offer a wage of £2 here to any one who does this work, do you not think you will get a better class of labourer?—I do not think so, if by 'better class' you mean a man who is capable of doing more work.

E-435. Did you ever try?—We have tried.

E-436. For the same wages?—We have increased the wages for improving the class of work.

E-437. Did you improve the rates sufficiently high?—Yes. We have taken men who came from other parts on sufficiently high rates on recommendations from other sources, but we found that that did not improve the standard and therefore we kept to our original standard. But the point I would like to make in connexion with the comparison of wages is this: I say there is very little difference in the case of a skilled man. Here is a man who is drawing, say, 4*s.* a day. He is allowed free medical attendance, he is given free housing, the company has put in bazaars and controls the shop-keepers so that he may not be exploited, the company has put in roads and has made sanitary arrangements; the man has to pay absolutely no taxes at all. Whereas if you take a British workman he has to live far away from his works and has to pay travelling expenses to and fro; he has to pay municipal and educational taxes. If you take all these into consideration, our workman here is paid just as well as a British worker is paid at Home.

E-438. *Mr. Tassie*: He is paid a great deal better?—Yes.

E-439. *Miss Power*: You refer to the labour turnover in the case of unskilled and coolie labour. Have you ever made any effort at continuity of employment by arranging leave facilities during the cultivation season and guaranteeing the vacancy to the worker on his return?—We have never tried to make any such arrangement.

E-440. Do you think if you did that you would get a less high turnover amongst the unskilled workers?—Yes, but unfortunately the cultivation time and the time when we have very heavy work coincides, so that it is very difficult to get a sufficient source of labour to supply the number who have gone on to cultivation. We think that the tendency nowadays is for people to continue if they like the conditions and the conditions are such that they can arrange with their families to do cultivation while they continue to do industrial work; so that what we are endeavouring to do is to make their conditions as good as possible so that they may settle down in the area and be continuous workers.

E-441. You want your unskilled coolies, if you can, to be as continuous as your skilled workers?—We do, and that is our aim, because ours is a continuous process plant, and people who know the work can do the work much more efficiently than new men.

E-442. Again you say: "All labour are free to approach their departmental managers if they wish." Do they, in practice, do that?—Yes.

E-443. Does a complaint ever get above a *sardar* or a foreman?—What I have endeavoured to do in my works organization is to make the departmental manager responsible for his own labour; in other words, he must get to know every man who is employed under him. I encourage the departmental manager to settle all kinds of disputes rather than that they should be taken to the court. We have a court only two or three miles away from our works, and disputes are very often taken there, and work-people are encouraged to take their disputes there by pleaders who want to make money out of them. So that my whole effort is to try and make the departmental manager take an interest in the workman himself; and in cases where the workman is not satisfied he can always appeal to me, and I always take the case myself.

E-444. You want to make the departmental manager an intermediary in their private disputes as well as in their complaints in connexion with their work?—Yes, because they work under him and if he takes an interest in the matter everything would be all right.

E-445. Do you find very great variation in the number of complaints dealt with by different departmental managers?—It depends on the class of labour; we have our greatest trouble with the lower caste labour; that is, in the case of private disputes, they are always very anxious to show that they have a caste, and they are always bringing disputes from caste prejudice and asking for a settlement; very often for the very reason of just trying to display that they have actually a caste. So that in departments where there is a big proportion of that type of labour you will naturally have more disputes.

E-446. It depends also, does it not, on the personality of the departmental manager?—Undoubtedly it does. By encouraging departmental managers to settle these disputes the workers become known to the managers and the managers become known to the workers; the managers more or less act in the position of an honorary magistrate.

E-447. On the question of education you emphasize more than once that you cannot expect any great increase in efficiency without an increase in the educational facilities. In your memorandum you deal with the facilities available. What number of workers' children attend the Mary Fairhurst M.E. School?—A very small proportion. There are six pupils out of 34.

E-448. Are those the children of clerks?—They are the children of the work-people, and the 34 represent the children of the educated *baboo* classes.

E-449. The number of children of school-going age must be far higher than 34, considering the large number of employees you have?—I might explain here that you see that we make a reference to a primary school. That primary school effort was really directed by myself to overcome what I thought was a great difficulty in the educational system in our area. To establish a middle English school first, I think, was a mistake, because it means that the children must be educated up to a certain standard before they are admitted to the school. Therefore while we did not intend to exclude the workers' children, the workers were not able to educate their children up to that standard whereas the clerks were. As a result the number of children from the clerical staff is very much higher than from the workers, so that I have petitioned for a primary school to be established which would act as a feeder to this school.

E-450. Is the proposed primary school to be a company school or a municipal school?—It would be an aided school; Government would pay half the capital cost and half the maintenance charges.

E-451. Do you propose to do any propaganda amongst your workers or offer any form of inducement to persuade the skilled workers to send their children to school?—Yes, I have done it personally. We have also done it through the departmental managers and foremen. I have personally tried to get my *mistri* type of man to send his children to be educated because I consider that he makes a better mechanic than the type that we get from the universities and colleges.

E-452. As regards the hours of labour, is a third meal taken in that midday break, or do your workers take only two meals, one before and one after work?—They take rest and also a meal.

E-453. Where do they take that meal? Have they a canteen or a dining shed?—They usually go to the bazaar which is not more than 150 yards from the works.

E-454. There are no dining facilities?—Not inside the workshop.

E-455. Have you considered that at all?—It is not necessary.

E-456. Dealing with acquaintance of work-people with factory legislation you say: "We do not think that labour as a whole are acquainted with the provisions." Have you undertaken any propaganda among the workers to make them acquainted with the laws that govern their conditions of work?—Only in so far that we have posted notices in the vernacular; but the uneducated worker knows nothing about the Act, and I do not think he would even appreciate the meaning of what you might tell him.

E-457. Turning to the question of women, excluding contractors' labour, are not about 20 per cent of your labour women, since you say that there are 2,800 men and 750 women?—Yes.

E-458. What are those women engaged on?—We have a tremendous amount of dust about our plant which is detrimental to the machinery. They are employed in cleaning up these areas; they are also employed in loading clay which we use for luting up coke oven doors.

E-459. Are the women you have recruited the wives of the men employed by you, or do they present themselves independently?—They are independent as far as our records are concerned; very often they are the wives of coolies working in the same department. The majority of the women who are actually employed in the works have come from the surrounding villages.

E-460. Do they work the same hours as the men?—No. We are obliged by the Act to lay them off for a day in a week.

E-461. Apart from that, do they work the same hours as the men?—They work from 7 to 3 in some departments.

E-462. You say you have no crèche. Are the children allowed on the premises?—No children are allowed in our works; that is very strictly enforced. Our work is very dangerous, and we have always considered that they must leave their children at home, and we strictly enforce that rule. I might also say that we do not employ any boys. The boys that we have are all over 16 years of age.

E-463. You say that you have given no maternity benefit. Do you know what is the length of the absence of these women during child-birth?—No. They are casual labour; they only come for two or three days and go away. They are not continuous labour and they are not living in our area; they are living in the village areas.

E-464. Does your company desire to have a more continuous female labour force?—No.

E-465. Speaking on the subject of mines you say that you are absolutely depending upon the women workers for carrying ore. I do not find that you give any maternity benefit before or after child-birth. Has your firm ever considered this matter?—In the mines there is a prejudice to carrying anything and very few of the ordinary coolies will carry anything in the shape of a basket on their heads. Therefore they bring their wives to do that work. There again, in the ore mines, they are only casual labour; they come and go; they work for a week and sometimes less.

E-466. Have you ever kept a record of the length of the time that these women work?—No particular record is kept.

E-467. Do you not think that you would get a more continuous service if you gave them certain benefits such as payment during child-birth?—I do not think so. I think the type of the labour is such that they will not be continuous workers until they become educated and until they get away from their land. The land is their mainstay; they get their food from their land and they cultivate it.

E-468. Are the men reasonably regular?—The men are exactly in the same position as women.

E-469. I presume that many of these women who must be the wives of the men workers, are as regular as the men employees?—Yes.

E-470. *Miss Sorabji:* In your memorandum you say: "There are no particular welfare officers, as the whole of the town is under our direct supervision." As a matter of fact, is any welfare work actually done by yourselves?—It depends on what you call welfare work. We look after the needs of the people in providing medical attendance, providing good foodstuff and providing proper sanitation, and the results which we have obtained in the past, I think, speak for our very good efforts in that direction. We have had no cholera case in our district for seven years, and in the last four years we have had only six or eight cases of smallpox, which were imported cases. While epidemics have been raging in the surrounding villages within a short distance from our works we have been absolutely free. So we are doing welfare work in that direction.

E-471. Not in the direction for instance of clinics for children?—No. We support religious institutions. We pay certain monthly subscription to the mosque which is in the town; they provide education in that mosque. We also have a *patsala* in the bazaar which we subscribe to.

E-472. You have no health centres for women and children?—No; but we provide them with free medical attendance.

E-473. You have no hospital?—We have a hospital.

E-474. Do you find that women go to the hospital on their own initiative?—Yes.

E-475. Would you be prepared to employ a woman welfare worker if such were available?—I do not think it is necessary.

E-476. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain:* On the question of contractors, will you tell us what sort of control you exercise over them? Are they responsible for their own duties?—They are responsible for their own duties, which are supervised by the departmental manager.

E-477. Can you tell us what sort of attitude is adopted by the contractor in the case of absentees?—No, I have no knowledge.

E-478. Can you say how the contractors deal with their work-people when they come back after their long absence?—If there is no work for them, I think they are sent back.

E-479. On the question of wages, have you any knowledge of the rates that these contractors pay to their workers?—I think that they are paying roughly the same rates as we are paying. If they pay less we would naturally expect that some of their labour would come to us, and if they were paying more we would expect some of our labour to go to them.

E-480. Have you any experience as to the difference between your rate and the rate paid by the contractor?—I think the rate is practically same.

E-481. You say: "The whole of the loading, unloading and general handling of raw materials is given out on contract." In the case of injuries who is responsible for paying compensation to the injured worker?—When the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force, we offered to take the responsibility from the contractor; that is, we insured ourselves, and we asked the contractor if he would share in that insurance. In the case of one contractor he accepted, while in the case of another he objected.

E-482. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri:* Was it not contemplated by your management to start works committees?—No.

E-483. Did your sister company, the Indian Standard Wagon Company, start works committees?—That I cannot say.

E-484. Has your management ever thought of starting works committees?—No. What we did contemplate was starting a municipality board for the running of the town.

E-485. These works committees are a sort of joint machinery for settling minor disputes and for looking after the welfare work of the labour. You know that they were started in England and are known as Whitley Councils, named after our Chairman?—We have done nothing in that direction. We do not think it necessary under present conditions.

E-486. What do you mean by 'present conditions'? You mean political conditions?—No. Under present conditions our work-people are perfectly contented. If they are left alone we are quite certain that they will remain contended, but if there is interference from outside they will not remain contented.

E-487. But the works committees do not imply any outside interference; in fact, they will eliminate such interference?—My point is that our work-people are contented under our present scheme, and we have had absolutely no trouble. During the East Indian Railway strike and the Tata strike, I know that emissaries were sent to our works and meetings were held. The reply that our men gave to these emissaries was "We will wait and see if you get something as a result of the strike; if you get anything then we will also strike."

E-488. I am not referring to outside interference at all, I am referring to the very small grievances of workmen that can be dealt with by a works committee. In view of the fact that you have a very large number of employees, it is very difficult to manage unless you have a consultative machinery?—I have already explained that I personally take an interest in making each departmental manager act in the capacity of settler of these disputes. We have actually had cases where the Magistrate from the Asansol Court has sent cases back to our departmental manager to settle amicably with the parties, and he has done so and the Court has been entirely satisfied.

E-489. For example, how can the management come to know that there is bribery and corruption going on unless you have got a machinery to ascertain the various points of discontent of the workers?—I claim that we have that machinery in force now. The workers are encouraged to go to their departmental managers and if they are not satisfied with the decision of these managers they are encouraged to come to me as some have done.

E-490. May I suggest that a fresh attempt be made to enquire about the working of joint works committees and to start these committees in your workshops?—We will consider.

E-491. Have you got a regular system of training the children of the *non-badralok* class?—We have a number of apprentices of that class and we encourage them to come forward.

E-492. On the question of indebtedness of your employees, did you ever make an attempt to start a co-operative credit society?—Yes. I personally was instrumental in making an attempt to start co-operative societies. We have it in force in several of our departments, and the higher officials thought that instead of a number of societies there should be one society, but I strongly objected to that on the ground that if you had one big main society you would have to go in for outsiders to carry on the work, and there was a possible chance of money being taken away; whereas in the small way in which we have it working now in some departments the men are all known, their needs are known and the society is run by themselves. For instance, we have it in force in the chemist department, in the drawing office department, in the accounts department and in the stores department.

E-493. Did the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal, communicate his advice to you to start a co-operative society?—He did.

E-494. Did you respond to it?—Yes, we did follow it in many departments, but so far as the labour was concerned it was not a feasible proposition.

E-495. Have you ever thought of starting a co-operative stores shop?—We have.

E-496. Have you got one running now?—We have a dairy farm.

E-497. You have not got one for the supply of food-stuffs?—We have tried to do that and we found that the labour and also the shop-keepers at present in the bazaar were very much against it. We have altered our system of bazaar arrangements. Previously shop-keepers were allowed to come into the bazaar to build their own shops. We had great difficulty in getting rid of these people if required. Recently we have built two new shops which have been given out on registered lease; if the shop-keepers do not comply with the rules of the lease we have power to turn them out.

E-498. How can you control the prices of food-stuffs?—They are based entirely on published Calcutta prices plus one anna.

E-499. But can any one rely on the published Calcutta retail prices?—I think they are published in the Calcutta Gazette.

E-500. You pay your workers monthly wages, do you not?—Yes.

E-501. Have you ever thought of making weekly payments?—We consider that the present system is the best. As I have explained to the Chairman, we consider it the best from the point of view of being able to control payments.

E-502. Have you ascertained the fact that the weekly payment is conducive to economy in that the shop-keepers will not be required to charge higher prices for the supply of food-stuffs because the workers will be able to make payments once a week?—I do not admit that.

E-503. *Mr. Tassie*: You say that most of your labour comes from the country round about your works?—Yes, the casual labour.

E-504. The other labour comes from a distance?—Yes.

E-505. Do you find that there is a tendency as years go on for the labour to give up connexion with their country and become more permanent and absolutely industrial workers?—We have found that by giving them better conditions their tendency is to bring their families and settle down.

E-506. You are encouraging them to become industrial workers and to cut off their connexion from their land because from your point of view that is the best thing to do?—We do not encourage them to give up their land; we encourage them to be thrifty and to continue cultivation so that when they are old they may go and settle down on their land.

E-507. You encourage them to keep in touch with their country?—The leave facilities that we give, enable them to go to their country. If our permanent workers want leave, say, for two months we very often give them leave and permit them to go.

E-508. *The Chairman*: You have a system of recognized leave?—It is recognized in so far as that they do not get any privileges except that their job is open for them when they come back.

E-509. It is not treated as leaving their work if they go to their country with your permission?—No.

E-510. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of training the children of the *mistri* class, do you find that when they are educated they are inclined not to take to their fathers' job?—We have found considerable difficulty in that direction. We find that the tendency for a *mistri's* son, when he is educated, is to become a contractor or a *baboo*, and we discourage that as much as possible. I have instances where I have actually taken these boys, against their fathers' advice, into the workshops and they have turned out to be good skilled workers; these boys with a little amount of education and with the natural ability which they inherit from their parents turn out to be our best workers.

E-511. But the tendency of the educated boys of that class, unless some such steps were taken, would be to go into the *baboo* class which would reduce the number of your mechanical workers?—Yes.

E-512. As regards bribes, is it not a fact that the labour take it for granted that there must be a certain amount of bribery, because it is the custom, and that so long as it is moderate they see no harm in it?—That is so. We keep it down to the absolute minimum.

E-513. You do not think the labourers would object as long as you keep it at a reasonable degree, and that if it were moderate you will not find anybody to report even if you wanted them to?—Quite so.

E-514. As regards the payment of wages, the system you have adopted of making payments through the Cash Section is a guard against the *labourers being cheated by foremen and people like that?*—Yes.

E-515. Unless you have an organization such as you have you feel that a good portion of the amount might not reach the hands of the labourer at all?—We have found that where we had to do work in a hurry, and people could not come to the office for receiving payment, money has gone in a wrong direction.

E-516. Of course, with the European labour the case is different because a European labourer can protect himself while an Indian labourer cannot?—That is so.

E-517. That is why this intricate system of accounting and paying is necessary in the works in India?—We separated the system purposely in order that there might be no combination.

E-518. *Mr. Ahmed*: I think your only objection to weekly payment is that you will have to engage more people for disbursement of pay because you will be paying four times a month; otherwise you are ready and willing to pay your workers every week?—My point was that it will interfere with the work. Our plant being a continuous process plant it is difficult for us to arrange for these people to be absent from their work more frequently than is absolutely necessary.

E-519. Can you find any method by means of which you can, without interfering with the work, make weekly payments?—I do not think it is possible without interfering with the work.

E-520. Have you any knowledge of instances of firms in this country who make weekly payments?—No.

E-521. Have you any knowledge of payment in Lancashire or in England?—I have knowledge of payment in England.

E-522. Would you agree to follow that system here?—If you can give me the British workmen then I might be able to get a scheme whereby it would be workable.

E-523. On the question of co-operative societies, will you tell us whether these societies advance money to your workers at a low rate of interest?—I have already said that the co-operative societies are open only to the educated classes and not to the workers.

E-524. Is it not a fact that generally your workers are indebted?—Yes.

E-525. Have you taken any steps to help them with advances in order that they may clear off their debts?—What we have done is to discourage money-lenders coming into our place.

E-526. *The Chairman*: Mr. Ahmed's point is whether you have any co-operative credit society?—No.

E-527. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you be in favour of starting a co-operative credit society which will be to the benefit of your workers?—I would favour it if it were workable, but I do not think it is workable with our uneducated labour.

E-528. On the question of rest interval, you said that the workers go to the bazaar for taking rest and their meal. Do you not think that it would be better if you could give them a room in the workshop itself where they can take rest?—I do not think they would use it, because the company has provided houses next door to the works, and the people are at liberty to go to their homes.

E-529. But in the case of casual labour would it not be advisable to provide for them a rest room in the workshop?—I do not think that they would use it because they have to get their food from the bazaar.

E-530. Can you not make provision for supplying food at a small payment?—If it were necessary we would have done it, but we have not considered it necessary.

E-531. With regard to casual labourers you said that they come from the villages and are not quite familiar with the work. Is it not a fact that they work continuously for 10, 20 or 30 years except that they do not work for two or three months in a year?—These people are residents in the surrounding villages and they come to us whenever they want to make money.

E-532. How is it you say that they are not efficient even though they work for such a long period as 10 or 20 years?—They do not come for years; they are only casual labour; they work for a day or two days and then go back.

E-533. Do you mean to say that they only work for two days and go away?—They keep changing. They are not permanent. They may go for employment on railway construction works, in brick-making works or in quarry works.

E-534. When they come to you for work they learn something, is it not?—These people are only employed in loading work; they are not employed on any operation work.

E-535. Do you mean to say that these people are agriculturists and cannot do any work which an industrial labourer would do?—Their mainstay is agriculture; they are agricultural people.

E-536. How do you know that they are agricultural people? Do you mean to say that all the Indians are cultivators and there is no industrial worker in India?—I know that these people are agricultural workers, and they are casual labourers, because of the district they come from, and also they are known to us.

Mr. Ahmed: Known to you because they worked previously?

E-537. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In your memorandum you say: "Full advantage is taken of all accommodation available" and that all quarters are provided rent free. In the case of workers to whom you do not supply quarters, do they get an allowance?—We take care of the whole of our permanent labourers.

E-538. They all have quarters?—Yes. We do not provide for casual labourers. What was really intended by that sentence was that there was a certain amount of competition in getting family quarters as against bachelor quarters.

E-539. Can you tell us how many beds has your hospital got?—I should think we have got about 40—two wards of 20 beds each.

E-540. How many in-patients would you have in a year both on account of sickness and accidents?—I think the average number would be about six or seven at a time in the hospital.

E-541. Out of 40 beds you have never had more than six or seven beds occupied?—No.

E-542. Is that because the workers do not like going to a hospital?—Our work is of a very dangerous nature, and we are liable to get accidents, and therefore we have provided sufficient accommodation.

E-543. You keep these 40 beds for accident cases?—Yes.

E-544. You do not keep these for illness?—Illness is really attended to in their own homes, but cases of acute fever where people are really bad and want proper nursing and attention are brought to the hospital.

E-545. We went round your allied works in Howrah and found that they have some canteens for the use of their workers. I was wondering why their workers would like such canteens while your workers would not. Is there a difference in the class of workers?—I think the main reason is that the majority of our workers have houses on the spot and they go to their homes for food; in Howrah they have no accommodation near to the works; their people are scattered over a wide area. I would like to mention that we have now made provision for canteen arrangements. We used to have trouble with temporary stall-holders coming into the works and selling sweetmeats and keeping our men off their work. Now we have provided a big shop which is outside the work gates and we are giving our men facilities to go out and buy things.

E-546. It is leased, is it not?—Yes, rented.

E-547. You say: "Quality of food in the bazaar is under our regular supervision and control." How is that supervision carried out?—The whole of the town is under my direct control.

E-548. But you personally cannot run the bazaar?—The officers running that particular branch are personally supervised by me.

E-549. What I really want to know is what machinery you have for this purpose?—We have the medical side; they look after the whole of the sanitary arrangements. We have a town engineer who looks after the whole of the water-supply and the building part of the town. We have a *zamindari* manager who looks after the land questions connected with the bazaar, and the labour superintendent is responsible for the allotment of the quarters in the town.

E-550. It is really the *zamindari* manager who controls the bazaar?—The leases are signed by the company on the advice of the *zamindari* manager.

E-551. We have had evidence put before us that although Indian labour, both skilled and unskilled, is definitely inferior to European western labour, yet, expressed in cost of efficiency, Indian skilled labour is in general slightly more efficient than European western labour, while unskilled labour similarly expressed is definitely more efficient. Would you agree with that statement?—No.

E-552. The idea is that the loss that you make in your work efficiency is made up by the low wages that are paid?—I do not think so.

E-553. You have not found that your cost per ton in labour is less than in western countries?—No; we have found it to be more in some cases.

E-554. Would you say the same thing in the case of unskilled labour?—No. From an economic point of view it sometimes pays one to employ unskilled labour as against mechanical handling.

E-555. You might agree that in the case of unskilled labour it might be advantageous?—Yes. I will give you an instance. We employ men on lifting raw materials from stock; for that labour we pay the contractor a flat rate per ton. The tonnage we have to pick up varies from time to time and therefore we have not installed any mechanical handling plant. We could have installed an expensive plant which would deal with our requirements, but that mechanical plant might be lying idle for the greater portion of the year; we would thus have to bear a heavy interest charge.

E-556. You have that advantage over the west?—Yes.

E-557. In the case of skilled labour you do not agree?—No.

E-558. *The Chairman*: I am not quite clear to what you referred when you were speaking of the town. Is that town on your own property; did

you acquire the *zamindari* rights over the whole area?—The town is entirely our own property, and that is the land which is being acquired by Government now.

E-559. Was the town there before you began your work?—It was paddy fields.

E-560. It is a town practically of your own people?—Yes, of employees on our works or the Indian Standard Wagon Company which is a sister company, and of people engaged in the supply of food-stuffs to the labourers.

E-561. And that is the reason why you supervise the bazaar, as also the sanitary and medical arrangements throughout the town?—Yes; and also we consider it to our interest to have our labour contended and well looked after from the point of view of health and efficiency.

E-562. And also on medical grounds, I presume, because by that means you reduce the incidence of cholera and other diseases?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Lt.-Col. B. H. BROWN, Superintendent, Ishapore Rifle Factory; Mr. R. T. DUNDERDALE, Superintendent, Metal and Steel Factory; Mr. A. W. CONNOLLY, Works Manager, Rifle Factory; Mr. R. C. FRAIN, Works Manager, Metal and Steel Factory; Lt.-Col. E. W. SEWELL, I.M.S., Medical Officer to Factories and Estate; and Mr. K. K. CHAKARAVARTY, Labour Bureau Supervisor, Rifle Factory.

E-563. *The Chairman*: For the purpose of record perhaps you will remind me of the number of men that are on the average employed in the Rifle Factory and in the Metal and Steel Factory in 1929?—(*Colonel Brown*) The average number of men on the roll is 3,569 in the Rifle Factory. (*Mr. Dunderdale*) With regard to the Metal and Steel Factory, about 1,700 men.

E-564. You tell us, with regard to the character of your labour at the Rifle Factory, that about 45 per cent comes from local villages?—(*Colonel Brown*) About 40 per cent from local villages.

E-565. And from other districts of Bengal, you have 14 per cent?—Yes.

E-566. And then you have a number from Bihar, the United Provinces, Punjab, Orissa and other provinces?—Yes.

E-567. We are particularly interested in what you tell us in your memorandum, of the successful institution in your factory of a labour bureau since the year 1920. You tell us that it has been successful in stopping the promotion of the undeserving, and in giving a chance for promotion to the deserving, and that abuses in recruitment have ceased. Can you tell us a little more about your experience since you established this labour bureau? Particularly, I take it, you refer to the elimination of bribery?—There is one way of seeing whether bribery is going on. We keep a record of the turnover of labour; as soon as we see that the turnover in a particular section is going up we at once look for bribery, as it is usually the cause of discharge of or taking on labour, but beyond a few odds and ends of accusations which have proved untrue since I have been in the factory, there is only one case I have come across of bribery in three years.

E-568. We have been told in many places that bribery is ineradicable in Indian conditions. From what you tell us here you appear to have achieved a success?—Bribery has not come to my notice, and if it were there I should have probably found out some cases. We have a welfare committee who would very soon know about it and probably tell me.

E-569. It would come to our ears through the welfare committee?—I expect so; most things do.

E-570. But I take it that the essential point lies in the appointment of a labour bureau with a really capable and efficient labour superintendent?—I think it depends practically entirely on the character of the labour employment manager who runs the labour bureau, and who must be an Indian.

E-571. As to the possibility of practical schemes, you recommend the introduction of a labour bureau in each mill or factory with a man of good education and personality. That is, what you mean is a man who is responsible for the engagement of labour and who goes straight to the head of the mill or factory without having to go through any *sardars* or overmen, and who is in constant touch with the supreme authority, as you call it, in the factory?—Yes. All labour bureau cases come to me direct through the labour employment manager. He sees to all these cases of discharge or taking men on. They send down to the labour bureau and say "I want an A-grade fitter", or "a B-grade turner", and they supply them, and if he wants to discharge him he sends him to the labour bureau with a note saying "I want this man discharged". He is usually given two more chances before he is finally discharged, and I discharge him.

E-572. Does the labour employment manager see you once a week or once a day?—He is generally in my office two or three times a day.

E-573. So that there is the closest contact by that method between you and the whole labour force?—Yes.

E-574. You lay stress in your memorandum on his being a man of good education and personality. May I ask where you found a man of the requisite qualifications, and what were the qualifications? We understand that the supply of such men is not very large at present?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) I think in selecting a man who would run the whole show, academic qualification should be the first consideration, and engineering qualification the second; because I think a man with a higher academical qualification will be beyond all petty temptations which are quite possible in holding such a post. After passing the M.A. examination at Calcutta University, I joined the factory when the apprenticeship scheme was started and I joined the evening classes in order to get myself acquainted with the engineering side of the matter. When this scheme of recruitment was first started some men were astonished to find that they could get free access to the head of the department. It was very difficult at first to convince the men that there was no necessity for them to pay bribes. The system was introduced of allowing all the workmen to lodge complaints direct instead of through the head of the section. Every man is at liberty to report to the employment manager direct for any advice, either at tiffin time or after 4-30 p.m. If it is within the power of the head of the section to deal with the matter, he does so, but if it is something beyond his power the employment manager reports to the supreme head for the necessary action.

E-575. Am I right in stating that you first of all gained a university qualification; then you turned your mind to industrial work; you took employment in this factory and you obtained practical experience of machinery; then when the labour bureau was initiated you were appointed as employment manager?—Yes.

E-576. You make the suggestion that there should be such a labour bureau and such an officer in each mill or factory. If the demand arose, do you think the Universities of India would be capable of meeting the demand for the supply of suitable men?—(*Mr. Connolly*) Provided that the men in charge of the mill or factory were competent to realize that they had the proper type of men. The University authorities themselves could provide the material, but they would not know whether that material was suitable.

E-577. You think there would be a supply, but it would need to be sifted?—Yes, it would need to be very carefully sifted.

E-578. Does the employment manager keep any record of the number of small grievances which come to him and how they are dealt with?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) Every complaint is recorded and filed.

E-579. Do the workmen come freely to you with all their troubles?—Yes, and not only in regard to factory affairs, but also in regard to their family troubles. Sometimes a wife submits a petition saying that her husband was sending her no money. We cannot legally force the husband to do so, but I find that if I talk to the husband about the matter, telling him that he is under an obligation to send the money, he authorizes me to send it. They also consult me about private quarrels which they do not want to take to Court.

E-580. I understand that they send very large remittances through you?—Yes. (*Colonel Brown*) In 1922 they sent Rs. 2,025; in 1929 they sent Rs. 47,120.

E-581. How many languages of the people do you speak?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) I speak Hindi, Bengalee, English and a little Urdu.

E-582. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How is money actually remitted?—(*Colonel Brown*) By money order.

E-583. You merely do what the man could do himself if he went to the post office?—Yes.

E-584. *The Chairman*: Do you also write letters for the workmen to their relatives in the country?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) No.

E-585. I suppose you also have some duties in connexion with housing?—Yes.

E-586. I do not know how you carry out single-handed all these duties which are tabled in the memorandum?—(*Colonel Brown*) He is not single-handed. He has a staff of five. Here is a list of his staff. (Handing in list.)

E-587. You give under six columns the duties carried out by the labour bureau; the second column is headed "Village Administration". What does the employment manager do in the way of village administration?—(*Colonel Brown*) There are a lot of durwans there whose duty it is to keep order. There is also a conservancy staff to keep the place clean. Although this section is under the labour bureau there is a supervisor in charge. The allotment of quarters comes directly under the labour bureau.

E-588. The employment manager is the chief officer dealing with all the subjects which are detailed under this head?—Yes.

E-589. Will you please tell us something about your welfare committee?—The welfare committee consists of thirty members. Every shop is represented. They elect their own representatives. There is a president, a well-educated Indian, Mr. Dutta. The committee meets on the first Saturday in every month, and any questions which are likely to cause trouble are referred to it, when the committee seeks the views of the men and makes recommendations. For instance we are building a canteen for mid-day meals. The plans were submitted to the welfare committee in order that we might have its views on the arrangements made for the different castes. The welfare committee is most useful in that way.

E-590. Does your employment manager sit on the welfare committee?—Only when invited.

E-591. I gather from your paper that you have in your works a system of recognized leave absence. How is that arranged?—The monthly-paid men are allowed 30 days leave in the year on full pay. The ordinary labourer under certain circumstances can be granted leave with pay, as for instance if he is segregated on account of disease.

E-592. I am thinking of the man who wishes to go back to his country home for the harvest?—He can always get leave, but he does not get any pay.

E-593. When they apply for leave, and leave is given to them, are their places kept open for them when they come back?—Yes, they are not actually struck off the rolls until we have written to them and have received no reply for three months.

E-594. They are not treated as absentees when they go home for harvest?—No.

E-595. Therefore a man who went regularly home to his village each year for a number of years would be counted as one of your permanent workers?—Yes; he would be marked up as "absent with leave" instead of "absent without leave".

E-596. You do distinguish in your registers between "absence with leave" and "absence without leave"?—Yes, and also absence for sickness.

E-597. Do you have a separate column for absence for sickness?—Yes.

E-598. Do you follow that up with any increment for regularity of service in the case of men coming back year by year?—There is a rule on the subject that the service increment will be given automatically in twelve months for such men only whose absence from all causes does not exceed fifteen days in the year, and in eighteen months, in cases of sickness, not

exceeding twenty days; the men who are absent more than twenty days will not be eligible for the increment. Long leave is sanctioned in the case of men whose record of service justifies such consideration, and such leave will not count as absence in the award of increment. Long leave will not normally be sanctioned in less than eleven months service.

E-599. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Supposing a man wants two months leave for harvest every year. Would he fail to get his increment then?—In such case he would not get his increment.

E-600. *The Chairman*: You tell us that your co-operative society was started in 1921. I gather that also comes within the sphere of the employment manager?—The co-operative society has its own committee of management, and its own secretary.

E-601. You tell us that the institution of that co-operative society has freed the workmen from the money-lender?—Yes.

E-602. You say that the money-lenders who used to be found outside the factory gates, especially on pay days, have now disappeared; it almost seems to be too complete a success to be real?—I have not seen a money-lender there for six months.

E-603. May we put it as high as this: that you have almost got rid of the money-lender trouble as far as your workmen are concerned?—(*Mr. Connolly*) So far as the *Kabulis* are concerned. Colonel Lenfesty knew that these *Kabulis* were hiding round the corner; he hunted them out, and if he found a workman owed money to them he "vetted" the *Kabulis'* claim and said "We will finish up this debt once and for all". The debt was liquidated, and then he said to the *Kabuli* "Now clear out, and do not come in these lines any more; you are on Government land here, and if you come again we will hand you over to the police."

E-604. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Could we have a return of the amount of loans outstanding since you started your co-operative society, the amount of their debts and the amount which the sureties have to find?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) We took a census in 1920 of the total debt of all the workmen, and we found it amounted to six lakhs.

E-605. *The Chairman*: What does your provident society show in the way of total loans at the present time?—Rs. 1,36,760.

E-606. Dealing with industrial efficiency of workers you tell us that the efficiency has increased since 1920 by 27 per cent. How do you support that?—(*Colonel Brown*) The average earnings per month in 1920 were Rs. 26·1; in 1928 they were Rs. 32·1. That is without any alteration in the piece-work rate. That is per man.

E-607. Is that attributable wholly to the personal efficiency of the workers?—No, not wholly; some of it might be attributed to the management.

E-608. Has the rate been altered?—No, not radically.

E-609. Or speeded?—No.

E-610. The piece rates have remained the same, but the earnings per man have increased since 1920 by no less than 27 per cent?—Yes.

E-611. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Do you mean to say that since 1920 you have not increased the rate for piece-work?—The piece-work rates were revised in 1920. Since then we have not altered them.

E-612. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Yesterday the Commission saw some of your new houses which are for the better class of operatives. Can you let us know what is the cost per quarter, what rent you charge and what the economic rent would be to give a return of 5 per cent?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) I have here all the particulars of these quarters.

North land.

Type of quarters.	N.	P.	Q.
Final layout	46	115	130
Actually built	4	10	70
Cost per quarter, built in blocks	5,660	4,741	2,150
Cost of land per quarter	1,060	880	440
Cost of roads and drains per quarter	580	450	225
Cost of sewage disposal per quarter	430	430	430
Cost of road lighting per quarter	90	90	90
Cost of water-supply installation per quarter (includes tube wells)	148	148	148
Total ..	7,968	6,739	3,483

East Land.

Type of quarters.	N	P	Q	R	S
Peace requirement	..	..	..	172	344
War requirement	22	36	36	237	1,297
Total requirement	22	36	36	409	1,641
Cost per quarter, built in blocks	5,660	4,741	2,150	1,500	1,000
Cost of land per quarter	695	571	283	133	90
Cost of roads and drains per quarter ..	97	97	97	97	97
Cost of sewage disposal per quarter ..	65	65	65	65	65
Cost of road lighting per quarter	..	..	..	..	..
Cost of water-supply installation per quarter.	130	130	130	130	130
Total ..	6,647	5,604	2,725	1,925	1,382

Rents.

Quarters.	Rent per month. Rs. A. P.
N.	11 4 0
P.	5 10 0
Q.	2 8 0
R.	1 9 0
S.	2 0 0
Zanana (female) (old lines)	(from 2 men Re. 1 each) 1 4 0
Single (old lines)	1 0 0

E-613. Can you work out, including depreciation, what would be the economic rent to give a return of 5 per cent?—I will get that worked out.

E-614. With regard to the comparative efficiency between Indian labour and European labour, is your labour cost per rifle or per unit less than the cost for a similar article at Home?—Our figure is Rs. 64-11-0 per rifle in 1927-28. I will try to get out a comparative statement and send it in.

E-615. In your canteen arrangements, do you supply cooked food?—(*Colonel Brown*) The canteen is being built at present, but we intend to supply cooked food for which the workman will have to pay. There will be three kitchens—one for Brahmans, one for non-Brahmans and one for Muhammadans.

E-616. Is your co-operative society one single society or is it a number of small societies?—It is one society only.

E-617. Do you choose as guarantors those who come from the same district as the borrower?—Not necessarily. Any one who has shares of a certain amount can come forward and guarantee a loan.

E-618. Does the borrower find any difficulty in finding guarantors?—Some of them do. They can mortgage land or jewellery.

E-619. Could we have the number of refusals for loans per year?—Yes. I will send that in.

E-620. Do you supply raw materials for food in the way of rice or other stores?—(*Mr. Connolly*) We supply rice, flour, ghee, mustard oil, etc.

E-621. Do you find that your workers patronize your co-operative stores for foodstuffs rather than patronize the dealers in the bazaar? We have been told that workers patronize private dealers either because they get their foodstuffs in the form in which they like it, or that they get more credit from the bazaar shopkeeper?—(*Mr. Chakravarti*) We have not experienced that sort of thing.

E-622. In your organization for production, are you overstaffed? Could you produce more, if necessary, with the same labour force?—(*Mr. Connolly*) We are permitted to do that in mass production rifle manufacture. We manufacture a large number of components, and we are permitted, under Colonel Brown's administrative orders, to produce more of one component than another. As time goes on, we can balance them up.

E-623. You make to stock, in other words?—Yes.

E-624. If you got an increased demand, would you be able to increase the output from 67,000 to a higher figure without taking on extra men; that is to say, could the present staff, by getting more money, increase the production?—(*Colonel Brown*) Our limit is 67,000.

E-625. If you had to produce more rifles, would you have to take on more staff?—(*Mr. Connolly*) Yes. Above the 70,000 mark—assuming a 25 per cent systematic overtime.

E-626. I understand that there is a likelihood in the near future of the present type of rifle being altered?—That is the case at Home, but India has said that she will not adopt it until it has been tried out.

E-627. If the new type were decided on for India, would you have temporarily to reduce your production largely, while you were reorganizing your factory?—Yes.

E-628. Would that mean that you would have to discharge a large number of men, or put them on short time?—We would have to discharge them, because there would not be the machines on which they could work. They would return to the land or get jobs elsewhere as coolies. We should have to keep the skilled craftsmen, even if there was no work for them.

E-629. Are those skilled craftsmen at present paid by time or piece-work?—Piece-work.

E-630. Then you would have to turn them on to time?—Yes.

E-631. *Mr. Ahmed*: Does your daily-paid labour get any leave or holiday with pay?—(*Colonel Brown*) No. They only get leave with pay, if they are segregated on account of disease or when going up to Shillong for anti-rabic treatment or accidents.

E-632. Do these people, who have been working in the factory for years, get any pension or gratuity?—They get a gratuity out of the fine fund, if they have more than five years' service, which sometimes amounts to as much as six months' pay. There is no pension. The question of a provident fund has been referred by the Master-General, Ordnance, to the Government of India, and there is some hope of its going through.

E-633. Why do you pay on a daily system instead of per month?—(*Mr. Connolly*) Because otherwise India would have to pay a very much higher price for a rifle. You have to train men specially to realize that they are under a duty to give a proper return for a monthly salary. I am absolutely certain that no group of illiterate men has yet reached the stage when they will give the proper return which they should give to their country for monthly wages. That applies not only to India but all other countries in the world.

E-634. Are you against the workers in your factory forming a trade union?—(*Colonel Brown*) That is a matter of Government policy.

E-635. Do you employ teachers to educate the children of your workers?—We have a primary school with 240 boys; a technical school with 85 boys; a boy-artisan school with 60 boys; and Mr. Dunderdale has an infant school with 50 infants.

E-636. *Mr. Tassie*: Does your labour manager deal with all cases of complaints?—If they are small complaints and he can settle them with the foreman, they do not come to me; but a workman can always insist on coming to me if he wants to.

E-637. Did your European foreman co-operate at the very beginning with your labour officer?—(*Mr. Connolly*) At first every body both European and Indian opposed the scheme. It was something strange and they feared the unknown; but having got familiar with it, I do not think any Indian or European would care to see it abolished.

E-638. But you had trouble at first?—Yes.

E-639. On your welfare committee the lowest paid man is represented, more so than the highly paid staff?—(*Colonel Brown*) Yes.

E-640. Would you say that your labour is superior to the jute mill labour?—(*Mr. Connolly*) I think the machinist is of about the same class, but the craftsman is unquestionably a better class. You do not have to employ a man who can work to 1/1000th of an inch in the jute mills.

E-641. Do you find that when the boys leave school, they go into the factory to do manual work, or do you find that they prefer to go into clerical life?—(*Colonel Brown*) They are all wanting now to do manual work, because they are beginning to realize that there are no vacancies for them as clerks and that they can get better jobs as practical men.

E-642. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: What is the constitution of your works committee; how are the members elected?—They are elected by the different shops in the factory. Each shop elects one or two members according to the number in that shop.

E-643. How often do you hold meetings of this committee?—There are no regular meetings, but generally a meeting is held on the first Saturday in the month. In addition to that, meetings are held on special occasions.

E-644. Is there a secretary whose duty it is to note down grievances of different workmen and prepare an agenda thereon?—Yes.

E-645. Have you any of the minutes of the committee here?—No, they are not here.

E-646. I take it that disputes and questions of holidays, recreations, etc., have not been discussed in this committee?—Yes. Anything on which they are capable of advising I refer to them.

E-647. Do you debar the question of wages being discussed in the committee?—If there was any grievance it would be brought forward. There is nothing to prevent it.

E-648. I take it that no serious effort has been made to institute proper Whitley councils among the workmen?—No.

E-649. Did you receive the report of the Bengal Government as far back as 1921 recommending workshops such as yours to start these Whitley councils?—(*Mr. Connolly*) I did not happen to be the superintendent of the factory, and I could not have received such a report.

E-650. With regard to the strike in 1921, did the workers not actually forward to you a copy of their grievances in writing, and did you not hear that the chief cause of the strike was the question of wages, the workers wanting a 20 per cent increase in wages?—No, I did not hear that that was the chief cause of the strike. I was not one of those who were behind the scene.

E-651. Did the workers not actually submit to you their grievances in writing?—They did not send their grievances to me. I was not the superintendent of the rifle factory.

E-652. How did that strike collapse? Were not the workmen starved into submission?—(*Colonel Brown*) I have not the details.

E-653. *Miss Power*: Is there any compulsion with regard to the attendance of children at your primary school?—No. The number of children attending the day and night schools is about 240.

E-654. What sort of propaganda have you carried out in order to induce the parents to send their children to school?—They are ready enough to send them without any propaganda.

E-655. Has it anything to do with the security of tenure of your work—people in their jobs?—No. Whether they thought their tenure was secure or not they would take the opportunity of sending their children to school.

E-656. We have been told elsewhere that there is great reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to school?—I think that must be due to their being suspicious of something which they do not understand.

E-657. I take it that these pupils who go to your school are all boys?—Yes.

E-658. Has any effort been made to educate the girls?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) The infant school takes girls as well as boys. When they leave the infant school the girls apparently cease to take any further interest in schooling, or else they are dragged off to do household occupations.

E-659. *Mr. Clow*: There is a very large percentage of Bengalis in the one factory and a small percentage in the other. Is that due to the differing types of work?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) Yes. The local Bengali has not the physique to stand in front of a furnace or melting platform.

E-660. Are the employees in the steel factory equally ready to send their children to school?—I do not think the ones who melt and who work on the furnaces have any objection, but they are not so interested as the people

employed in our heavy repair shops and in our tool room, that is, fitters and turners. In fact the people in my factory have some difficulty in getting their children into Col. Brown's school, because all the vacancies are taken up. The consequence is that we have not so many people in that school as Col. Brown's factory has. If there were more school accommodation there would be even more children going to school from our factory.

E-661. *Miss Power*: Why can your factory not have a school of its own?—It is chiefly a question of money and convenience. The present school occupies all the vacant space available. It could not be enlarged at present as a physical proposition.

E-662. *The Chairman*: On the point of the willingness of boys to attend school, I take it that these boys are not of an age when they could be earning money in your factory?—Some of them are.

E-663. You do find that even some who could be earning money go to school because their parents desire them to do so?—Yes, especially in the case of the more skilled men.

E-664. *Miss Power*: Is it preponderatingly from among the Bengalis that the pupils come?—Yes.

E-665. *Mr. Clow*: Did you pay compensation for accidents before the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force?—(*Colonel Brown*) We could always give a grant out of the fine fund.

E-666. Did not the Government regulations provide for the grant of compensation before the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed?—Before the Workmen's Compensation Act the Civil Service Regulations governed the matter.

E-667. The reason I am asking the question is that yours is the first memorandum in which we have had the statement that employees were attempting self-mutilation in order to secure compensation?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) We found that in our factory. It is dying out now. The workmen discovered that it was more painful and less paying than they thought.

E-668. What was the nature of the mutilation?—They used to put their finger into the press for making small arms, cartridge-cases, and allowed the punch to come down on it.

E-669. But a mere puncture would not cause disablement?—It would carry off the top articulation of the finger and crush the bone.

E-670. Have you had a number of cases of that sort?—Several.

E-671. *The Chairman*: Then they were not so ignorant that they did not know of the legislation?—They were getting the hang of it. They did not realize that the compensation for that sort of injury would be so small as it was—(*Colonel Brown*) The compensation was paid under section 291 of the Civil Service Regulations.

E-672. *Mr. Clow*: That did not cover all the employees?—Where they were not covered we gave them something out of the fine fund.

E-673. Your fine fund seems to provide for a good deal. What is the amount of it?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) My fine fund runs to about Rs. 4,000 a year.

E-674. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What is the cost of production of a rifle in your factory?—(*Colonel Brown*) The cost in 1927-28 was Rs. 6,411, including everything, all overhead charges and even part of the salaries of the Headquarter Staff at Simla.

E-675. What is the cost of the same rifle imported into India from abroad?—Rs. 92 in 1927-28.

E-676. That is to say, your factory produces rifles of the same quality and of the same calibre at about 25 per cent less than the imported article?—Yes.

E-677. In answer to the Chairman your labour officer stated that at one time a census of the debts of the workmen was taken, and that it came to 6 lakhs of rupees. When was that census taken?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) In 1920.

E-678. Has any similar census been taken subsequently?—(*Colonel Brown*) No.

E-679. Why? It would throw a great deal of light on the effect of the various measures which have been taken in the meantime for the benefit of

labour if it could be shown that the total amount of debt is considerably less than 6 lakhs?—It has not been done, but it would be worth doing from that point of view.

E-680. *The Chairman*: Would it be practicable for you to take a corresponding census after these nine years which would show the extent to which your labour bureau, including your co-operative society, had been successful in reducing the indebtedness of your people?—Yes, we can do that.

E-681. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You say that now that the apprentice and boy artisan schemes are in force there are facilities for young Indians to get training and gradual promotion to supervising appointments. When was this scheme of apprenticeship introduced?—In 1921.

E-682. What is the total number of apprentices who have passed out trained?—Forty-seven in four years.

E-683. What has become of them?—They are nearly all in the factory.

E-684. Can you let us have, in the form of a statement, the total number of apprentices who have passed out trained, and what has become of them?—Yes.

E-685. You refer to gang piece-work. Will you explain what you mean by that?—In a gang there are so many men on one operation. Take the body of a rifle. There are 26 points on which that is paid for after certain operations. There are some 300 or more operations altogether, but up to a certain point they are done by a gang of fifteen men. The number that are passed are paid for at a certain rate to the whole of the gang. At the end of the month you have got the attendance of the gang, and each man is rated at a certain day rate. From the day work rate and the time he has attended you find out what they would all have earned on day work. The rest of the money which is paid for that piece-work is profit—so much per cent on the total, and that is allocated to each man in proportion to what he has earned on day work.

E-686. The man whose daily wage is Re. 1, and the man whose daily wage is annas 14, and the man whose daily wage is 18 annas share in the profit on that principle?—In that proportion.

E-687. The profit is not uniformly divided amongst the fifteen men?—No, because one man is more skilled than another, and therefore he reserves more profit.

E-688. Is there no friction amongst them when they work in a gang: do they do their best to produce more so that their share of the profit might be larger; is that the spirit in which they work?—If a man in a gang did not work, the rest of the gang would soon tell the foreman, because they would be losing money, and the foreman would either make the man work or if he refuses to work he would be sent up for discharge.

E-689. His place in the gang would be filled by somebody else?—Yes.

E-690. Do many cases of that kind occur?—Very few.

E-691. As a general rule do they all work unitedly in order to show better results and earn more money?—That is so.

E-692. *The Chairman*: Do you fine your late comers?—Yes. Everybody who comes late is fined.

E-693. We have been told in some places that you cannot get the Indian worker to come to work except when he is pleased to do so: but clearly you have a system of discipline which seems to disprove that statement; what is the amount of your fine for lateness?—One-eighth of the day's pay.

E-694. For how many minutes late?—They are fined that amount if they are half a minute late.

E-695. What proportion on an average turn up late?—40 out of 3,600.

E-696. That shows that, by your system, you have established a punctuality which is rather remarkable and which shows that it is not impossible to teach the Indian workman the benefits of coming punctually to his work?—Lateness is recorded on their attendance cards which are kept with their records of service. Every workman who shows a full year's attendance with no lateness gets one share in the co-operative society, value Rs. 10, free. That is given to them out of the fine fund.

E-697. In addition to a fine for being late you give a bonus for good attendance and regularity?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTIETH MEETING

(PANEL NO. I.)

CALCUTTA.

Thursday, 6th February 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Major H. W. WAGSTAFF, M.C., R.E.
Lt.-Col. H. A. J. GIDNEY.
Mr. J. K. CHATTERJEE.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. G. R. DAIN, Agent, The Calcutta Tramways Company, Ltd.

E-698. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your experience?—I was at a public school in England and I took the Science and Engineering Triposes at Cambridge. I then served on the East Indian Railway from 1906 to 1926. I inaugurated and was in charge of the whole scheme of the Government of India for training and teaching railway servants. I was Principal of the Railway College at Chandausi subsequently removed to Dehra Dun and five subsidiary schools throughout India. I have been 24 years in this country except that I was away during the war.

E-699. Who engages your labour?—The head of the department. Monthly staff and labourers are taken on by the works manager.

E-700. Who dismisses them?—In the case of the traffic department, that is done by the traffic manager himself; no one else can do it. It is referred to me in a great many cases. In the case of the engineering department, the lower paid staff would be dismissed by the works manager while the senior staff would be dismissed by the Chief Engineer.

E-701. Has any individual workman a right of appeal?—Every workman in the whole organization has a right of appeal to me.

E-702. Do you get many appeals?—I get on an average one or two a day, including workmen's compensation claims.

E-703. Do you often reverse the decision of the traffic manager?—I have twice asked him to reverse his own decision which amounts to the same thing.

E-704. You give preference to men who are relatives and friends of existing employees?—Yes; it is the only way we can do it. There is no educational qualification. The main cause of dismissal or leaving the traffic department is cheating. Among the conductors cheating is almost continuous, the main method being to take half the price for a journey and issue no ticket. That is done especially early in the morning when the inspectors are fewer and late at night after many of the inspectors have gone off. I should be inclined to think there is a certain amount of cheating in the middle of the day; probably the only time when it does not happen is during rush hours.

E-705. Why do you give the traffic men holidays with pay while you do not give them to the engineering people who stay with you longer?—The conditions of the engineering staff are exactly the same as in all other engineering firms in Calcutta. It is recognized that the work of the tramway drivers and conductors is infinitely harder. It is an 8 hours a day as nearly as we can make it so, but it is a very hard and trying day. I am

afraid that is why they leave us more than they should. I offered the men to break the eight-hour shift into two shifts of four hours each. I took a referendum of the whole staff but out of the 2,000 men driving and conducting I had about 12 names in favour of splitting the shift.

E-706. *Mr. Cliff*: How many tram depots have you?—We have four main depots and four subsidiary depots.

E-707. Do your men live close to the depots?—The majority do; they live in what I consider to be disgraceful conditions.

E-708. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You do not provide any housing and they have to live in the insanitary *bustis*?—Yes.

E-709. You admit it would be an advantage if you provide housing?—Yes. I do not think it is a good policy for us to provide housing but from my own point of view I would like to provide housing. The reason why I cannot urge the Board to do so is that the company is coming to the end of its contract; at the end of this year our contract with the Corporation lapses and the Corporation have the right to purchase the tramway undertaking at 25 times the average net annual earnings, on a 4 per cent basis. After the end of this year, they have a right every seven years to purchase our undertaking on that basis. That being so, it is impossible for me to raise capital.

E-710. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you sought to alter this?—I have; two years ago I implored the Corporation to give me a long term of years so that I can raise money and build quarters. I do not believe in building quarters but I am prepared to do so. I said to the Corporation, with the approval of the Board, that if they would give us a long term of years which would enable us to set up a sinking fund and get new capital (which it would be easy to obtain), I would not only construct new lines but we would also share profits with them.

E-711. What reply did you get?—I have had no reply after two years' waiting. The present position is that after the end of this year we shall move into the 7-year periods. That means that our undertaking is stultified because I can raise no capital. We can pay our dividend and put to reserve a reasonable amount for depreciation but we can do nothing in the way of expansion. This state of things prevents the expansion of communications in Calcutta. The 30th June is the last day on which the Corporation can give the company notice that they intend to exercise their right of purchase at the end of this year. We are in exactly the same position as Lord Ashfield is in London. Another thing which prevents expansion is indiscriminate licensing of omnibuses and consequent duplication of services on routes in Calcutta. The police say that there are 750 omnibuses running in Calcutta but if you take a census you will find that there are 450 omnibuses on the road including 87 which are run by my concern. The remaining 360 odd omnibuses have 300 separate owners. It is a disgraceful state of affairs which has been brought about by the police indiscriminately licensing omnibuses on any route on which the tramways are rendering adequate service. For instance, on the Chitpore route we serve a narrow road by running a two-minute service, but the licensing authorities superimposed another two-minute omnibus service. The result is that none of us are making money on that route. I would willingly run many non-paying routes which ought to have been opened a long while ago. I maintained non-paying routes for a long time in Calcutta until the cream of our traffic was taken off the paying routes. Calcutta has become more and more congested because no new routes are being driven out to outlying areas.

E-712. Do the police issue licences?—Yes.

E-713. Who controls the police?—I think they come under the Home Member of Government.

E-714. I think the areas of which you are speaking are outside the area of the Calcutta Improvement Trust?—Yes; the area of the Calcutta Improvement Trust is practically the same as the area of the municipality; that area is disgracefully limited. The Improvement Trust have made great improvements in their area but they have done nothing towards taking up land outside and providing it with drainage and roads so that people may settle there and live in their own way. It is not desirable that people should be housed in *chawls* as they are in Bombay, because

that is not the way they want to live. Land and roads should be provided outside and drained; then the people should be left to build their own huts or capitalists should build and let houses.

E-715. Has the municipality the power to acquire land in those areas?—They certainly have power within the municipal area and Government have power to acquire land anywhere.

E-716. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many workmen's houses have the Improvement Trust built in connexion with their developments?—I think they have built three sets of *chawls* near Central Avenue.

E-717. *Mr. Cliff*: Is the land available at a reasonable price now?—Land three or four miles out, particularly on the Howrah side, can be purchased cheaply. Calcutta has been developed only on one side of the river. London would have done the same with only London Bridge. Of course more bridges will have to be built.

E-718. Have any schemes for transport been put before the Improvement Trust or Government?—Yes, there are two schemes, one on the north and one on the south. These schemes were put forward by the Tramway Committee about four years ago.

E-719. Why were they not adopted?—I presume because the whole of the transport arrangements of Calcutta are in such a state of chaos.

E-720. Have you as a company considered acquiring land and allowing your workers to build their own houses?—We have land on which we could build houses for them, but I am strongly opposed to building *chawls*. If we had capital I would prefer to obtain land outside and advance money to the people, as we do now, to enable them to build their own houses on their own land.

E-721. What standard of regularity of attendance do you require of your traffic employees in order to entitle them to 14 days' leave?—288 days' work in the year; we are lenient with regard to that; if a man has a good record we do not bother about absence for a day or two.

E-722. Do you dismiss a good many traffic men for cheating?—It is very bad; in fact it is disgraceful. I consider these cases very carefully; I have the accused man before me and I am careful to have his statement correctly translated. Sometimes I spend three hours with a man before I dismiss him.

E-723. Have you any power to prosecute passengers for evading payment of fares?—Yes, it is under the Tramways Act, not under the Indian Penal Code.

E-724. Do you ever prosecute your conductors and passengers?—We sometimes prosecute passengers; we practically never prosecute our own men; we defend our own men, but we never prosecute them.

E-725. In Calcutta what effect do you think the disturbance of family life has?—As far as we know there is very little venereal disease among our men. We have two highly qualified doctors. What venereal disease there is is mainly among the local Mussalmans; there is not much among the up-country Hindus.

E-726. *Colonel Russell*: Can you give us figures as to that?—I think I could collect a figure.

E-726-*a*. *Mr. Cliff*: Can inspectors read and write?—Yes.

E-727. Is your co-operative credit bank open to all employees?—The provident fund limit is wages of Rs. 20 a month, but any man can come and get an advance if the committee are satisfied with him as a borrower.

E-728. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why do you give an advance if you have no security?—If a man has three or four years' service we may look at his provident fund and see how much he has got there, but we have no real call on the provident fund. The real criterion is service.

E-729. *Mr. Cliff*: If you roster a man for six days' work and he works five out of the six days, does he have to go on working for six days before he gets a rest day?—The number of days he works is divided by six and one day is added for every six. It is left to the man's choice as to how he takes his rest. If he works for thirty days, a day is added to his pay for every sixth day.

E-730. It appears that 76 per cent of your drivers and conductors do not get more than Rs. 26 per month?—That would be so, owing to their short service.

E-731. 93 per cent do not get more than Rs. 28?—Yes.

E-732. Why are you not able to get a more permanent and stable traffic staff?—I should say it is entirely because they are an agricultural people who come from Bihar, and they will go home at certain times of the year whatever happens; even if they have five years' service and their provident fund is at stake they will go.

E-733. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If they all go home at the same time of the year, who carries on the tramways?—At certain times of the year we have a very difficult time; our services are short, and it is all we can do to keep going. April and October are the worst times.

E-734. *Mr. Cliff*: As a traffic operator I suppose you are not satisfied with that state of things?—I am not, but I have to take what I can get.

E-735. And I suppose the public are not satisfied if they get short service?—We have not let the public down so far.

E-736. Is there no new field from which you can build up a more regular force?—I might advertise, but if I advertised for 30 conductors I should get about 1,000 applicants.

E-737. I am wondering why you are content to go on from year to year with the staff which, in the main, does less than five years' service?—I am not content. Eighteen months ago I set up a provident fund; that may improve things, and it is in fact improving things to a certain extent.

E-738. The period of increment seems to be 16 years. If you shorten that period, would not that attract more stable labour?—It has already been shortened to some extent; it is better now than it was two years ago.

E-739. It actually takes 16 years to get the maximum?—There is nothing to prevent promotion to inspector in that time.

E-740. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many inspectors have you?—One hundred and forty-six. *Our difficulty is that we are struggling for existence in the teeth of unbridled competition encouraged by the Commissioner of Police. I do not think it is an inefficient service; in the middle of the day we carry a passenger ten miles for one anna, and at any time of the day we carry a passenger three miles for one anna.*

E-741. Mr. Cliff: What do the omnibuses charge?—They charge what they like. They have no fixed rates, and there is no control of them.

E-742. Apparently your omnibus workers work seven days a week while your tramway traffic staff only works six days a week?—That is so with regard to some of them; they do not get the advantages that the conductors and drivers of trams get.

E-743. Will you let us know the number of persons fined last year and the total amount of the fines?—Yes.

E-744. What have you to say as to delay in payment of wages?—The Commission might watch men being paid; every coin is rung on the ground, and it frequently takes 4 to 5 minutes to pay a man. To pay 100 men in this country takes four hours sometimes.

E-745. *Sir Alexander Murray*: No, I will undertake in a jute mill to pay 1,000 men inside an hour?—It cannot be done in Government service. The clerical work in this country in preparing pay-sheets is very slow. On the Great Western Railway, which is one of the most efficient railways in England, 400 clerks run the head office, while here on the East Indian Railway there are over 3,000 clerks doing the same work, and it is done at half the speed. At a railway booking office it would take you four to five minutes to get a ticket here whereas at Waterloo station in London an ordinary boy of 16 will hand out four tickets a minute and give change.

E-746. It apparently takes you 15 days after the end of the month to make up your books and pay your workers; when do you begin paying them?—We begin on the 15th of the month and it takes two to three days.

E-747. But does it take 15 days to make up the books?—There are deductions to work out, and many other things; it is just as bad on the railways.

E-748. With regard to the comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers and the extent to which comparisons are effected by standards of living and climate, what have you to say?—It seems to me to be a question of climate. Under western civilization we build up our supervising and upper staff from the lower grades. It is the same in society; but this country seems to be stratified, and there is difficulty in the men from below rising; for that reason we have never built up a foreman class. If that is a social order brought about by climatic conditions we cannot alter it. If it is merely a social state of affairs brought about by other considerations, then to my mind primary education is the only thing that can correct the present state of affairs. We must educate from below. We began in the wrong way; we began to educate the middle class in order to produce clerks to keep our businesses going, instead of educating at the bottom and enabling people to rise.

E-749. Is your traffic day in Calcutta a 16 hours' day?—Sixteen and 16½ hours.

E-750. You have apparently an 8-hour roster, but you say that the actual time worked including overtime is nine to ten hours a day?—Owing to traffic delays half an hour will often be lost from roll call to paying in. Every day we miss trips owing to congestion on the roads, mainly as the result of bullock carts.

E-751. *Colonel Russell*: With regard to work of boards of health in special areas, what was the difficulty of which you speak?—It was a private quarrel, and I was not in it. I was quite prepared to build the latrine if it was wanted near the High Courts where we have a tram circle.

E-752. That is the sort of place where you require a convenience?—There is one there, but it is some way away. I was quite prepared to bear my share of the cost of putting up a new convenience, but the Public Works Department and the Corporation entered into a quarrel about the site. I stood aside waiting for the result, but nothing happened.

E-753. How long has this quarrel been going on?—Two years; I am inclined to think it has died a natural death.

E-754. Has the possibility of putting in an underground latrine ever been considered?—I should think it would be impossible because of drainage difficulties; we have considered putting in underground transformers, but we could not do it.

E-755. You say that the Indian worker is a bad timekeeper owing to his poor physique. Have you ever examined the question of what food the ordinary tramway man eats?—Yes, I know pretty well what he lives on. We have little depots at which he can buy food cheaply; they are run by a contractor, but are controlled by us.

E-756. Is it to be inferred from what you say that the Indian tramway man does not eat enough?—I am staggered at the little he lives on.

E-757. Is that because he will not buy any more or because he cannot buy any more?—It is because he will not buy any more. All the people who live up-country remit money home.

E-758. So that in order to remit money home they practically starve themselves?—They seem to be able to do a lot of work on extraordinarily little food.

E-759. You say he is a bad timekeeper. Is that a bad effect produced by this low diet?—Yes.

E-760. That statement is not supported by your sickness rate which is not very heavy?—It is about 1·5 per cent.

E-761. Is the low sickness rate related to the short service period that these people do before they return to their villages?—I should think that is probably so.

E-762. Do you think a man goes back to his village after 8 or 9 months work and uses the period while he is in his village to recuperate?—I should imagine so. Generally sickness and worry are the things that take them back to their villages; a little worry from the village in the way of reports about their land and their relations, combined with unfitness, will take them back to their villages more than anything else.

E-763. That is in addition to their harvesting?—Yes.

E-764. As a company do you make any effort to supply these men with refreshments on duty?—We have our refreshment places at the depots at which they can buy food.

E-765. But do you supply tea or hot drinks to the men when they are on duty?—Tea can be bought at the depots from the contractor, and we control the prices.

E-766. You do not supply any refreshments during the running period?—No.

E-767. Do you think that might be of use?—It is extraordinarily difficult to feed Indians.

E-768. I am referring to refreshments such as hot tea in monsoon weather and on occasions of that kind?—I do not quite know how one could do it on the run; the only place at which we could do it would be at the centre of all our big runs. I take great care of the water supply; all our water is good.

E-769. *Mr. Cliff*: You have quoted Lord Ashfield; he sent coffee out to all his busmen in the severe winter of last year?—Our tanks are underground and that ensures the water being cool. They can get cool water at all our depots and at the Esplanade in the middle of the run.

E-770. *Mr. Birla*: What is your capital?—£1,539,500.

E-771. The company was registered in London?—Yes.

E-772. I suppose the management is being directed from London though you have your local board here?—We have a Dominion share register here and an Advisory Committee.

E-773. But your Board is composed of Englishmen who are in England and who direct the management from England?—Yes; the capital was raised in England.

E-774. May I take it that almost all the capital has been provided by non-Indians?—About £85,000 of the capital is held in India. It is a fluctuating figure.

E-775. Do you think that leads to prejudice, Indians looking on the concern as a non-Indian concern and not caring to invest their money in a concern over the management of which they have no control?—I think the fact that we are an English company does prejudice us, but that does not affect the Indian who is investing his money because the Indian is a very big investor in English concerns.

E-776. How far do you think it would be helpful if your company was registered in India with a local board, and if opportunities were given to Indians to invest their money in it?—Indians can invest their money in it as freely as they like. I have never noticed that Indians are prejudiced against investing their money in our concern; in fact I have never noticed any reluctance on the part of Indians to invest their money in anything they think sound.

E-777. The Corporation is thinking of taking over the concern and they have appointed a committee to go into it?—Yes. I believe they had appointed the committee about 2½ years ago.

E-778. If the concern could be purchased at a reasonable price do you think the attitude of the Corporation is that they would like to take over the management?—I cannot answer that question; it is more or less a political question on which I am not qualified to speak.

E-779. What dividends have you been paying during the last few years?—The average would be nearly 6½ per cent.

E-780. Do you not think the pay of your Indian conductors and drivers is very low and does not enable them to obtain a sufficiently generous diet? I suppose you will agree that Rs. 25 a month for a conductor or driver is not very high pay?—They spend a small proportion of that on their diet; they send away a considerable portion of their pay to their villages. If it is worth their while to come to Calcutta I presume they must be living on less in their villages.

E-781. But the environment in the villages is quite different, and the cost of living is not so high as in a large town like Calcutta. Is it a fact that they are living in a sort of vicious circle? Until you give them higher wages they cannot provide themselves with a generous diet, and until they

have more nourishment you cannot expect from them more efficient work; while you feel that until they give more efficient work you cannot give them higher wages?—I think so. I fancy they require a certain amount to live on, but it is not very much.

E-782. You have compared the efficiency of the Indian worker with that of the non-Indian worker, but do you think the efficiency of the Indian worker will increase by itself without your taking any special measures?—I think it will improve with education. We must also remember that one can never expect such virile workers in the temperatures that we have here as at Home where the temperatures are so much lower. I myself have felt the climate terribly.

E-783. The climate in the Punjab and in other parts of North India is hotter than that of Calcutta, but yet men from the Punjab can do more work than the men of Bengal and Bihar and Orissa?—It is drier and healthier in the Punjab.

E-784. Do you not think it has something to do with the diet?—It might to some extent; I am not enough of a doctor to know.

E-785. You think education might improve efficiency?—I think it undoubtedly will.

E-786. But where are you to find the money for education?—I think a good deal might be found from what is now being spent on Calcutta University in turning out an entirely useless type of clerk who is unemployable.

E-787. Would you stop the present higher education?—Yes.

E-788. Is your company prepared to spend money on the education of the children of your workmen?—Surely education is a matter for Government, and taxation.

E-789. Do you know there are many employers in this part of the country who spend money on the education of the children of their workers?—Yes, many railways have spent money on the education of the children of their workers, but it is a policy to which they have been driven.

E-790. If you think education will improve the efficiency of your workers, do you not think it would be a sound investment for you to educate the children?—Not individually; it is for Government to say what has to be spent and how education is to be provided for.

E-791. Then you are not prepared to spend any money on education?—No, I will spend what Government will tell me to spend. In other words I will pay the taxes I am ordered to pay them.

E-792. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In your memorandum you compare the skill of a British fitter on about £5 to £6 a week with his equivalent out here. I take it that both the people that you are comparing are doing the same work?—The same kind of work.

E-793. How do you reckon that the work done by the British fitter is 33⅓ per cent better than that of the Indian fitter?—First of all there is a slightly higher finish in the work of a British fitter. I say that having known them both intimately. Secondly, the British fitter, turner or machine hand, requires a great deal less supervision; you can give him a drawing and leave him to do the job, while very often you cannot do that here with quite experienced fitters.

E-794. How do you come to this exact figure of 33⅓ per cent?—It is a round figure; I will call it a third.

E-795. Is it just guess-work?—It is an opinion based on 25 years' experience. I am not dealing here with quantity alone, but with quality and quantity.

E-796. Have you any British fitters here in the workshop?—We have foremen who have been fitters.

E-797. They are not actually doing a fitter's work?—No. I myself am a useful fitter.

E-798. What is a fitter's work?—A fitter is a person who puts together the parts of a machine and builds it up.

E-799. Have you ever considered whether an Indian fitter turns out as much work in 8 hours as a British fitter?—No, it is less.

E-800. How much less?—That is an extraordinarily difficult question to answer, but I should say the Indian fitter does three-fourths or perhaps less than three-fourths what a British fitter does. I have worked in an English works and I have had Indian employees.

E-801. What are the comparative wages paid to an Indian fitter and a British fitter?—A really first-class machine hand or fitter at Home three years ago got 2*s*. 1*d*. an hour while an Indian gets Rs. 60 a month.

E-802. In your memorandum you give the wages of fitters here as from Rs. 16 to Rs. 67?—Yes, the man receiving Rs. 16 is not a fitter; he is a labourer; he is probably an apprentice.

E-803. What would be the average?—Rs. 55.

E-804. How many hours work does an Indian fitter do?—8½ hours a day, 48 hours a week.

E-805. That is about £1 a week?—Yes.

E-806. So that the wages are £1 and £6?—Yes, or £5.

E-807. So that the English fitter receives five times as much wages as the Indian fitter?—Yes.

E-808. While the efficiency of the Indian fitter is one-third less, on your statement, than that of the English fitter?—The efficiency is one-third, so that it may be taken as being one-third of £5.

E-809. You refer to a fidélity deposit; what is meant by that?—It is a small guarantee against fraud; we make a small deduction which accumulates and becomes a deposit which is their own property on which they get interest.

E-810. Would you be agreeable to limiting the fine to a definite percentage which you would not be able to exceed?—One's ordinary humanity does that, but I would not be in favour of touching the present fining system because the only result would be a bigger turnover of labour.

E-811. Would you be in favour of legislation limiting by a percentage the amount of fine that could be levied?—I am against the principle; the fining is not vindictive. It is a very unpleasant method of dealing with more unpleasant trouble. The alternative in nine cases out of ten is dismissal; it means dismissing a poor fellow who has come from up-country to earn a living. We fine him frequently where we really ought to dismiss him.

E-812. Before you dismiss a man or fine him, is any chance given to the man?—Chance after chance. Every man has a card upon which everything about him is written, and generally he is not discharged or dismissed until we have used both sides of that card and sometimes both sides of two cards. He is then finally cautioned again and again. It is a long drawn-out process.

E-813. Have you a trade union?—There is a registered body, but I would not give it the name of "Union". I wish I had a strong union. Shih Nath Banerjee was the President. He is in prison. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt is the President of the union for the time being.

(Witness handed in a document.)

E-814. Where did this document come from?—From one of the conductors who happened to be present at a meeting of the union.

E-815. Is that a regular system which you employ of having reports of these meetings?—No, it just happened.

E-816. *Mr. Birla*: What reason have you for thinking that this report which has been supplied to you is correct?—Curiously enough it came from two sources.

E-817. It is quite possible that those who provided you with this information wanted to prejudice you against the union?—They would not get any advantage by doing so. I am not prejudiced against the union; I should welcome a strong union. Mr. P. K. Sanyal, Secretary of the Calcutta Tramway Workers' Union, at the last meeting said that the object of calling this meeting was to inform employees that there are very few members of this union, and if they did not join the union it would be dissolved. The Secretary has to submit a report annually to Government, and in that report the Secretary has to submit false information, otherwise the union will be dissolved. That was said at the meeting held on the 29th December last.

E-818. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is that another report from the same source?—It is not from the same source.

E-819. How did you get this report?—People do not bring them to me; there is very close touch between our men and the inspectors and between them and the European staff.

E-820. Is it the regular custom for you to get these confidential reports of the meetings of these workers?—These meetings are held in open squares.

E-821. Are these reports taken from the press?—They are taken from people who are present in a public place.

E-822. Do they submit this information under your instructions?—Reports frequently come from men I employ to keep me informed about how various competitors are working, etc. They are in our pay, but have no instructions.

E-823. Of their own accord?—Yes.

E-824. Do you ever consult the union in regard to the correctness of these reports that you get?—I never consult the union over anything.

E-825. If you do not consult the union how do you expect the union to flourish?—There is only one way in which I can make the union flourish; that would be by running it myself, but that would be suspect.

E-826. But it is much more suspect if you get these confidential reports. You declare your policy to be that you want a strong union; do you not think the first step to take would be to get in touch with the union and listen to its collective statements?—Not at all. I will take a parallel. We have a games and amusement committee. When I first joined the company three years ago the company subscribed pretty liberally towards it from the company's funds, but it died a natural death. The only way in which I can carry on my games and amusements is by running them myself, or through my officers. We now have a very strong football league. We won the office cup this year. We have two extraordinarily good dramatic societies which are well worth going to see at any time; I run those through departments. I would run a union, but it would be suspect.

E-827. I do not want you to run the union, but I ask you to deal with the union?—I have a registered union, but it is a union in nothing else but name.

E-828. Have you had any strikes on the tramways?—No; we have had a *hartal* or two, but that is not a strike.

E-829. What is the difference between a *hartal* and a strike?—There is no trade dispute involved in a *hartal*. In the last *hartal* there were two killed and 30 wounded.

E-830. But the vernacular for a strike is a "*hartal*"?—It occurred on the arrival of the Simon Commission on the 3rd of February 1928.

E-831. What happened?—We had the usual rioting in Calcutta.

E-832. How long did the *hartal* last?—Our men turned out and we were stoned by the general public; I had a couple of pieces of iron weighing about 4 lb. each thrown into my car, but I do not call that a strike.

E-833. How long did that last?—12 hours.

E-834. When did you last have a trade dispute and a strike?—I think the last one was in 1921.

E-835. Would you be in favour of a system of weekly payment of wages?—Yes.

E-836. Has it been your definite policy not to recruit Indians on the technical side?—I am a businessman, and I have to pay a dividend; I do not look at anything but the quality of the service offered. We have Indians holding technical posts. We have selected managing and senior technical staff at Home because we have not been able to obtain such men in this country. If I could get them in this country I would.

E-837. Have you made any attempts to obtain them in this country?—I do not know what you mean by "attempts".

E-838. Have you advertised these posts in India?—I do not think vacancies have occurred in the senior posts during the 2½ years I have been here. All my experience has been on the railways.

E-839. What house rents do the traffic staff pay for their quarters?—I know very little about that; most of them live in messes of 10 or 12. I suppose they pay Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 a month for board and lodging, but I do not know; it is very hard to find out.

E-840. Is there any chance of getting on with the housing scheme?—That remains with the Corporation; if they give me a chance of raising capital I will spend it. We can raise capital very easily; our present debentures are well covered.

E-841. What do you mean when you say that you consider that among your people industrial fatigue does not exist to an extent which affects their efficiency, because their outlook is so different from European peoples?—I am referring to the referendum which I took among the men as to whether they would prefer to work a straight 8 hours or break it into two parts; the result of that referendum seemed to me to indicate that boredom did not exist to a great extent among them.

(Witness withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTIETH MEETING

(PANEL No. II.)

CALCUTTA.

Thursday, 6th February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
Assistant Commissioners.

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. PROHLAD CHANDRA ROY, Vice-President of the Press Employees' Association, Calcutta, and Mr. INDU BHUSAN SARCAR, Organizing Secretary.

E-842. *The Chairman*: You have stated in your memorandum that your Association began in 1906. How many members have you at present?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) About 3,000.

E-843. Are those members mainly in the Government of India Press and in the Government of Bengal Press, or are they distributed between those presses and private presses?—Most of our members are in Government Presses. Some are in private presses.

E-844. Are all your 3,000 members in Calcutta?—Yes.

E-845. Your Association is not an All-India Association, but a Bengal Association?—Yes.

E-846. You state that there are 40,000 people in Calcutta working in the different presses. That seems a very large number of workers to be engaged in one single industry. From where do you get your figure of

40,000?—There was a question put in the Council in 1925; Mr. Daud in his speech on the necessity of franchise for labour gave out the number of people employed in the presses as 50,000 and the number 40,000 as given by us is a guess from that.

E-847. I take it that your Association numbers 3,000 members out of 40,000 workers who might be members of your Association if you had them all in?—The difficulty of getting members from those who work in private presses is that their employers are against the idea, and therefore the employees are afraid of joining the union. Take for instance the case of Sj. Nalin Kumar Basu who was once the secretary of this Association. As soon as he joined the staff of the "Statesman" in Chowringhee he was forced to resign his secretaryship of this Association and with him all the people of the "Statesmen" who were at that time members of the Association left the Association.

E-848. Did the 3,000 members now in your union pay their subscription for 1929?—Yes.

E-849. Is your membership increasing or decreasing?—Increasing.

E-850. By how much did it increase last year? By about 1,000.

E-851. We have in front of us a considerable memorandum which you at first sent in, and also several other papers which came in later. Are you responsible for all these various sub-memoranda?—Yes.

E-852. Then we may take it that these are all part of the Association's case, although they are in the names of individuals in some cases? I see that you make a complaint that in some private presses there is no provision for drinking water and inadequate provision for latrines. You also speak of lack of adequate supervision by the Inspector of Factories. Are you aware that some of these private presses do not come under the Indian Factories Act?—Yes, but those which do come under the Act also suffer from all these disadvantages.

E-853. Why do you not give information to the Chief Inspector of Factories when it comes to your knowledge that the Factories Act is not being complied with?—We did bring it to the notice of the Inspector of Factories, but unfortunately he took insufficient action.

E-854. Has the Inspector of Factories, having received a complaint from you, asked you to meet him at the place, and you have not attended?—On one occasion I was told on the 'phone by Mr. Ray Chaudhuri, M.L.C., that the Factory Inspector would be visiting St. Andrew's Press at Radhabazaar and that I should go there. I went and remained standing outside. The Factory Inspector, a European, did come to visit the press, as I came to know later, but neither he knew me as the representative of the Association nor I him as the Inspector of Factories. But of this visit I can say this that the Inspector confined his queries to the managers of the press but did not deign to ask any question to the employees themselves. I say this on the authority of the employees who wrote to say this. And here is that letter of the employees (letter shown to the President).

E-855. Did you fail to turn up at the appointed time?—There have been no such occasions.

E-856. When you send a complaint to the Inspector of Factories, are you careful to satisfy yourself that the complaint is a true one before you send it?—Yes. We enquire into the matter carefully and then we submit our complaints.

E-857. You refer to workmen's compensation, and you say it is difficult to get the compensation to which men are entitled after they have had an accident. How many cases of workmen's compensation did your Association take up last year?—Five cases, every one of which we lost. We did not take them up with the Compensation Commissioner, but with the employers, and we got nothing from the employers.

E-858. Why did you not take up the cases with the Commissioner?—These were fatal accidents and we could not trace the dependents. Therefore we dropped the cases.

E-859. If you could not trace the dependents, for whom were you trying to get the compensation?—The men before they actually died were in hospital owing to the injury, and it was at that time we took up the matter. When the man died we dropped it.

E-860. You say that your Association has applied for registration under the Trade Union Act. When was the application made?—Last August. There was some delay, but now our Association has been registered as a trade union.

E-861. Dealing with the question of fines you say that in the Government of India Press there is a compassionate fund with the object of helping the employees in time of distress. You add that the workers in the Bengal Government Press have asked for a similar fund, but that up to now it has been " a cry in the wilderness." How are the fines used?—They are credited to the Bengal Government revenue.

E-862. Dealing with rates of payment you say " The rates fixed in the handbook have not been revised since 1875, when the cost of living was at least 300 per cent. cheaper than at the present time." I suppose you mean that it was one-third of what it is now?—(*Mr. Roy*) There has been a 40 per cent increase since July 1920. It is a fact that before 1920 the last rate was fixed in 1875.

E-863. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Fixed by whom?—By Government. This refers to the Government Press.

E-864. *The Chairman*: You make reference to a promise of the Government of India that the workers in the Government of India Press should have a provident fund similar to that in the State Railways, and you State that nothing has been done?—We represented this matter to the Government of India, and we were informed that it had been referred to the Secretary of State. It is under consideration and we are suffering from this delay.

E-865. You suggest that the private presses are much worse than the Government Presses. You are aware that a number of these small presses are not at present included under the Factories Act?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) We are only dealing with those presses that are under the Factories Act.

E-866. You say, referring to a particular press which you name, " The binders say that they have received only five months' pay during last year "? —(*Mr. Roy*) We are satisfied that that is the fact. Almost all of the binders there have not received pay for five months. The same applies to compositors and distributors.

E-867. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have they worked there those five months?—Yes.

E-868. *The Chairman*: How does it come about that they go on working there under those conditions?—They receive their pay in dribs and drabs—Re. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 at a time; they do not leave, because they fear that if they do, they will lose the balance of what is owing to them.

E-869. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How much is outstanding when the advances are deducted?—On the average there is a balance due from the employer of three months' pay. The men were told by the employer that if they did not choose to accept this instalment method of payment they could leave.

E-870. Surely the union could sue for them?—The union is too poor to go to law. Even if the union took the case to court the employer would bring in a big lawyer with a reputation to fight the case and the chances are that we might lose it. These employees whose pay is in arrears submitted a petition to the Governor-General, but no step was taken.

E-871. How does the Governor-General come into it?—Because these particular printing presses are Government contractors.

E-872. *Mr. Clow*: You refer to the works committee in the Government of India Press and say that the result " Has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the employed ", but in the next line you complain that the Government of Bengal has not set up a works committee. If the result has been a growing misunderstanding between employers and employed, what is the advantage of having a works committee? —Originally there was a misunderstanding, but that has now disappeared.

E-873. Do you know of any private press in which the conditions of pay and of leave are as good as those in the Government Presses?—There is one such private press, the Sri Gouranga.

E-874. How much leave is given in that press?—They give leave on Hindu and Muhammadan festival days.

E-875. I am not talking of holidays, but of leave?—There is no specific rule, but that press does occasionally give leave with pay. That is the only press of which we know where such a condition obtains.

E-876. *Mr. Joshi*: It appears from your memorandum that 10 per cent of the men in the presses suffer from lead-poisoning. If there is such a large number of cases of lead-poisoning why have not your Association taken up the matter before it has been necessary to take the men to the hospital?—Before we can take the case before the Compensation Commissioner, medical officers have to examine the case. The Compensation Commissioner does not accept the testimony of a private practitioner, but only of a Government Medical Officer, and we find great difficulty in getting Government Medical Officers to examine these cases.

E-877. Under the Workmen's Compensation Act any properly qualified registered private doctor can give a certificate. Has there been a case in which the workmen's Compensation Commissioner has refused to accept a certificate from a private qualified registered medical practitioner?—No, there has been no case of that kind where the Compensation Commissioner has refused to recognize such a certificate. We have been under the impression that the medical testimony must come from a Government Medical Officer. And there is reason for our having such an impression. Abinash Chandra Ray, an employee in the Bengal Government Press, was declared to have contracted lead-poisoning by the Civil Surgeon of Burdwan. The authorities of the Bengal Government have, however, sent him to the Calcutta Medical College to be examined again, presumably not being satisfied with the report of the Burdwan Civil Surgeon. And the upshot was that the man, after six months, was told that his was no case of lead-poisoning.

E-878. You state "Though lino-operators are placed on a graded pay yet a reduction from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 is made every month from the pay of the operators for shortage of their outturn". What is the meaning of that?—Government fixed 5,000 ens on which they based the pay. Those who work less than 5,000 ens get their pay reduced from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15.

E-879. What is the total pay out of which that Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 is deducted?—If the pay is Rs. 80 the Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 is deducted from that, and if the pay is Rs. 90 or Rs. 100 it is Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 which is still deducted.

E-880. You say something about regular employment and state that if a man is not present for 90 per cent of working days, he does not get leave. Again, you say later on that a man must be present for all the working days of the year?—That grievance has been removed.

E-881. You also make some complaint about the supply of drinking water?—That grievance has been removed.

E-882. You make a complaint about questions being asked in the Legislative Council to which no answers were given. Is it not necessary that questions asked in the Council should be replied to?—Yes.

E-883. There is a complaint made in one of the sub-memoranda that in the confidential section only Anglo-Indians and Native Christians are employed. Was this brought to the notice of the Council?—Yes.

E-884. What was the reply?—This matter was made the subject of several interpellations in the Council, but Government never gave a satisfactory reply.

E-885. Did your union write to Government?—Yes. The union brought it to the notice of Government, but nothing was done.

E-886. Did Government send any reply?—The Secretary waited on Mr. Marr, one of the members of the Government, about this matter, but he could not get any satisfactory reply.

E-887. How many people are employed in that section?—About 15, all of whom are Anglo-Indians and Native Christians.

E-888. Then you make a complaint about the authorities of the Calcutta Corporation Press being against the enrolment of their employees as members of your Association. Did you bring that to the notice of the Calcutta Corporation?—I personally saw the Chief Executive Officer, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor about the matter, but I could not get any satisfactory answer.

E-889. Did you write to the Mayor of Calcutta?—The Mayor gave instructions to the Chief Executive Officer not to penalize any one for joining the Association, but no action was taken.

E-890. With regard to hours of work would you prefer to have legislation fixing an eight hour day?—Yes.

E-891. Would the piece-workers like such legislation?—They are working eight hours now, and they have no complaints to make.

E-892. Would you like to have some kind of legislation for unemployment insurance, and would you be prepared to make some contribution towards an unemployment insurance fund?—We have no objection whatever to contribute; in fact we would welcome it.

E-893. Would you have any objection to a sickness insurance fund and an old age pension fund?—No, no objection whatever.

E-894. Did you ask the Government of India to hold an enquiry into this matter of lead-poisoning?—We passed a resolution at an open meeting calling the attention of the Government to this matter and inviting an enquiry. We sent up those resolutions to the Government, but no action was taken.

E-895. *Miss Power*: Dealing with the question of an employment bureau, do you suggest that it should be compulsory on the employers, as well as on the employees, to both offer employment and register for employment through that bureau?—Yes. We want such a bureau and such a register, provided we are represented on that bureau.

E-896. Do you suggest such a bureau for Calcutta only?—No, for the whole of Bengal.

E-897. Your organizing Secretary in his memorandum states that men work 15 and 16 hours a day in order to get the overtime allowance. Do the number of hours which a man has to work before he is entitled to overtime pay vary in the different private and newspaper presses?—At what stage does the overtime allowance begin?—After 8 hours.

E-898. What is the overtime rate?—In the Government Presses the overtime allowance is at the rate of 25 per cent increase over the normal wages for the first two hours, and 50 per cent for the following two hours, but the second payment is not operative because it would then become against the Factories Act.

E-899. You are talking about Government Presses. I am talking about newspaper and private presses?—In newspaper presses there is no extra allowance for overtime work. The normal rate is paid for extra hours.

E-900. Is it the same in private presses?—Yes.

E-901. But in reply to my first question you said that there was no overtime payment in private and newspaper presses, but only in Government Presses?

The Chairman: There is no extra rate.

E-902. *Miss Power*: In private presses are arrangements made for the workers who deal with lead type to wash their hands?—There is a water basin, but no soap or towel.

E-903. *Miss Sorabji*: On the question of workmen's compensation, you suggest that the employers might do something to make the workmen acquainted with their rights and the protection provided for them under the Act. What do you think the employers could do in that direction?—We suggest that leaflets in vernaculars should be printed and a copy given to each of the employees.

E-904. But we have been told that most of the workmen are illiterate?—If they are illiterate their fellow workers who are literate will explain to them.

E-905. Is that the only suggestion you can make?—The employers might arrange for holding meetings at which the workers may be addressed in the matter.

E-906. You would suggest that the employers might appoint some one to tell the workmen about their rights?—Yes.

E-907. You say that sufficient effort is not made to trace dependents. What could be done to trace the dependents of persons who are entitled to compensation under the Act?—A register containing the names of the dependents must be kept.

E-908. The employers should keep a register of the dependents whose names are supplied by the workmen when they are taken into service?—Yes.

E-909. In cases where the dependents, the wife and the children, for instance, do not accompany the workman to this part of the country, what would you suggest?—As I said, full information about the dependents of the workman should be ascertained from the workman and entered in a register.

E-910. To check this, would you approve of information being collected by the Tahsildar or the circle officer of the district from which the workmen come?—Yes.

E-911. You talk of the difficulty of the workmen suing. Have you heard of the Legal Aid Society which has lately been established at the High Court? This society would not only give advice but would also supply a poor man with counsel without any fees?—We have never heard of the existence of this society.

E-912. On the question of education you say in your memorandum: "The employers make no provision for the educational facilities of the workers in their presses". Why cannot the children of employees go to municipal schools in the districts?—No doubt there are sufficient number of Coporation Schools in Calcutta but not in all localities.

E-913. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Your difficulty in the Government Presses is the difficulty about piece-work?—Yes. We do not want piece-work.

E-914. Why do you not approve of piece-work?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Because the wages fall off with the advancement of age. The second reason is that the work allotted to us does not help up to earn enough. Thirdly, the piece-workers do not get the same privileges as monthly salaried servants in that they do not get the benefit of leave with salary; if they do not work on holidays they do not get pay.

E-915. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can they not make the same amount in the same number of working days?—Their wages vary according to the amount of work allotted to them. They are not sure whether they would be able to earn sufficient for any particular month or not, whereas the salaried hands are sure of what they would get.

E-916. Your difficulty is that you do not get enough work?—Yes.

E-917. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You know that in the Government of India Press they have instituted a works committee?—Yes.

E-918. And that works committee is functioning well?—Yes.

E-919. *The Chairman*: Is there any one here who is a representative on that works committee?—(*Mr. Roy*) I am on that committee.

E-920. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: What are the functions of the works committee?—The grievances of individual workers are discussed at the meetings of the works committee, and that is a great advantage to the workers. The question of promotion of workers is also discussed; if there is any partiality or favouritism shown by any supervisor, that matter is brought before the works committee and remedied.

E-921. *The Chairman*: Is it the general opinion of the workers in the Government Press that the works committee has been a success?—Yes; it has been a great success.

E-922. If that is so, I am rather surprised at what you say in your memorandum in this connexion?—There was originally a misunderstanding but that misunderstanding is removed. If the manager has got enough good-will towards the works committee, it functions well, but if he has not that good-will, it does not function well. That good-will was absent at the time of the formation of the works committee, but now under the present management the good-will is there and the works committee works well.

E-923. Then I take it that we may strike out from the memorandum these words which are very misleading: "The result has been a growing

misunderstanding between the employers and the employed"?—At the time of sending this memorandum there was friction going on, but since then it has stopped because the manager has changed and a new manager has come.

E-924. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You remember that as a result of my resolution in the Council the Government appointed an enquiry committee under the chairmanship of Mr. McAlpin, and one of the recommendations of that committee was the institution of works committees?—Yes.

E-925. In spite of the recommendation of that committee the Government of Bengal have taken no steps to institute works committees?—No.

E-926. You also remember that in reply to my question in the Council as to the reason why the Government did not give effect to that recommendation, the Government replied that they were making inquiries with regard to the working of the works committee of the Government of India Press and that they would think of starting it in their press later on?—Yes.

E-927. *The Chairman*: Before we leave that point, I think I am right in saying that there has not been a change of manager in the Government of India Press but that the manager was on leave and has returned?—Yes, he has returned. When the officiating manager was working, that misunderstanding occurred, but now that the permanent manager has come back there is no more of that misunderstanding.

E-928. That clears up the matter. I think it would be better to strike out this sentence from the memorandum: "The result has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the empoyed"?—Yes, we agree.

E-929. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: On the question of lead-poisoning, I think you remember that I took up some of these cases myself with Government?—Yes.

E-930. I think you also remember that I told you that on certain occasions Government was not satisfied with the medical report, because there is a variation of opinion among medical men due to the fact that lead-poisoning cases being a new thing the medical men have not acquired a sufficient knowledge of these cases?—That is so.

E-931. *The Chairman*: Did the union allege a case of death from lead-poisoning which afterwards was proved to be a death from bronchitis?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Originally it was a lead-poisoning case, but it developed into bronchitis; no doubt, the immediate cause of the death was bronchitis, but all the time the patient was suffering from lead-poisoning.

E-932. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In the private presses the pay is insufficient and the workers have to work longer hours?—Yes.

E-933. You know that people are very anxious to get into the Government of Bengal or the Government of India Press because the conditions there are better than in the private presses?—Yes.

E-934. Can you suggest any remedy for improving the conditions in private presses?—If a Minimum Wage Act or a Trade Board Act is passed then there is a chance of remedying the grievances.

E-935. You know that the factory inspection department lacks in officers?—Yes, there are some Factory Inspectors who are good and some who are not good; some Factory Inspectors become friendly with the employers and they take sides with the employers, while some others do not.

E-936. Can you cite any case where a Factory Inspector became friendly with the employer and did not do his duty?—In the case of the Fine Arts Cottage we suspect that the Factory Inspector who went to inspect the press was rather friendly to the employer and therefore did not prosecute him although there were enough grounds for prosecution. As a result of our interpellation in the Council as to why the Factory Inspector was not inspecting private presses, we supplied the Factory Inspector with the names of the presses which should be inspected. I approached the Factory Inspector and suggested the name of a Factory Inspector who should be sent to inspect a particular press. That Inspector was sent for inspection and the result was that a prosecution was eventually launched.

E-937. *The Chairman*: The case that was last mentioned of a particular press, is that not a case where the Factory Inspector invited the union

to help and they failed to turn up to keep the appointment?—Some of our men did go to the appointed place, but for some reason or other, probably due to some misunderstanding, the Factory Inspector said that he did not find anybody there.

E-938. You should be careful about your allegations. Will you tell us if this is a letter, produced by you in evidence, from Mr. Gilchrist, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal, which ends: "I am to add that the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, will be glad to accompany Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri to the factory if it is desired such a course to be pursued"?

Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: I happened to be ill at that time.

The witness: Mr. Ray Chaudhuri was informed but he was ill and the Chief Inspector of Factories as well as Mr. Gilchrist were informed accordingly by the Association.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Were you not informed of this letter, Mr. Ray Chaudhuri?

Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: No. You, Mr. Sarcar, told me that 17 persons died of poisoning by working in the Bengal Drawing Press, because a lot of acid is used in that press.

E-939. Could you give me the names of those persons?—I can give a few that I remember. Kabirudin Beg, Ramzan Ali, Oliyulla, Padacharan and Shyamchander.

E-940. Did you approach the Government in that connection?—No.

E-941. You do not allege that these people died by working in the press?—Not exactly. We are under-paid, we get phthisis and kala-azar and we die.

E-942. *The Chairman:* Was there any claim for compensation?—No.

E-943. *Mr. Tassie:* Mr. Sarcar, I notice that in two years you have changed your job in three presses. You say you first joined Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons., as a printer in 1911. Subsequently you resigned your post and joined Messrs. Newmans'. You resigned there also in 1912 and then joined the Bengal Government Press. There you say you found the employees being treated like cats and dogs. You resigned from that press also and joined the Government of India Press. Later on you joined the "Forward" Press, managed by Desabhandu Chittaranjan Das, and you say that the atmosphere there also was irritable to you and you resigned from that press. Does it not strike you that there might be something wrong with yourself when there are five different people you cannot get on with?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) You cannot appreciate our difficulties because you have never worked as a press employee. Piece system was introduced in the Bengal Government Press in 1878 and the employees both in the confidential section and the general sections were on the same footing then and at that time Indians were taken in the confidential section. But in 1911 the rate in the confidential section was increased by 50 per cent and from that time that section has been a close preserve for the Anglo-Indians and the Native Christians where simple Indians may not enter when even in the C.I.D. Department Indians are taken and given honourable posts. This is, Sir, a treatment which no self-respecting Indian should tolerate and that is the long and short of my leaving the Bengal Government Press.

E-944. Is it not strange that you could not get on even in the Forward Press managed by Mr. Das?—So long as Mr. Das was alive we were well looked after, but after his death we were very badly treated, and therefore I left it.

E-945. *The Chairman:* You are now the organizing Secretary of the union?—Yes.

E-946. *Mr. Tassie:* Do you find that as an organizing Secretary you can get on quite well and that you are not ill-treated?—I get on quite well because I am working among my brethren and colleagues. The printing presses in this country are so badly managed that any one with an ounce of self-respect could not get on. For instance, the paper that was started by Sir Surendranath Banerji and now conducted by Mr. R. S. Sarma gives the worst treatment to its workers.

E-947. Will you tell us what pay you get from your Association?—I get Rs. 50 a month as allowance.

E-948. What is the maximum amount that you earned while you were working in the press?—While I was a head-printer of the *Forward* I was getting Rs. 125 a month. I now get an additional income of Rs. 35 a month from the Indian Journalists' Association of which I am one of the organizers. I am quite contented with what I get because I need not fear of ill-treatment or oppression.

E-949. You are the boss?—I follow the decision of the Committee.

E-950. I understand that your Association has 3,000 members?—Yes.

E-951. What subscription do your members pay to the Association?—There are two grades; some pay 2 annas and some 4 annas.

E-952. Do they pay that?—Most of them pay.

E-953. So there is an income of about Rs. 1,000 a month?—Most of our members pay 2 annas; our income may be about Rs. 500.

E-954. Are your accounts audited by an auditor?—Yes, they are audited by a Government auditor.

E-955. You said that you could not afford to employ lawyers to fight cases. Surely with an income of Rs. 500 a month you could employ them?—Half of that amount goes towards meeting the cost of establishment, room rent, printing and so on. If a case is a complicated one, or a big one, and if we engage a lawyer we will have to pay him a very heavy fee, which we will not be in a position to pay. Moreover, we do not want to fritter away our money on litigation.

E-956. On the question of making your members acquainted with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and tracing dependents, do the union not think that they might spend a little of their funds in dealing with that matter?—At one time we did attempt to distribute hand-bills relating to the rights of workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Act to our members, but in many cases the distributors were turned out by the *durwans* of the presses.

E-957. *Mr. Ahmed:* Will you give us the names of those persons who were dismissed because of their joining your union?—Rasik Chandra Badras of Edinbara Press.

E-958. He was actually discharged for joining your union?—Yes. Abdul Gani of Messrs. Thacker Spink and Company and Jugalchandra Pal of S. C. Banerjee & Co.

E-959. *The Chairman:* How do you know that it was for joining the union and not for bad work that they were dismissed?—Because the employers while dismissing them told them "We discharge you; you better now go to the union and get your sustenance from the union." The Superintendent of Government Press, Bengal, also discharged a few and told the same thing. There was a debate in the Council over this matter, but nothing came out of it.

E-960. *Mr. Ahmed:* With regard to the five injured persons who died in the hospital, is it not a fact that as soon as an injured person goes to the hospital, his name and address and also the names and addresses of his dependents are taken down?—In these cases they were unconscious.

E-961. The beat constable must have taken them to the hospital?—No.

E-962. You took them?—Their fellow workers.

E-963. From which place did you take these injured persons to the hospital?—From the press.

E-964. Did you enquire from the manager of the press the names of these men and the names of their dependents if he happened to know them?—No. We know of an instance where we enquired of the dependents of an employee and told by the authorities that it was no business of ours to make such enquiries.

E-965. On the question of wages, you say in your memorandum: "The wages earned by the employees are inadequate and cannot be said to be a living wage in view of the phenomenal rise in the prices of the different food-stuffs as well as the exorbitant house-rent prevailing in Calcutta." What do you think is a living wage for a man, his wife and two children?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Rs. 60 a month.

E-966. Will you furnish us details as to how you arrive at that figure?—When I said Rs. 60 I had in mind a skilled labourer. If you take into account the cost of food, house-rent, education of children, clothing, medicine and so on, it will come to more than Rs. 60.

E-967. What is the average income of a skilled labourer?—A little over Rs. 40.

E-968. What is the condition of these labourers; are they much indebted?—It is a matter of every day incident that *Kabulis* come at the gates and drive them about, and they borrow money from the office *durwans*.

E-969. What is the rate of interest that is generally paid?—One to two annas per rupee per month.

E-970. What remedy would you suggest for getting them out of the clutches of the money-lenders?—The only remedy is to increase their wages.

E-971. You want that the wages should be increased to Rs. 60?—That is so.

E-972. From the memorandum submitted by Mr. Prohlad Chandra Roy, we find that his family expenses are more than what his earnings are; he says he earns Rs. 135 while he spends Rs. 180?—(*Mr. Roy*) I am obliged to spend so much, and therefore I am to incur debts to keep things going.

E-973. Suppose the cost of education for the workers' children is wholly or partly to be borne by the employers, it will at least to some extent give you relief, is it not?—Certainly.

E-974. Do the workers, who work in private presses for 20, 30 or 40 years, get any pension?—No. There is pension only in the Government presses.

E-975. Would you be in favour of the Government enforcing by legislation on all the employers the necessity of treating their workers in the same way as the Government does in regard to their employees?—Yes, certainly; it will be a great help to us.

E-976. *The Chairman:* Will it also be a great help if you close down half the number of presses?—No it will not; in that case, unemployment will increase.

E-977. *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Mr. Sarcar, speaking about private presses, you say in your memorandum that 25 per cent of the workers "fall victims to the dreadful lead-poisoning disease". Where did you get that figure from?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) It is only an approximate figure.

E-978. One of your friends in his memorandum says that it is only 10 per cent?—He refers only to the Government of India Press, while my remark refers to all the presses in general.

E-979. You have no figures; it is merely a guess?—Yes.

E-980. I should like a little explanation of the remark you make in your main memorandum; you say: "The authorities of this press (that is, of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers) are said to have shifted the timing of the period of work of the employees who wanted to join the Press Employees' Association in such a way that they may not be able to join in any union activities." What do you exactly mean by that?—We generally hold our meetings on Saturdays just after 5 in the evening, and this press made these employees work after 5 on Saturdays so that they would not join the union.

E-981. You say: "It is very unfair to the men if the time allowed them for their meals or tiffin be a source of loss to them." Do you know of any industry or trade where a man who is on piece-work is paid his wages for the period in which he takes his meals?—No.

E-982. With regard to your remarks about the lino-operators, what is the task for which they are paid the standard wage? Is it 5,000 ens?—Yes.

E-983. Is it true that some men do as much as 7,000 ens?—There is only one man in the Government of India Press who can give 7,000 ens.

E-984. How many can give 6,000 ens?—There is no one who can give 6,000 corrected ens, except the one in the Government of India Press.

E-985. Then your point, I take it, is that 5,000 is too high a standard?—5,000 corrected ens is too high a standard. In Simla and Delhi presses they adopt the system of 5,000 uncorrected ens; it is only in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, that they insist on 5,000 corrected ens?

E-986. You would not object to 5,000 uncorrected ens?—That would be, no doubt, an improvement upon the present state of things. But it must be remembered that the work of these men depend on various other things which are beyond the control of the workers, e.g., variety of work, regular supply of gas, defects in the machinery and old age, etc.

E-987. You would think it would be fair that, whatever fair standard was fixed, if men constantly produced less than that amount, instead of giving them a smaller wage they should be turned out and more competent men put in their places?—In that case some inquiry should be made either to alter the standard, or to find out the real causes as to why a man cannot turn out that fair standard.

E-988. Mr. Prohlad Chandra Roy in his memorandum says: " . . . the compositors are the first-class workers in the industrial section but they are paid as third-class labourers, and their average earnings in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, are only Rs. 56-8-0 per month." Do you hold that a third-class labourer would get as much as Rs. 56-8-0 a month?—(*Mr. Roy*) By 'third-class labourers' I mean those who are not sufficiently educated and those whose standard of living is not high.

E-989. Do you maintain that in Calcutta the average third-class labourer in other industries makes as much as Rs. 56-8-0 a month?—Yes; for instance, motor-drivers and lorry-drivers get more than that.

E-990. But surely they are skilled men?—I meant skilled workers.

E-991. From the memorandum submitted by the compositors, distributors and binders employed in the East Indian Railway Press, we find that they object to piece-work because they say that on piece-system they are naturally fast workers whereas if they are paid by time they are apt to be slow. Does that mean that you want to stop piece-work so that the labourers could be slower workers than they are to-day?—What is meant is that a piece-worker has to work very hard and gets himself exhausted in order to earn sufficient money.

E-992. You consider that efficiency is too high under present conditions among piece-workers, and you want to lower the rate of efficiency?—Yes, we want to reduce their excessive labour which will increase and not lower their efficiency.

E-993. It is stated in the same memorandum: "No increment is granted to those who are compelled to absent themselves even on medical grounds for more than 60 days in a year." How many days' leave you think you should get in a year?—Barring Government holidays, there should be at least one month's leave per year.

E-994. How many days does that come to?—There are 42 holidays.

E-995. You want 124 days, including 52 Sundays?—Some holidays may fall on Sundays.

E-996. Roughly speaking, you think you ought to have 120 days in a year?—Yes; that is what they get in Government offices.

E-997. You get 52 days under the Factories Act, and 42 Government holidays, is it not?—Yes.

E-998. That makes 94 days. I am not clear about the figure 60. Does it mean that if you get 42 holidays you should be allowed to have 42 holidays plus 18 days?—Yes.

E-999. What you really want is 30 days instead of 18 days outside the Government holidays?—Yes.

E-1000. In the memorandum submitted by revisers and copy-holders of the Bengal Government Press, Alipore, they complain about the novel fancy of the Superintendent towards sports. Do you object to sports among men?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) We object to contribute towards the sports fund.

E-1001. Do you think that you should be paid wages while you play sports?—No; what we mean is that we should not be compelled to pay for the sports fund.

E-1002. Are you compelled?—Yes.

E-1003. Sports fund is a deduction made from pay?—Yes.

E-1004. You said that you had no objection to make payments towards a sickness fund or old-age pension fund; at the same time you complained that you were not earning enough. How can you afford to pay for these funds if you are not earning enough?—We are willing to sacrifice from our wages a certain amount as contribution towards these funds.

E-1005. Even though you have not got enough now?—Yes. We are willing to contribute because it will be for our own protection.

E-1006. You ask for a press workers employment bureau and you want one of your representatives to be on that bureau. What do you mean by that?—Unless we are represented there, it is possible that favouritism might be shown and wrong men taken in.

E-1007. Do you mean that you must decide who should be taken in?—Yes, jointly with the employers.

E-1008. Will you not allow an employer to choose the employees he wants?—Suppose there are two men, of whom one is unemployed for six months and another for two months. The union would naturally recommend the man who was sitting idle for six months.

E-1009. In other words, you want the union to decide who is to be employed?—We want to follow the rules that apply to the London Compositors Union, where they maintain a register in which names of persons seeking employment are entered, and appointments offered in that order.

E-1010. Why should not the union tell its members the terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—We have experienced this difficulty that if we took an active part in propaganda or in publishing leaflets for distribution to our members, we would be causing annoyance to the employers.

E-1011. It seems very strange because in every industry we have been to, the Commissioner who looks after the workmen's compensation often helps and informs the people of what their rights are. Why should it be peculiar to this industry? Has any employer objected to the men knowing the terms of the Act?—They do not object, but there is a reasonable suspicion.

E-1012. Have you ever tried to teach your members?—We are doing it.

E-1013. Has any employer objected to that?—The only isolated instance when the employer of a press objected was when we wanted to distribute handbills to our members inside the press. He said that he did not like to see any union activities inside the press.

E-1014. Is there any reason why a member of the union the moment that he has an accident should not go to the employer and ask what his rights are, without a handbill?—No.

E-1015. *The Chairman:* We have received a memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Press Employees' Association. Does this also represent the views of your Association?—Yes.

E-1016. He suggests that "The press employees must have at least one member in the Legislative Council elected from among themselves." Does the Association subscribe to that view?—Yes; we want a special electorate for the press employees.

E-1017. Should there be a special electorate for every kind of industry?—Yes.

E-1018. So that you would have one for the press, one for the taxi-drivers, one for the lorry-drivers, one for the sweepers and so on?—If the Bengal Chamber of Commerce which consists of only a few employers can have a separate electorate, why should we not have one for ourselves especially in view of the fact that our number is very large. I would suggest that there should be one representative on the Council for every 10,000 workers.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING

CALCUTTA

Friday, 7th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER,
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSAN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

(At the Titaghur No. II Mill.)

Mr. R. N. NEISH, Manager, Titaghur No. II Jute Mill.

E-1019. *The Chairman:* Will you tell us how many people you employ here?—7,036.

E-1020. And how many of those are men?—Seventy per cent.

E-1021. And how many are women?—Twenty-five per cent are women and the remaining five per cent are half-timers.

E-1022. Here you work on the multiple-shift system, starting at 5-30 a.m. and finishing at 7 o'clock, that is, for 13½ hours?—Yes; the engine runs the whole time.

E-1023. What is the maximum and minimum hours within those shifts that the individuals work?—The maximum for men is 11 hours and the minimum is 8½ to 9 hours. For instance, the weavers and winders work for 11 hours, the half-timers work for 6 hours only, and the *mistries* for 8 hours.

E-1024. Has this mill always been on the multiple-shift system?—Yes.

E-1025. How long have you yourself been the manager here?—Roughly for about 17 years.

E-1026. Have you had experience in any other mill?—Not in India.

E-1027. Do you consider that you get as good quality of work here on the multiple-shift system as you would on the single-shift system?—I think so. Some time ago when there was a rumour about our going in for the single-shift system, all our people were against it; they did not want to go on to the single-shift system. In the present system they get more interval which helps them very much to attend to their needs.

E-1028. *Sir Victor Sassoon:* There are fewer men in the single-shift system than in the multiple-shift system, and therefore the production per head is more in the former than in the latter?—I think the production per loom on a multiple-shift system is more than on a single-shift system.

E-1029. I am talking of the production per head. A weaver on the single-shift system works for 60 hours and earns more than a worker on the multiple-shift system ; he has the opportunity to earn more?—Our weavers who are on the multiple-shift system earn enough. We have 25 per cent extra weavers.

E-1030. My point is there is opportunity for a weaver in the single-shift system to earn more. In the single-shift system the number of yards per weaver is more than in yours?—How can it be? For instance, for working four looms we have five men; the fifth man is a *badli*. These four looms work all the 13½ hours, and the weaver is paid for full-time though he does not work all the time.

E-1031. How many hours does a weaver work?—He works 11 hours a day, but he is paid for 13½ hours.

E-1032. You are paying to the weaver for what the *badli* does?—Yes, it comes to that.

E-1033. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri:* In your opinion, it is good for the labour to have double-shifts?—I think so. If you introduce the single-shift system in this district, you will be making 20,000 people idle at once, and with the present unemployment in the country I think it would be very improper to take such a step.

E-1034. Apart from the fact that the double-shift system is suitable for the local labour as it suits their convenience best, the real attraction of this system is its shorter working hours ; in other words, the workers would prefer shorter working hours and take less wages?—It suits the workers much better ; they are more contented with the multiple-shift system than with the single-shift system.

E-1035. *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Does your spinner under the multiple-shift system get less per week than the spinner under the single-shift system?—If the spinner on the single-shift system works 11 hours as against 9½ in our case he will naturally get more money.

E-1036. Therefore the spinner under the single-shift system would be earning more than the spinner under the double-shift system?—But he is working more hours.

E-1037. Yes, but you give him the opportunity to work more while he does not get that opportunity under the multiple-shift system?—But still they do not like the single-shift system.

E-1038. They prefer shorter hours?—Yes, because it suits their conditions of life and the mode of living far better than it would under the single-shift system.

E-1039. *The Chairman:* Opinions might differ, but that is your experience?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

PRAKASH (from Mirzapur), a boy worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I came to work this morning at 9 o'clock ; I will go home at 11-30 and come again at 1 and work till 4-30 p.m. I do not go to school. My father and mother are in my village in the United Provinces. My brother is working in the Standard Mill ; I got my job through my brother. I live with my brother. I earn Rs. 1-14-0 a week, out of which I keep a few pice for my pocket expenses and give the balance to my brother. I am working in this mill since eight months ; I have not worked in any other mill. I do not find the work hard ; I like the work. I am a shifter. My age is 15 years. When I grow up I would prefer to be a spinner rather than a weaver because the handling of looms requires a lot of experience. Before I came here I was looking after the cattle in my village.

(The witness withdrew.)

MANGRUL (from Patna), a boy worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I came to work this morning at 9 o'clock and will leave for home at 11-30. I live with my father and mother who are in the lines. I have been working in this mill for the last six months. I did not work in any other mill before I joined this mill. I came from my village eight or nine months ago. I earn Rs. 1-14-0 a week. I have not been fined so far. I have not been ill recently. Formerly I was well fleshed, but I am now weak as I do not get enough food. I give my earnings to my parents. My father does not go to work as he is an old man of 70 years.

(The witness withdrew.)

BABUNIYA (from Arrah, Bihar and Orissa), a woman worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I am a bobbin winder. I am working for the last 12 years. I came here with my husband. I am a Muhammadan. I have four children of whom one is pretty grown up and is in my village ; the other three are with me here. All my children were born here. I did not get any maternity benefit when the children were born. I was away from work for 12 weeks when a child was born. I did not get any pay from the company during this period. My husband works here as an ordinary weaver and earns Rs. 5-7-6 a week. I earn Rs. 3 a week. We go to our village once in two years. We have no land or any other property. If there was a room here for the children and some one is employed by the management to look after the children, I would be willing to leave my children in that room instead of taking them with me into the mills when I am working. I did not lose any of my children. I leave my home at 5 in the morning to come to work in the mill, and go home at 9-30 ; I come again to work at 11. I do not get sufficient time to do proper cooking. If I am a little late in coming to work the *baboos* reprimand me. I feed my children after 9-30 when I go home. My husband is not on the same shift as I am ; he goes at 8 and comes back at 9. As I cannot be at home to serve meals to my husband he takes it himself ; it becomes cold by the time he takes it. I have never worked in any other mill. When I was first entertained I had to pay Rs. 4 *bakshish* to the *sardar* who appointed me. Each time I return back from the village I have to pay the same amount as *bakshish* to the *sardar*. I also pay him 2 annas every week. My husband paid Rs. 6 when he was first appointed. He pays 4 annas a week to the *sardar*. If we refuse to pay to the *sardars* we will not get work. Every worker pays a similar amount to the *sardar*. If I absent myself for four weeks on account of pregnancy and go to work after that period, the *sardar* will have to be paid his *bakshish* again.

(The witness withdrew.)

MUNIYA (from Benares), a Muhammadan woman worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I have worked in the jute mills for 12 or 13 years. I have never worked in a single-shift, but I have friends who work on the single-shift in other mills. The single-shift system is better because we get enough time to go home and prepare our meals. The time that I get under the double-shift system is sufficient but it is irregular. At the time of my first entertainment I had to pay the *sardar* Rs. 4 as *bakshish* ; and I pay 2 annas to him every week.

(The witness withdrew.)

JUMRATH (from Chapra district), a weaver in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I have been working in this mill for the last 12 years. I am an ordinary weaver. I did not pay any *bakshish* to the *sardar* at the time of employment. I secured my employment through one of my village men who was working in the mill, and I do not know whether he paid any *bakshish* to the *sardar* on my behalf. I earn Rs. 5-9-3 a week and Re. 0-10-0 *khoraki*. I have not worked in any other mill. I had to leave my village as I had lots of difficulties and had not enough to eat. After coming here I learnt the work.

(The witness withdrew.)

HARILAL (from Monghyr), a spinner in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I have been working here for the last six years. I am by caste a Dusadh. I brought my wife here, and she died here. I did not pay any *bakshish* for getting my job ; other people might be paying *bakshish* to the *sardar*. I am living in the *busti* with my brother-in-law. When there is a big surplus labour then we have to pay bribes to the *sardar* to get employment, but when there is shortage of labour we get in somehow or other. I came in when labour was short. I earn Rs. 2-14-0 a week including 6 annas *khoraki*. I come to work at 5-30 in the morning and work till 10 ; then I go home and come again at 2 p.m. and work till 6 in the evening. We are paid our salary every Friday.

(The witness withdrew.)

(At the Standard Mills, Titaghur)

GAURI, woman worker, was examined and made the following statement.

I came here from Ganjam district when I was a little child. My father and my mother were dead and I came here with my aunt. I work in the jute department. I throw the jute on to the carding machine. I come to the mill at 5-30 in the morning, work till 9 o'clock, go home and eat my food and return to the mill at 10 o'clock. I then work till 3 o'clock, go home, eat my food and return at 5 o'clock. I then work till 7 o'clock, go home, take my food and sleep and then return to the mill next morning at 5-30 as usual. (She then produced a C-shaped token bearing the number 180.) I work on the C shift. If I feed the jute breaker machine I get Rs. 2-8-0 for four days ; if I take delivery of the slivers I get Rs. 2-6-0 for four days. If I work five days I get Rs. 3-2-0. My husband is a jute cutter in the batching department. He works four days and gets Rs. 3-2-0. If he works five days he gets Rs. 3-12-0. I have my husband's relations in Ganjam but we do not send any money to them. There is another brother there who looks after them and that is why we do not send any money. I live on the mill lines paying a rent of 2 annas a week. When I came here as a little child I worked for one year in another mill. In the other mill also the shift is exactly the same as in this mill. I like to work on this system of shifts. Everybody else is working on this kind of shift. I prepare my rice in the morning before I go to the mill and eat it at 9 o'clock. My husband comes at 8 and goes back at 9 o'clock. We start together at 5 o'clock in the morning to reach the mill at 5-30. At 1 o'clock my husband eats the food I cooked in the morning. When I go back at 3 o'clock I cook the rice which we eat at night. I took leave once last year and went back to Ganjam because my brother died. With the wages we get we eat and clothe ourselves and save 8 annas to Re. 1 every week. We keep this amount so that it may serve us in times of illness. We also sometimes buy clothes with that money. I do not put that money in a savings bank but I spend it. For instance my husband was ill and he had to go to my country and that is how the money is spent. One of the ornaments I am wearing cost Rs. 5 to Rs. 6.

My husband gave me only one ; the rest were given to me by my brother. I had fever a year ago., I did not go to the doctor because I was too weak and unable to move, nor did the doctor come and see me. Some of the Madrasi people go to the doctor, others do not. I paid Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 to a man who came to my house and treated me. He is a man of my caste, but he is not a qualified doctor.

(The witness withdrew.)

MUTHIALU, woman worker, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Ganjam. I cook my food at dawn and go to the mill at 5-30 in the morning, work till 6-30, return home, take my food and go back to the mill at 8 o'clock. I then work till 1 o'clock, return home, take my food and go back to the mill at 2 o'clock. I work till 7 o'clock, then go home, cook my food and eat it. My eyes have not been all right for the past few days. I did not go to the doctor. I put in my eyes the medicine other people give me. I once went to a lady doctor in the other mill with my daughter. She was expecting a baby and was in the seventh month of her pregnancy. The lady doctor wrote something and told us to go to the Sahib at the mill. He read this paper and tore it. We did not know what to do. We had to work. My daughter went back to work. One day when she was passing under the coconut tree she got frightened and fainted. That night she was in great pain. We sent for a *dai* and she examined her and found that the child was dead. Then she was treated and gradually she got better. She then went back to work. The *sardar* told me that my daughter would get money for the time she was absent on account of child-birth. We went to the doctor. He wrote something on a piece of paper and said that my daughter would get money for five weeks. She got money for two weeks only and did not get any money for the remaining three weeks.

Some people go to the doctor and they may get well. If they do not get well they get very much worse.

(The witness withdrew.)

LACHANAO, boy worker, was examined and made the following statement.

I work as a shifter in the spinning department of the Standard Jute Mill. This is my token bearing number R398. I started work in this mill about a year ago. My father and mother have been working here for five years. I have been doing this very work all this time. I come at 9 o'clock and go away at 11 o'clock. I come back at 12 and go away at 4. I do not work anywhere else after I finish this work. If I work four days I get Rs. 1-12-0. If I work five days I get Rs. 2-3-0. I have always been getting these wages. When I was a small boy there was a man in the lines who used to teach me and I learnt a little there. I live in the Standard Mill lines. My father and mother have been working in this mill all along. When I was a little boy I had a little sister who fell ill and died. My family was badly in need of money, so I came to work. I heard from my father that there was work in the mill and I came to the mill and saw the *sardar*. He took me to the office. I put my thumb-impression there on a paper and from that day I started working here. I did not pay anything to the *sardar*. He is not a relation of my father. He is a man from upcountry whereas I am a Madrasi. I did not pay anything to the *sardar* to get a job. I am now 14 years old. I learnt something from the teacher on the lines for four or five months. I gave up learning three years ago. After I gave up learning and before I joined the mill I was doing odd jobs for the Bengalee shop-keepers in the bazaar and earned a little money. I like to go and read provided this does not interfere with my work. (The boy was able to write a few vernacular alphabets and the Arabic numerals). I am looking forward to become a spinner in the spinning department. If I learn weaving I will become a weaver. At present I am a little boy and I have to do whatever is given to me.

(The witness withdrew.)

ABDUL HAKIM, worker in the Standard Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Darbhanga. I have been here 20 years. I live in the lines. I have not brought my family here ; they are in Darbhanga. I am now 32 years old. All the time I have been working in the mill here my family was in Darbhanga. I go there every year and stay for three or four months. People of my district do not bring their families to these industrial areas here. If I brought my family my people would laugh at me. I have got some lands at Darbhanga. I have my wife and two children there. I have also two brothers. My wife looks after the children. She is a *purda* lady. I earn Rs. 8 one week and Rs. 9 another week. I am a broad loom weaver. I send home Rs. 20 a month ; sometimes I borrow some money here and send Rs. 40. I take the loan from the *sardar*. I take Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 at a time. I pay him no interest. I owe him no money now. I am a family friend of the *sardar*. I get work in the weaving department every day. Only the new men will have to wait for some days before they get work. I am not played off on any day. The *sardar* comes from another district in Behar ; he has brought his family here and lives with them. Nowadays some of our people are bringing their families with them. I do not want to be a *sardar*. I pay Rs. 2 a week to another man and he cooks my food for me. Sometimes the crops in my country get damaged and I have to send money to my family to live on. On those occasions I have to borrow money.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. MIHBUBUL HUQ, President, and Mr. AFTAB ALLY, General Secretary, Indian Seamen's Union.

E-1040. *The Chairman:* You have stated in the covering letter to your memorandum that the seafarers' section, which you describe as the main section of your union, has a present strength of 15,981 members. Are those members all registered in Calcutta?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes.

E-1041. They are seamen taking service from the Port of Calcutta?—Yes.

E-1042. In addition to this main section I take it that there are other sections of your union?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes. We have three sections—the seafarers' section, the waterside workers' section and the inland waterways workers' section. In all our membership is 18,151.

E-1043. We have had a memorandum submitted to us from the Bengal Mariners' Union. Is that a separate union from yours?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes; I am a President of the Bengal Mariners' Union.

E-1044. But in other respects it is an independent union?—Yes.

E-1045. Is there any proposal to amalgamate these two unions?—The matter is under negotiation.

E-1046. At present we may treat them as separate unions?—Yes.

E-1047. *Mr. Ahmed:* When was your union formed?—(*Mr. Ally*) In 1908. The Indian Seamen's Union and the National Seamen's Union of India were amalgamated on the 27th August 1927.

E-1048. What is the numerical strength of your membership?—At present about 18,000.

E-1049. What is the exact number of Indian seamen which is now available for service in the Port of Calcutta?—According to the information supplied to us by the Shipping Office it is about 140,000 seamen.

E-1050. How many of that number are now employed?—According to the Shipping Office's figure about 53,000 including the coastal vessels.

E-1051. How is the number of 53,000 divided?—50,000 are employed on the high seas and 3,000 in coastal vessels.

E-1052. When you say " Coastal vessels " what ports do you include?—(*Mr. Huq*) From Calcutta to Rangoon, from Calcutta to Bombay and from Calcutta to Colombo.

E-1053. Out of 140,000 available seamen only 53,000 are working. The remainder are unemployed all the time?—Yes, that is so. (*Mr. Ally*) These figures were given to us by the Shipping Office, but we believe that about 100,000 Indian seamen are always kept unemployed.

E-1054. How many Indian seamen are always seeking employment in the town of Calcutta?—About 20,000.

E-1055. *The Chairman*: The rest having gone to their country in the meantime?—(*Mr. Huq*) Sometimes they go there, but they do not stay there for long.

E-1056. In addition to that 20,000 there will be some others in other ports like Chittagong and Rangoon who are seeking employment?—Yes.

E-1057. *Mr. Ahmed*: What were the recommendations submitted by the Clow Committee?—The Clow Committee reported that abuses existed in the present system of recruitment through licensed shipping brokers and ghat serangs. The committee suggested the abolition of that system and the establishment in its place of an employment bureau on which there should be representatives of Government, the shipowners and the seamen, with advisory committees attached to it.

E-1058. What happened after the submission of that report?—We were informed that the Shipping Master of Calcutta would be in charge of the recruitment bureau, and that recruitment would be started through that bureau ; but up till now not a single seaman has been so recruited.

E-1059. What is the name of the special recruitment officer?—Captain Darvell.

E-1060. I think he was appointed recruiting officer for the Port of Calcutta in 1924?—Yes.

E-1061. What has he been doing since then? Has he been recruiting in accordance with the Clow Committee's report?—(*Mr. Ally*) In August 1924 the Government of Bengal informed our union of the appointment of Captain Darvell as officer-in-charge of the Seamen's Recruiting Bureau, and they also told us that he was going to act in another capacity, viz., as shipping master.

E-1062. He is both shipping master and recruitment officer?—Yes ; not a single seaman he has recruited, nor has a recruitment bureau come into existence so far. We have submitted prayer after prayer to Government, but nothing has happened.

E-1063. Will you submit to the Commission the resolutions which you have forwarded to the Government of India on this matter?—Yes, we will submit copies of all the resolutions which we have passed in recent years.

E-1064. You describe in your memorandum your grievances with regard to the abuses practised under the brokerage system. Why do you want to abolish this system?—(*Mr. Huq*) Because by this pernicious system the seamen are fleeced ; they are made to pay in an indirect way about 25 per cent of their wages to intermediaries—the licensed shipping brokers. By such a system seamen are kept unemployed for years. They do not get any chance of employment, while those who are in a position to give bribes to the heart's desire, of these brokers are given preference for jobs on board a ship.

E-1065. Referring to the inland waterways workers, what hours do they work?—For 13 and 14 hours a day.

E-1066. What hours do the seamen engaged by the Port Commissioners work?—They are also subject to a lot of hardships.

E-1067. Do seamen get any holiday with pay?—(*Mr. Ally*) Holidays are unknown to seamen.

E-1068. Do they get any pension or gratuity?—(*Mr. Huq*) No, nothing of the sort.

E-1069. Do seamen working for the P. & O. Company get any pension?—(*Mr. Ally*) Sometimes old seamen, on making an application, get a few rupees a month, but we do not call that a pension system.

E-1070. Do these seamen work for a long time?—Yes, some of them have worked for thirty years. It depends upon the sweet will of the employers whether they get anything when they retire. (*Mr. Huq*) A pension is given to the serangs employed by the Clan Line.

E-1071. Do the shipping companies supply their seamen with housing accommodation?—(*Mr. Ally*) No.

E-1072. Do they supply them with any club or any recreation ground or any sailors' home?—No.

E-1073. Sir Alexander Murray tells me that they do supply a sailors' home?—That is only for Europeans ; Indian seamen are not allowed to enter the doors of that sailors' home.

E-1074. Have you read what Colonel Harnett said in London?—(*Mr. Hug*) Yes, he said that greater facilities are going to be given to seamen in the matter of recreation and the treatment of venereal diseases, and that next autumn a club will be opened for them, but all these things are only meant for white seamen and not for the poor Indian lascar.

E-1075. These things are to be provided for Europeans only?—Yes.

E-1076. *Mr. Clow*: Are there any other unions on this side of India which include seamen?—The Indian Seamen's Union is the only recognized union, and it is registered under the Trade Union Act.

E-1077. Is the Quartermasters' Union affiliated to your union?—It is a branch of our union.

E-1078. From your report I see that it was agreed by the executive councils of both unions that when the Indian Seamen's Union was registered the Quartermasters' Union was to be merged in it. Has that merger taken place?—Not yet. The president of that union is still away in Geneva.

E-1079. You estimate the number of seamen available for employment at 2½ lakhs, and the number of seamen that can be employed at any time at half a lakh. You have also suggested more than once that seamen should be employed on a roster system?—Yes, so that each seaman may get some share of the work. At present some seamen get work year after year, whereas other deserving seamen come away disappointed from the Shipping Office day after day.

E-1080. If there was a roster system, and if there are five men for every one job, that would mean that the average seamen would only be employed for one-fifth of his time?—Yes, but he would get his turn some time or another.

E-1081. He would be employed for one year and unemployed for four years?—Yes.

E-1082. Do you think that would be a satisfactory system?—Yes. It would mean that every seaman would not be kept unemployed indefinitely.

E-1083. But a man cannot live for five years on one year's earnings?—(*Mr. Ally*) We think that if a roster system were introduced matters would be adjusted by the supply and demand, especially if old seamen were retired and the recruitment of new men was immediately stopped.

E-1084. Unless the number of seamen available were substantially reduced the effect of a roster system would be practically to starve all the seamen because they would not be employed with sufficient frequency to enable them to get an adequate income?—(*Mr. Hug*) Under a roster system each seaman would have the satisfaction of knowing that he would get into work at some time or another; he would not be kept indefinitely out of employment.

E-1085. If every seaman is to be employed for one year only out of five he will not be able to live. One year's earning will not keep him for four years' idleness?—An alternative suggestion is that old seamen should be pensioned off and fresh recruitment should be stopped.

E-1086. Is it not better that few men should be employed and that their employment should be as continuous as possible rather than that the available employment should be spread over a very large number?—Yes, but as matters stand that is not possible. Those who have been seamen all their lives cannot give up their profession at once.

E-1087. Am I right in supposing that one of your reasons for insisting on the roster system is that you want to devise something automatic which will check bribery?—Quite so.

E-1088. Do you think that bribery has decreased since 1922 when the Recruitment Committee reported?—Not in the least. The report of that committee is a dead letter. Bribery is still rampant.

E-1089. Do you think the same amounts are still being taken from the seamen?—Yes, and bigger amounts.

E-1090. You have stated that the seamen are paying money to the brokers and *ghat* serangs. Are they paying it to the brokers and *ghat* serangs directly or are they paying it to the serangs?—They pay in different ways. When they present their promissory notes a big commission is extorted from them.

E-1091. That is a discount?—Yes.

E-1092. I am not talking of the discount on the promissory notes. I am talking of what was formerly known among seamen as the increase?—(*Mr. Ally*) Only in the deck department do they call it an increase.

E-1093. Is that still being paid to the same extent?—Yes.

E-1094. What has your union done in the last few years to check that?—When seamen join the union they cannot remain long in it because they are victimized and black-listed ; that is one of the primary reasons why the union can never be a really strong body.

E-1095. Are not there men in your union who have been in employment for a number of years?—The majority of our members are now always employed because unemployed members cannot keep up their subscription.

E-1096. Everybody cannot be victimized if they remain in employment? —They are always victimized when it is found out that they belong to the union. They are victimized not only by the employers, but by the serangs, because they think that if the union's activities are not checked it might become too strong for them.

E-1097. Has not the Quartermasters' Union been able to stop bribery to some extent?—To a small extent. Besides only 1,700 men are concerned in the Quartermasters' Union.

E-1098. Why cannot you copy their methods?—Until there is a system of direct recruitment and registration of seamen through an employment bureau with advisory committees attached thereto, it will be impossible to check bribery.

E-1099. *The Chairman*: Have you ever decided that your 18,000 members should all agree never again to give a bribe to a serang?—We always ask our members not to do so, but after remaining out of employment for months and months they cannot help paying a bribe in order to get employment. When we have seen them dying of starvation we have asked them to go and pay the bribe in order to save their lives, because it is better to pay a bribe than die.

E-1100. You told us that your 18,000 members are continuously employed? —I said that some of our members automatically lose their membership after remaining unemployed for years and years. When they join a ship they become members, but when they are unemployed they cannot pay their subscriptions, and so they lose their membership.

E-1101. Do you not think that a firm decision on the part of your 18,000 members to have no more to do with this pernicious system would do good? —We did take action in connexion with one particular broker, and we kept him out of business. He made things so intolerable that we decided to boycott him, and we have kept him out of business altogether in spite of the fact that he is holding a Government licence.

E-1102. That shows the power you have?—But we do not want to take that sort of action. We want to try to settle things in a different way.

E-1103. I take it that your 18,000 members being mostly more or less continuously employed, must be some of the best men that go to sea?—Yes.

E-1104. And that if they took a firm action, as you have successfully done in one case, they might be successful in other cases as well, and you might be able to purify the service by your own efforts?—In the particular case to which I have just referred, the Harrison Line tried to get a crew from Bombay; we kept the ship idle for five days. After those five days they decided to take a crew from Calcutta because they could not get a crew from Bombay.

E-1105. Then they took that crew without any bribes?—Yes. We have also refused to accept these promissory notes, and now they are paying in cash. (*Mr. Huq*) The same old system of recruitment through licensed

shipping brokers still exists. In this particular instance the matter became so intolerable to the seamen that we decided to resort to determined action, but what is the fruit of it really?—The case is hanging over us.

E-1106. *Mr. Clow*: If you can take firm action when matters get intolerable, why are you not able to pursue that policy generally?—The difficulty is that all the men who are continuously employed do not stay in Calcutta. If we go on doing drastic things the difficulty may arise that the union will find its existence jeopardized, because it is the interests of these licensed shipping brokers which are involved, and they will resort to all sorts of tactics and devices.

E-1107. Why do you suggest that articles should always be signed in the shipping office and not on the ship?—*(Mr. Ally)* If the articles were signed in the ship the crew might be persuaded to give bribes, but if the articles are signed in the shipping office other people will be there and bribery cannot take place.

E-1108. Is a representative of the union not allowed on the ship at the time of signing on?—He is not expelled from the ship, but the ship is not a proper place for the signing on of men.

E-1109. You state in your memorandum "If the company wants, it can discharge men without assigning any reason, and at any port, without payment of wages for the unexpired period". Surely that is not correct?—Yes, it is.

E-1110. If there is an agreement for twelve months is the company at liberty at any moment to discharge a man at any port?—Can a seaman be discharged at any time during the currency of the articles for no reason?—Yes.

E-1111. You refer to sick and injured seamen, and one of your demands is a free passage to home ports for all seamen left in foreign ports due to sickness. Has he not any title to a free passage at present?—We had a case recently of a man who was taken sick in a foreign port. He was put on to another ship, to return home, and the officers of that ship forced him to work, with the result that when he arrived in port his condition became worse. We want such men to be brought home without having to work.

E-1112. But supposing he becomes fit on the way home?—If he becomes fit then he must work.

E-1113. You suggest that there should be regulations on the sale of alcohol. What regulations do you suggest?—There should be no grog shops allowed near places where seamen live; nor should any person be allowed to go on board a ship in order to supply the seamen with narcotics or alcohol.

E-1114. Are persons allowed on ships to supply alcohol?—Sometimes persons go on board and supply it surreptitiously.

E-1115. With regard to International Labour Conventions you state "The time has come for the Government of India to change its angle of vision and to ratify the conventions and to accept the recommendations which are passed." The memorandum of the Indian Chamber of Commerce says "My committee are surprised to notice the promptness with which the Government of India desire to take action for the ratification of conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Conference." Can you reconcile those two statements?—*(Mr. Huq)* They are like poles asunder. We want co-operation between labour and employers.

E-1116. You recognize that ratification or non-ratification of conventions is done with the consent of the Assembly?—Yes, but sometimes non-ratification is passed hurriedly as was recently the case in the Legislative Assembly with regard to the convention regarding the minimum wage. It was done in a very hurried manner and at the same time the proper representatives of the people were not there. What we gain in Geneva is invariably lost at Delhi. What is the use of having a thing done in the international forum where delegates from various parts of the world go to legislate for recommendations when they are not given effect to in India.

E-1117. In the case of the minimum wage convention was not the discussion specially postponed because it came up in a thin house?—There was an amendment, which was accepted, because this Labour Commission was sent to investigate the conditions of labour here. With regard to other conventions they are not at all given effect to.

E-1118. This is a point on which you do not agree with the Indian Chamber of Commerce?—No.

E-1119. *Mr. Joshi*: Which conventions have the Government ratified and which conventions have they not ratified as regards seamen?—They have only ratified the convention dealing with the employment of boys as stokers, and also the convention dealing with the medical examination of children.

E-1120. They have not ratified the other conventions?—No.

E-1121. Mr. Clow asked you whether you knew that these decisions were taken by Government with the consent of the Assembly. Are you aware that in the Legislative Assembly the Government of India have got a large number of votes at their disposal? Are you also aware that every time Government desires to carry a point they call on this block of votes to support them?—That is so. So far as labour is concerned labour is almost entirely unrepresented both in the local legislatures as well as in the central legislature.

E-1122. With regard to recruitment, does not Captain Darvell keep any list of serangs?—(*Mr. Ally*) He has only recently made out a list—when the Commission started its enquiry at Karachi, or a couple of weeks before that. Captain Darvell was appointed in the year 1924 and it is only recently that he has kept a list.

E-1123. You ask for the supervision of such institutions as taverns, lodging houses, etc. Do you want that supervision exercised by municipality or by Government?—By persons representing the Government as well as the union, and the employers if they like.

E-1124. You want a joint machinery for supervising the housing accommodation?—Yes.

E-1125. Then you ask for supervision of boatmen plying between the ships and the shore. Do they come under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes.

E-1126. You want the Indian Merchant Shipping Act to apply even to these small boats?—Yes. They are an annexe to the ocean-going vessels in a sense.

E-1127. Then you deal with the question of a seaman being allowed to allot part of his wages to his relatives or family?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes that is very important.

E-1128. Section 53 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act says "A seaman may require that a stipulation be inserted in the agreement for the allotment by means of an allotment note of any part of his wages in favour either of a relative or member of his family". This section allows a seaman to allot one-third of his wages. Your point is that instead of one-third he should be allowed to allot three-fourths?—Yes.

The Chairman: Does that provision limit his allotment to one-third?—Can he not, under the existing law, allot one-half?

Mr. Joshi: The provision says "not exceeding one-third".

E-1129. Do you want that proportion altered to three-fourths?—This is an optional clause. It is not given effect to. A seaman finds difficulty in making the allotment because the signings on are done so hurriedly in the ship that he cannot make proper arrangements.

E-1130. *The Chairman*: Your point is that in practice the section is not properly applied?—Quite so.

E-1131. You are aware that in the English ports great attention is paid to that point?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes, but in Indian ports no attention is paid to it. No facilities are given to the seamen for allotments.

E-1132. Has your union taken up this point with the shipowners?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes. It was included in our fourteen demands; they did not take any notice of it.

E-1133. *Mr. Joshi*: You ask for proper accommodation for seamen. What sort of accommodation is given to seamen at present on board ship?—It is very bad indeed, like cages.

E-1134. Is there a difference made, as regards accommodation, between a European seaman and an Indian seaman?—Yes. The difference is as great as that between day and night.

E-1135. Are you aware that section 90 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act makes a difference between the accommodation as regards superficial area given to British seamen and Indian seamen? Is the stature of the Indian seaman different from that of the European seaman, so that the latter requires more superficial area?—(*Mr. Huq*) No. This is an invidious distinction which is made in this section, and we want to have it done away with. There should not be any distinction made between the Indian seamen and the European seamen as regards superficial area.

E-1136. Is there any difference made in the rations?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes, there is a great difference. The food which is given to Indian seamen is not fit for any human being.

E-1137. Do most of your members eat meat?—Yes.

E-1138. They would like to get as good food as is given to European seamen?—Yes. They are given dry fish five days a week. (*Mr. Huq*) We claim equality in the quality of food.

E-1139. You also ask that beds and pillows should be provided for Indian seamen. Are not beds provided at present?—No.

E-1140. Would your members agree to pay some small contribution towards a sickness insurance scheme?—(*Mr. Ally*) They would, but our demand is that there should be a national fund to be contributed to by the employers alone.

E-1141. Your first demand is that it should be a non-contributory scheme? —We would contribute provided our wages were raised.

E-1142. Supposing you are given a choice between no scheme and a contributory scheme, would you agree to a contributory scheme? Would you also agree to a contributory pension scheme?—No. Why should we contribute towards a pension scheme?

E-1143. Suppose you are given a choice between no pension and a pension by means of a contributory scheme, to which also the employers and Government would contribute?—(*Mr. Huq*) We should like to know the proportions.

E-1144. I suggest that it should be a fair proportion—say, one-third?— We are prepared to contribute a very small fraction in order to get a pension.

E-1145. By section 30 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act it is necessary that the articles of agreement should be explained in a language understood by the seaman. Is that always done?—(*Mr. Ally*) No. I was present a few days ago when the articles were read over to a crew, and the whole of the document of this size (showing a printed article of agreement) was read over in five minutes. How can such a document be explained in five minutes?

E-1146. Your point is that the articles of agreement are not properly explained to the men?—Never.

E-1147. You are aware that sometimes the discharge certificate contains a clause about the quality of work. Do you approve of that?—(*Mr. Huq*) We do not, because it creates ill-feeling between a master and a crew and it also makes it difficult for the man to get further employment.

E-1148. With regard to advances, did I understand you to say that the system by which the broker used to take commission has been stopped?— It has been recently stopped.

E-1149. I want to know exactly what practice has been stopped. How much advance is given?—A month's advance.

E-1150. Does the broker always give the full month's advance?—He does now, but previously he gave half in promissory notes and half in cash.

E-1151. Did he charge any interest?—Yes. On these promissory notes the seamen were paying 6¼ per cent interest.

E-1152. Both those practices have been stopped now?—Yes.

E-1153. Did your union make any efforts to see that Captain Darvell carried out his duties in the office to which he was appointed?—(*Mr. Ally*) We addressed him many times. We also passed resolutions which were communicated to Captain Darvell but we were never listened to.

E-1154. *The Chairman*: Did you have consultations with Captain Darvell? —Yes.

E-1155. *Mr. Joshi*: Do the British Indian Steam Navigation Company ever recruit their seamen through brokers or do they recruit direct?—They do not call him a broker; they call him a *ghat* serang, but he is just the same as a broker. There is no difference except in name.

E-1156. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do they recruit through *ghat* serangs?—The only difference between the two is this: in the one case they pay a commission of 5 per cent to the broker, whereas in the other case they pay a salary. But essentially there is no difference in the system of recruitment.

E-1157. *Mr. Joshi*: Government makes a difference between the method of the British India Steam Navigation Company and the other method. In your experience do you find any difference between the two as regards corruption and bribery?—So far as the seamen and the union are concerned we do not find any difference.

E-1158. Did you bring any case of corruption to the notice of the British India Steam Navigation Company?—We have brought our grievances to their notice and negotiations are still going on. After the boycott we addressed a letter to the company with regard to these corrupt practices. The company wanted the seamen concerned to give evidence before them and prove the existence of the alleged practices. We asked them to give an undertaking that they would not victimize the men who would give evidence. No such undertaking was given and we have not been able to send up our witnesses.

E-1159. *The Chairman*: You have had negotiations with the company only by means of letters; have you ever sought for an interview?—I had an interview also with Captain Liddle, the Marine Superintendent.

E-1160. They also received you and discussed the matter with you?—Yes, they received me and discussed the matter with me.

E-1161. *Mr. Tassie*: You say in your memorandum that your union has at present 15,981 members. But I see from the subscriptions that you have received during the past eight years your membership is only as follows:—

1922	3,556
1923	2,638
1924	72
1925	334
1926	134
1927	2,100
1928	2,100
1929	250

That gives an average of about 1,400 a year. The largest number is 3,556. How do you say in your memorandum that you have 15,981 members?—When our union was registered in August 1929 we had 9,981 members and now we have 15,981 members.

E-1162. But the total subscription you collected up to 31st March 1929 was only Rs. 175 representing a membership of 250 only?—We have stated in our report that the majority of our members are in arrears of their subscription.

E-1163. Are they in arrears for eight years?—That is the case with the majority of the 9,981 members on our rolls at the time of registration. Formerly though members did not pay their subscription they could not be removed from the roll. There was no time limit. Now we have changed the rule and if a person does not pay his subscription within two years his name will be struck off.

E-1164. How does a man become a member of your union? Does he pay an entrance fee or a subscription before he becomes a member?—We have membership cards on the model of the National Union of Seamen in Great Britain. A man who wants to become a member has to fill that card and affix the necessary stamps. We keep a copy of that card in the office and also enter in a register the amounts paid by him. He has to pay his subscription before he joins the union.

E-1165. How much is the subscription?—We have three scales: As. 8, Re. 1 and Rs. 2. We have changed our rules recently and they have been approved by the general body of the seamen.

E-1166. Meanwhile you have been quite happy to go on with an average of 1,400 people paying their subscriptions while you have been saying that you have a membership of about 16,000?—All the new members enlisted between April last year and now have paid their subscriptions.

E-1167. Dealing with recruitment you say that now and then "mushroom unions spring up being engineered and financed by ingenious persons interested in maintaining the pernicious system of recruitment through licensed brokers". Did not your present secretary once start a union when he came back from America?—But that was not a union of this type. He was a seaman himself. The seamen did not like the way in which the old union was run and they appealed to him to start another union. (*Mr. Huq*) Then better sense prevailed and amalgamation took place automatically. When there was a rivalry between an organized union and a mushroom union or a bogus union the latter had to give way.

E-1168. You say they are mushroom unions. Did you not send an appeal to the various shipping companies saying that unless they supported your union you feared that all the seamen would desert your union and go to the other union which had communistic ideas? Was that the mushroom union you were making an appeal about?—(*Mr. Ally*) We know nothing about that at the moment.

E-1169. But somebody has been sending that in your name?—We might have sent it, but we cannot say one way or the other without seeing the paper referred to.

Mr. Tassie: Dealing with the waterside workers' section of your union you say that that body was involved in a twenty-two days' strike within a couple of months of its formation and that the strike was withdrawn on the assurance of the Port Commissioners that their various minimum demands would be considered. As a matter of fact what happened was that the men were told that if they returned to work the Chairman would consider their rates of pay and if he found that they were lower than those paid by other employers for similar work he would recommend that the rate should be increased. But he never said anything about considering the minimum demands.

Mr. Cliff: Was the Chairman's offer made in writing?

Mr. Tassie: It must have been in writing.

E-1170. *Mr. Cliff*: Did you receive a communication in writing from the Chairman?—Yes, we did.

E-1171. Have you a copy of that here?—No.

E-1172. You might send it in?—Yes, I will do so. But it is a fact that we withdrew our strike on the assurance of the Chairman of the Port Commissioners that he would consider our minimum demands. Of course he has considered the minimum demands of a minor section of our workers and granted them small increments, but so far as the majority is concerned he has done nothing for them. He wanted to know the strength of our union, but we had communicated to him this information even before he asked for it. When the waterside workers' union was amalgamated with us their 2,000 members became our members also.

E-1173. One of your minimum demands is one month's privilege leave without prejudice to fundamental and medical leave. Do you not know that many of the workers enjoy a full month's leave with pay?—Some do, but we want that privilege for all. At present it covers only a handful of workers.

E-1174. But they can all get if they want it?—At present only a handful of workers in particular grades, such as the serangs and so on, get leave. But we want the privilege to be extended to people of all grades.

Mr. Cliff: Do I understand Mr. Tassie to say that they can all get this benefit if they want it?

Mr. Tassie: They can all get it at any time without pay but after a certain number of years service they can get it with pay.

E-1175. As regards provident fund is it not a fact that all the workers not entitled to a pension can join the provident fund if they want to do so?—No, some of the workers are not given this facility. We want these facilities for all the workers.

E-1176. But is it not a fact that the men who do not get provident fund get a pension?—The trouble is this. Certain men get provident fund and certain others get pension. A few people get privilege leave. They say that all the people get all these privileges and for all outward appearance they show that they are affording all the facilities to all the workers and that they are treating them nicely and sympathetically. But actually that is not the case.

E-1177. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Are there any workers who do not get either a pension or a provident fund?—Many. The majority of them get nothing.

E-1178. *Mr. Tassie*: Do the waterside workers not get either pension or provident fund?—Yes, they get pension. The point is this. A few years ago the men had a choice between pension and provident fund. At that time the union was not active and the men were misled into choosing pension. At present some people have the benefit of provident fund. Others cannot get it even if they want it.

E-1179. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you cater for all the workers on the waterside?—Yes, for all the dockers engaged in the water front, in the quays and jetties.

E-1180. Are there a number of men employed by contractors on the waterside?—Yes, there are. But they are not entitled to any of the privileges from the Port Trust.

E-1181. With regard to the employees of the Port Trust in whatever capacity they are employed, are they eligible to a pension on the one hand or entitled to become members of a provident fund?—No, the Port Trust does not recognize workers employed by stevedores.

E-1182. They are men employed by the stevedores; they are not directly employed by the Port Trust. Is there any section of the workers employed by the Port Trust directly who cannot either be members of a provident fund or be entitled to pension?—The workers directly employed by the Port Trust get either pension or provident fund. But the workers want provident fund and not pension.

E-1183. *The Chairman*: You have admitted that all those directly employed by the Port Trust come either under the pension scheme or the provident fund scheme. But they would like to come under the provident fund scheme and not the pension scheme?—That is so.

E-1184. *Mr. Tassie*: You say that one of your minimum demands is that arrangements must be made for payment of compensation to workers for injuries received by accident in course of their employment as provided in the Workmen's Compensation Act. Can you give any instance in which compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act has not been paid by the Port Commissioners?—We do not say that the Port Commissioners do not pay compensation, but the workers find it extraordinarily difficult to recover the compensation due to them. In one case where a man lost his thumb I had to undergo considerable difficulty before I got his compensation. He was awarded Rs. 115.

E-1185. *The Chairman*: What improvement in the law or the administration of the law would you recommend to the Commission?—We want that the union or the worker concerned should have the right of approaching the Commissioner for workmen's compensation directly without approaching the employers first and wasting a lot of time. We must be able to file our case with the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner directly and get our compensation from him.

E-1186. *Mr. Tassie*: In your memorandum you also ask for a "formal recognition of the union by the Port Trust". On the 21st October last the Chairman of the Port Trust wrote to you asking for information regarding the constitution of your union and the extent to which it represented the Port Trust staff. If you were anxious about recognition why did you not reply to his letter?—We supplied the Chairman with a copy of our rules and our annual report and asked him for an interview. Since he did not grant an interview we thought that it was better to organize the men more firmly.

E-1187. You did not answer that letter?—The letter was not answered.

E-1188. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the establishment of an employment bureau you have to face the contention of the shipping employers who say that it is possible to get crews together only through serangs and tindals.

What is the opinion of your union as to whether crews can be got without the aid of serangs and tindals?—There are 20,000 men waiting for employment in the port. Many of them wait in the shipping office from 10 to 5 every day. Without the help of serangs and tindals we can get men easily even for 10 ships a day. (*Mr. Huq*) It would be a pleasant task for the union to arrange for the men as quickly as possible.

E-1189. For instance Captain Liddle in his memorandum says that " the men themselves do not want it " and " the serangs and tindals are the only people who can get effective crews together, and the serangs alone can bridge the gaps and complete the formation of a workable crew which a State organization has utterly failed to accomplish ". Seeing that you make a demand for the establishment of an employment bureau how will you meet the position of the shipping employers with regard to the obtaining of effective crews?—(*Mr. Ally*) Even with an employment bureau they will be getting the same seamen they are getting now. The only difference is: now they are getting through brokers and serangs, under that system they will be employed direct. So far as the men remain the same I do not see where the question of effectiveness comes in.

E-1190. *The Chairman*: Do you mean that you will get the same crews—friends of each other, men from the same country or village to serve together? —In 90 per cent of the ships there is some trouble or other when it reaches the home ports of the seamen on account of bribery and so on. It is always contended that the serangs take their relatives. Of course that is true in a few cases. But that is no reason why we should not establish a public employment bureau.

E-1191. You ask to be represented on an advisory committee for recruitment of seamen. Would it be your endeavour then to see that harmonious crews were made up of a number of disjointed individuals?—Yes.

E-1192. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: It might happen that the next man on the roster was not from the same village or country as the rest. In such cases how would it be possible to gather a harmonious crew?—We do not intend that the roster should be strictly followed in such cases.

E-1193. *The Chairman*: You may keep to the roster as nearly as possible. At the same time you would recognize the need for harmony?—Yes, that is essential.

E-1194. *Mr. Cliff*: Does the union see any practical difficulty with regard to the obtaining of disciplined crews through an agency such as you suggest? —There will be no difficulty at all. Even now there are some people employed who have had no experience at all. They simply pay some money to the serangs and get appointed. Under the system we suggest the ship will be manned by the most efficient crew, for there will be no room for bribery and only the most efficient men will be taken.

E-1195. You agree that it is essential to have harmony?—Yes, we agree.

E-1196. The point you have to face up to is whether employment through this agency would yield effective and disciplined crews?—Under the present system the brokers engage the serangs and the serangs have to take the men who would work under them. Certain serangs have one or two relatives and they take them. All the serangs have not got relatives to be employed as seamen. Even if a recruitment committee was appointed the serangs might be given the privilege of taking one or two of their relatives as seamen. But so far as efficiency is concerned under the proposed method the most efficient crew will be employed. From the discipline point of view also the public employment bureau will be a better method.

E-1197. Is there any office in Calcutta where there is an open muster of seamen from which they are employed?—Serangs and quartermasters are sometimes selected in this way but not the seamen.

E-1198. We are told that unions argue that brokers and ghat serangs accept bribes and generally exploit the seamen. Have you urged that as a union?—That is what we have been saying. That is a fact.

E-1199. Have you ever made representations to the British India Steam Navigation Company in regard to this question?—Yes, we have done so.

E-1200. Have you had cases that have been enquired into?—There was recently one case and we reported it to the company. We have been asked to send the man concerned and we have had no report of it.

E-1201. Have you made any representations before that?—I have already said that we made representations on this question and we were asked to produce the men to give evidence. We asked for an undertaking not to victimize the men concerned. Since no such undertaking was forthcoming we did not send our men.

E-1202. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I take it that you have sent up only one case. Have you sent up more than one?—The one case that we have sent up is not a case of bribery. It is a case in which an officer is concerned. So far as cases of bribery and corruption are concerned unless we get a clear undertaking not to victimize the men we are not going to send our men merely to be victimized.

E-1203. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to workmen's compensation I am told that the Commissioner for workmen's compensation summoned a meeting of shipping representatives with a view to discussing the question as to the amount that should be allowed for the cash value of the lascar's board and lodging. Has the Commissioner for compensation consulted your union on this question?—The amount was fixed in consultation with us. But we are not complaining about that. What we want is that there should not be a long delay in the payment of compensation. We should not be compelled to approach the employers first.

E-1204. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Have you instituted any enquiries with regard to the indebtedness of the lascars?—(*Mr. Huq*) They are very heavily indebted because they have to stay in lodgings for a very long time waiting to be employed. In order to alleviate their indebtedness we contemplate starting a Labour Bank, a sort of Mutual Benefit Bank. We have the rules ready and when it is put in operation we hope to alleviate the financial difficulties of the seamen to some extent.

E-1205. Have you approached any of the shipping employers to help you in this matter?—We contemplate doing that very soon.

E-1206. Is indebtedness among seamen a very serious matter?—It is a life and death problem. They are always in the clutches of the *Kabuli* money-lenders who take exorbitant rates of interest from them.

E-1207. Have you heard of any shipping company which has started a co-operative credit society for the benefit of lascars?—No, not to my knowledge.

E-1208. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In the memorandum submitted by the Indian Quartermasters' Union they say: "Unfortunately the Calcutta Corporation instead of helping, try to exact taxes as much as they can from the union". What taxes do the Calcutta Corporation levy on the union?—I do not agree with that statement.

E-1209. In your memorandum you definitely say that "the British India Steam Navigation Company engages seamen direct through their Ghat Serangs". In his memorandum Captain Liddle says that the seamen are engaged through serangs and that "the ghat serangs have no influence in the matter of choice and in no way interfere with selections"?—Captain Liddle is perhaps referring to the engine crew. It is true to a certain extent with regard to the engine crew. There the *ghat* serangs of the engine department have nothing to do with the selection of serangs. But it is not the case with the saloon crew. Unless the seaman pays the ghat serang he cannot even appear for selection.

E-1210. With regard to wages would it help the seamen if their wages were raised by one-third?—Unless some methods are found for saving their pay I do not see how any increase will help them. They should have facility of employment.

E-1211. In your memorandum you say that seamen have to pay in an indirect form 25 per cent of their total wages merely for the purpose of being recruited through Government Licensed Shipping Brokers. Is that an accurate figure?—Yes, they have to pay 25 per cent.

E-1212. It is not exaggerated and you say that out of their total wages they pay 25 per cent?—It comes to that, putting all the things together.

E-1213. If you stopped bribing it would increase the pay by 33⅓ per cent?—Yes, it would. Certainly.

E-1214. And that would make big difference?—Yes.

E-1215. You say in your memorandum that Indian seamen are exploited by white shipowners in every possible way. Do you make a differentiation

between Indian shipowners and British shipowners?—We do not mean thereby that only the British shipowners are exploiting. So far as the treatment of seamen is concerned there is not much difference between Indian companies and British companies.

E-1216. You do not say that one class of shipowners treat worse than others?—No. (*Mr. Huq*) As regards the scale of wages there is a great difference.

E-1217. You do not make any difference between Indian-owned ships and British-owned ships?—(*Mr. Ally*) No.

E-1218. You are only making a difference between Indian seamen and British seamen?—Yes.

E-1219. If you had your way and if the Indian seamen were put on exactly the same terms as the English seamen, do you think that they would employ as many Indian seamen as they are employing to-day?—(*Mr. Huq*) They are employing Indian seamen because they can be got at a cheaper rate.

E-1220. If you put the Indian seamen on exactly the same rates as the white seaman you would expect more unemployment than you have to-day?—Our point is that we must get our wages proportionately, adequately and justly. We do not want to come up to their level so far as wages are concerned, but we do not like the great disproportion.

E-1221. What you really mean is that you want something approaching their terms?—Yes.

E-1222. You say your seamen are very uneducated, but you refer to something which I have never heard of. You say: "The Merchant Shipping Act often leads the Indian seamen to think that the said Act is something like a Galley-Slave Act of the days of the Roman Empire". What particular Act is that?—We only make a comparison to the conditions which prevailed when galley-slaves were employed.

E-1223. You say that provision should be made for crèches. Do you suggest that you should have crèches on board ships?—We really refer to the ports. (*Mr. Ally*) We would like to have on board ships as well if that were practicable.

E-1224. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In answer to previous questions you said that the number of unemployed seamen was very large and that so many as 20,000 constantly remained on the unemployed list in Calcutta. Is that a fact?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes.

E-1225. If such a large number of unemployed remain on the list, how do they maintain themselves during the period of their unemployment?—(*Mr. Ally*) They borrow from the money-lenders and pay their dues after they get employment.

E-1226. You have stated that the wages of seamen are very inadequate. If they are inadequate how do they manage to effect sufficient savings to pay the debts incurred during their unemployment period?—That is the reason why most of the seamen can never free themselves from indebtedness when once they incur debts.

E-1227. Why do they not seek employment outside their line during the period of unemployment?—They are seamen by nature.

E-1228. They loaf about and do nothing?—They do harbour work sometimes but not always.

E-1229. If they keep on constantly in debt how is it that the money-lenders continue to lend them money?—Because the money-lenders charge As. 2 per rupee as interest.

E-1230. But if their wages are inadequate how are they able to make any savings even to pay the interest?—They do not make any saving. From their inadequate wages they try to pay something towards the interest. I know of an instance where a man borrowed money twenty years ago and is still paying interest.

E-1231. You say that you want public employment agencies with the co-operation of an advisory committee to carry on recruitment. If the number of unemployed seamen is so large, how will the selection be made? Would it not provide the temptation to bribe the employers or the members of the advisory committee in order to get employment? Many of them would, no

doubt, try to get in somehow or other?—The seamen will have a hand in the formation of the advisory committee, and if they find that any member or any officer has taken bribes they can remove him.

E-1232. There is bound to be very keen competition to get employment when the number of unemployed is so large, is it not?—Then it will be very keen competition, but now it is worse competition. (*Mr. Huq*) There will, no doubt, be competition among efficient hands, and the seamen will have greater confidence in an advisory committee consisting of representatives of different interests than they have in the present system.

E-1233. Has the union considered the question of effectively reducing the number of men seeking employment in order to bring the position to a healthy condition?—The union has given its deep consideration to this question and suggest that all old men should be pensioned off and that no fresh recruitment should be made until all those who are on the waiting list get employment.

E-1234. What would be the number of those who would require to be pensioned off, according to your scheme?—It is not possible to give any figure.

E-1235. It will be a fairly large number?—Yes.

E-1236. What will be the amount of pension and who will pay it?—Of course, the employers will have to pay.

E-1237. What will the amount come to? I want the union to consider some practical scheme by which this difficulty can be overcome?—If it is not possible to give pensions, the union would suggest that at least new recruitment should be stopped.

E-1238. Even if new recruits are not taken, how can you expect to have so much demand as to absorb the thousands of unemployed qualified seamen who are already on the waiting list?—We look to the Commission to find a solution.

E-1239. You said that you are in favour, as every body would naturally be, of sickness insurance and various other contributory schemes to which Mr. Joshi referred. Your whole case is that the seamen are not paid adequately and that they are heavily indebted, but in spite of that fact you are still in favour of contributing to these benefits. Where will you get the money?—We qualified our reply by saying, provided some increment is granted to us.

E-1240. That is to say you wish to contribute by charging that extra amount to the employer as additional salary?—Yes .

E-1241. *Mr. Birla*: Did you say that many of your members do not pay subscriptions regularly to your union?—A few old members did not.

E-1242. Does it mean that the members have not got sympathy towards the union, or is it because they are very low paid and have not got sufficient money to contribute towards the funds of the union?—They have got sympathy. Because their pay is very low they are not in a position to pay. Sometimes most of them remain unemployed and therefore they cannot pay the subscriptions regularly. It also happens that they pay up the arrears when they get a job.

E-1243. Is there any other explanation except the financial consideration? Supposing you had more sympathy from the employers and your members felt that much could be done by the union on account of the closer co-operation between the employers and the employees, probably they might be more attracted towards the union than they are at present?—(*Mr. Ally*) If the employers take a sympathetic view of the demands of the union and the grievances of the seamen, we have, no doubt, that things could be much improved.

E-1244. In that case probably you will be able to attract more members? —Yes.

E-1245. Do you think, to some extent, the same thing could be said about the prevalence of corruption; that is to say, if you are strong enough and work in co-operation with the employers you could fight more easily against the prevailing corruption?—Yes ; we on our part are ready to offer our full co-operation.

E-1246. On the question of sickness insurance, did you consider the matter at a meeting of your union, or does the view expressed represent your own

personal views?—Our memorandum was discussed at a meeting of the executive committee of the union. Most of our advisers who are present with us to-day are members of the executive committee, and what we have stated here can be taken to be the considered opinion of the union as a whole.

E-1247. You think they would be prepared to contribute towards such a scheme?—Yes, with the provisos to which I have already made a reference.

E-1248. Have you got any practical proposition in your mind as to how this scheme could be administered in case it was introduced?—Our immediate problem is recruitment; we want to live first. (*Mr. Huq*) We want sickness insurance benefits.

E-1249. Is that simply a vague idea, or whether you have carefully considered the whole question in all its administrative aspects?—We have not got any detailed scheme to put before you, but all the same we feel its absence very much.

E-1250. You have not got any practical proposal to put before us?—We have not got a cut and dried scheme ready at present, but we do require it very urgently.

E-1251. While putting forward various suggestions under "welfare work", you mention "regulation of the sale of alcohol including measures for the closing of taverns near the dock areas". Do you suggest that there is very serious drink evil among seamen?—Where there is a grog shop near about the place where the seamen congregate and live, there is every likelihood of the seamen getting themselves addicted to drink.

E-1252. Do you think it is very injurious to the health and the morality of seamen?—Yes, to a great extent.

E-1253. Am I to understand that you are in favour of total prohibition near the dock areas?—(*Mr. Ally*) Some of the Goanese seamen have represented to me, after this memorandum was prepared, that if they do not take liquor once a while it will not be possible for them to carry on the work of unlimited hours. So far as the saloon crew are concerned they are required to work practically day and night. (*Mr. Huq*) That remark applies only to the Goanese workers and not to all the workers.

E-1254. You think that it is not injurious to health to have drink occasionally?—(*Mr. Ally*) Provided it is taken in moderation.

E-1255. But in any case you want to regulate it?—Yes. There may not be total prohibition, but in any case the drink ought to be regulated.

E-1256. You mentioned to Sir Victor Sassoon that you do not find much difference between an Indian and an European employer. Is that your opinion?—We might or might not have found any difference, but we do not want to draw any difference here.

E-1257. I want to draw your attention to a remark made in the book which you have provided us, namely, "History and Developments of the Indian Seamen's Union". You say at one place that "Messrs. K. Ahmed and M. Daud were examined at length by the committee. They urged the reservation of the coasting trade of India to Indian shipowners, and favoured the grant of navigation bounties only to Indian-owned vessels; and vessels receiving navigation bounties must take on board a number of Indian apprentices". Then on page 75 of the book, referring to the interview you had with Mr. Erulkar of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., you say: "The union understands that more is expected from the Scindia Steam Navigation Company for the Indian seamen. We pray a long life for the company"?—That was the view that was perhaps taken by the officials of the union at the time of writing this book, but so far as the present administration of the union is concerned we do not subscribe to that view, and we do not make any distinction between an Indian employer and an European employer.

E-1258. In Indian-owned ships do you find the same racial discrimination about food?—Yes, the engineers and other officers are supplied with better food than that supplied to the seamen.

E-1259. Do you find the same racial discrimination between Indian and European lascars in Indian-owned ships?—Yes. The chief engineer and the other officers are supplied with better food than that supplied to the engine crew.

E-1260. Do they make any discrimination between employees of the same status on the basis of their race or colour?—The other companies do not also make any discrimination so far as the particular status of the workers is concerned.

E-1261. *Mr. Joshi*: Are there any Indian-owned ships in which both Indian and European seamen are employed?—No. Generally, all the ships are officered by Europeans and manned by Indians.

E-1262. *Mr. Birla*: Do you mean to say that you want the same treatment as is being given to engineers and officers?—Both the engineers and the seamen require food, and why should there be a difference in food?

E-1263. Do you also want the same salary?—That is a question of ability and work, but so far as food is concerned why should there be any difference between the food given to the officers and that given to the seamen.

E-1264. Do you confine your remarks only to food or to all the treatment, such as accommodation, recreation, working hours, wages and so forth?—Except wages, we want equal treatment in all matters connected with health and comforts of human beings.

E-1265. You want the same accommodation and recreation?—Yes.

E-1266. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Did your union approach either Government or the employers regarding the seamen's grievances, which you have just narrated, in the matter of hospital accommodation?—We have passed resolutions and have sent them both to Government and to the employers.

E-1267. Did you get any reply from Government?—I think we got a reply that the matter will be considered, or is receiving attention.

E-1268. As this question of hospital accommodation is a most important one did you ever try hard with Government with a view to arriving at an agreement, apart from merely sending them copies of resolutions?—So far as Government is concerned, we have not.

E-1269. Did you ever approach the employers?—Yes, we have been approaching them all along. By 'approach' I do not mean that we go and see them direct. As a matter of fact, only two or three months back perhaps we would not have been even received by the employers, but that attitude has changed now. We sent our communications to the Liners' Conference which is a representative organization of the shipowners here or their representatives, and we never received any reply; I do not think that in the course of these ten years the union has ever received a reply from the Liners' Conference although the union has addressed them perhaps more than a thousand times.

E-1270. Did your communications refer to the medical treatment?—They referred not only to our grievance in the matter of medical treatment but also to other grievances. The Liners' Conference has been repeatedly addressed, but we got no reply.

E-1271. In your supplementary memorandum you say: "We do not get any holidays on the occasions of such important festivals as *Bakrid*, *Id* and *Muharram*". Do I understand that you have to work on all these days?—Yes.

E-1272. What is the average pay of the seamen?—Rs. 23 to Rs. 24.

E-1273. On the question of sickness insurance and other beneficial schemes, you said that you would throw the burden on the employers?—Yes; when we get sick as a result of working for unlimited hours, I think our employers ought to pay us compensation.

E-1274. *The Chairman*: From what you have told us it would appear to be your view that since the Bureau was instituted in Calcutta, which, at any rate, was part, if not the whole, of the recommendations of the Clow Committee, no improvement whatever has taken place?—When the communication of the appointment of the Bureau was made known to us we expected some improvement, but subsequently we found out that it was only a communication and nothing else. (*Mr. Huq*) To our knowledge, the Bureau has not yet come into existence. (*Mr. Ally*) We do not admit that the Bureau exists to-day.

E-1275. Then you referred to something which has taken place just in the last few weeks or months; what was that?—When things became intolerable we represented to the Shipping Master and to the Principal Mercantile Officer. The Government of India have now taken over the charge of

merchant shipping affairs in their own hands and have placed them under a district officer known as the Principal Mercantile Officer for Calcutta district.

E-1276. I understand that you told us that in 1924 an officer was appointed by Government. It is five years or more since that appointment was made. Do you mean to tell us that that gentleman has been doing nothing?—He was appointed in two capacities—as the shipping master and the officer-in-charge of recruitment. So far as recruiting is concerned he has done nothing.

E-1277. I understand that you distinctly say that as far as recruitment is concerned he has taken no steps and that there is no improvement?—That is so.

E-1278. *Mr. Clow*: He has prepared no registers—(*Mr. Huq*) If he has prepared any he has not shown to us. We do not know anything about the existence of this Bureau except an official communication made in 1924.

E-1279. *The Chairman*: Then you did tell us that you had had some personal conferences with this officer. What did you talk about then if not about recruitment of seamen?—(*Mr. Ally*) So far as recruitment was concerned he said that he would not be able to do anything. We discussed with him grievances like bribery. We caught a few cases of official bribery and wanted to prove them before the Shipping Master. In one case we caught a broker taking Rs. 24 from three new trimmers, and we took the case to the Shipping Master. The case was enquired into, and when we proved it, we were told both by the Shipping Master and the Principal Officer to go to the court. As you know, it is not very easy to prove these cases in an ordinary court of law, and because of this we went to the Shipping Master who, under the Merchant Shipping Act, can report the matter to the Government of India and take official action.

E-1280. I am thinking for the moment of the question of improvement of recruiting methods which was at least one of the objects of the appointment of this officer. This officer receives you freely, I gather, from what you told us, to discuss matters that concern the seamen?—But not with regard to recruitment. He has told us definitely that he is not able to do anything so far as recruitment is concerned.

E-1281. When we were listening to the seamen's representatives in Bombay we understood that one of their great grievances was that too many Calcutta seamen were being enlisted to the detriment of Bombay seamen; they told us that Bombay seamen were being left unemployed because too many Calcutta seamen were being engaged, and I think they mentioned some cases of Calcutta crews being sent to Bombay. Do you agree with that view?—To a certain extent they are correct. When they communicated to us we wanted to discuss the matter with them, and we are still prepared to discuss the matter. (*Mr. Huq*) We do not subscribe to that view because we think that it is only parochial to confine seamen to the port of engagement. There are many Calcutta seamen in Bombay because the Calcutta seamen are paid less than the Bombay seamen. From the scale of pay which we have given in our memorandum it will be seen that the Calcutta seamen are very much less paid than the Bombay seamen. It is only to the benefit of the shipowners that Calcutta men are taken, not for the sake of Calcutta men alone. But if there is some amicable settlement, well and good.

E-1282. But you, as you say, do not take a parochial view. You think that Calcutta seamen should sail the seas the world over?—Yes. The same thing would apply to Bombay seamen as well. What we want is that there should be an open field.

E-1283. *Mr. Ahmed*: What do you think would be the cost of living of a seaman, his wife and two children?—It will not be less than Rs. 60 a month.

E-1284. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do the seamen generally keep their wives and children in Calcutta or in upcountry?—In upcountry.

E-1285. *Mr. Ahmed*: You should give us particulars about the cost of articles of consumption, cost of clothing and other requirements?—(*Mr. Ally*) As they live in a joint family it is not possible to give such particulars.

E-1286. *The Chairman*: Have you ever examined in detail the question of the cost of living of your seamen?—(*Mr. Huq*) I have consulted the seamen who live with their families, and they have given this figure of Rs. 60. This Rs. 60 is only for food expenses and does not include medical and clothing expenses.

E-1287. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you furnish us particulars in a day or two?—We will try.

E-1288. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do appreciate that you would have to differentiate the districts in which the families of seamen live because the cost of living varies in each district?—Yes.

E-1289. *Mr. Joshi*: Are the wages paid promptly after the discharge?—(*Mr. Ally*) Some times they are not paid, and the seamen are made to wait for two weeks even.

E-1290. Does not the Merchant Shipping Act provide for payment within six days after the discharge?—Yes, but sometimes the seamen go without taking wages for two weeks even.

E-1291. In that case do they not get extra pay for the waiting period as provided in the Act?—No ; the extra pay is not given.

E-1292. Did you make any case of payment after the period provided for in the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—No, but under the Act it can be done.

E-1293. *The Chairman*: You could bring a case in the court from which you could be sure of getting a conviction?—Not conviction, but we could recover the wages. But it would cost money.

Mr. Joshi: They are shy of litigation.

E-1294. *Mr. Tassie*: A statement was made that the reason why Calcutta crews are taken in Bombay was because the Calcutta men are paid lower wages than the Bombay men. For the information of the Commission I might inform that at the time of the last strike of lascars consultations went on between Bombay and Calcutta, and the wages fixed are practically the same for Calcutta and Bombay. As a matter of fact, the real reason why Calcutta crews are taken in Bombay goes back to the war. Are you aware that during the war we could not get Bombay lascars to go into the danger zone?—(*Mr. Huq*) Men were not available from Bombay side and therefore Calcutta men were taken. The Calcutta seamen were never afraid of going to the danger zone.

E-1295. So that during the war all Bombay ships had to be provided with lascars from Calcutta if they were going to the danger zone?—Yes, most of them.

E-1296. Was it not because of that that at least one steamer company said that in future they would always take Calcutta men whether they could get men from Bombay or not?—(*Mr. Ally*) I am informed by the Bombay crew that they had some trouble with the officials in certain Clan ships and from that time the Clan companies have begun to take their crew from Calcutta. I should have been very glad if Calcutta crew were being taken in recognition of their services rendered during the war.

E-1297. On the question of engagement of crews, have you not noticed that since 1919 the Clan Lines, when they want to engage crews, put up a notice board outside their office that crews are required and that serangs and lascars go there and are selected by one of the Europeans in the office? —In the Clan Lines, only the serang and the quartermaster are selected ; the crew is not selected.

E-1298. Are you aware that the Clan Lines keep a roster now?—What the selecting officer does is this: When the serang has selected a crew and produce the men before him, he says 'all right'.

E-1299. Is it not a fact that he goes down and examines the *nallis* of most of the men?—Yes, but that does not help the situation in any way.

E-1300. What do you suggest he should do?—We have already suggested that only an employment bureau working in co-operation with an advisory committee can ease the situation.

E-1301. Why do you think that the Clan Line or any other company keeping its own roster cannot improve the situation while an employment

bureau can?—That is our experience. I know of instances where the serangs of Clan Lines (James Finlay, Ltd.) have paid Rs. 200 and more as bribes for getting employment. I am willing to prove it if necessary.

E-1302. Why did you not bring such cases to the notice of the company?—They have not replied to any one of our letters. If the General Secretary of the Union addresses a letter to the firm, the firm sends a reply addressed to him by name and not as Secretary of the Union. When they want to make this difference in addressing him by name and not as an official of the union, it is clear that they do not want to recognize the union. If such is the case how can you expect the officials of the union to go to the firm for asking them to look into this case or that case.

E-1303. On the question of extra men being taken in by the companies, is it not a fact that for a year or more it is not possible for a new man to get a *nalli* unless he brings a letter from the Chief Officer of a steamer that he will employ him?—Yes, but that practice, I think, was followed correctly only for some time, and is not now strictly observed.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-SECOND MEETING

CALCUTTA

Saturday, 8th February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.	Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E. I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEN KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. L. MITCHELL (accompanied by Sir GEORGE GODFREY and Mr. E. C. BENTHALL), Representative of Messrs. Bird & Co., Calcutta, for their Labour Department.

E-1304. *The Chairman :* What is the scope of the work of your firm; you have told us in your memorandum with reference to the workers employed by you that in Calcutta the maximum number may be taken as 12,000, but I think that your operations extend a good deal beyond Calcutta?—Yes, we supply all the railways and steamer services in Bengal excluding the Eastern Bengal Railway.

E-1305. Your operations do not extend outside Bengal?—No.

E-1306. I think you are the principal firm engaged in this kind of enterprise of supplying labour for multifarious purposes?—Yes.

E-1307. Are there any other firms engaged in the same business?—There are a few engaged in it in a very small way.

E-1308. May I say that you do 80 per cent of the work of this kind?—For railways and docks I should say that is so.

E-1309. Therefore you are able to speak to us better than any one else whom we could call on this question of the engagement of labour for large operations by the contracting system through *sardars*?—Yes.

E-1310. I take it from your memorandum that you are convinced that this system of operation is more economical and more efficient than direct recruitment?—Yes, provided there is that personal touch with the labour.

E-1311. Although your labourers are collected, organized and paid through the *sardars* you, as a firm, retain a real control over their conditions?—Absolutely. The firm's policy in connexion with its labour department is to insist on a personal touch at all their agencies; that personal touch enables the coolie at any time to interview his agent on even the smallest grievance. It prevents any misappropriation of the coolie's earnings by the *sardars* and the staff. Each coolie knows every evening exactly what his earnings have been for that day, but if he considers he has not received satisfaction locally, it is easy for him to interview any one at the head office including the partners of the firm. It is this knowledge which accounts for the implicit faith which our labour has in us.

E-1312. I take it that your system has been developed because the *sardars* are the persons who know the labourers in their village life, and they can bring them together for the purpose of working on the undertakings for which you are responsible?—Yes, that is the reason for having *sardars*. They are really merely gangers. We use them in most cases to pay the labour; that is to say the earnings of a gang on a piece-work system are handed to the *sardar*, but each individual coolie knows exactly what his earnings are. If he thinks he has not got his fair share it is easy for him to have the matter rectified. But that system of payment through *sardars* does not represent the whole of our methods. We have several systems suited to the different classes of labour. For instance, there is the system adopted at the coal jetties which is unique. By that system we actually pay for the contents of coal per basket in cash before the operation is completed. There are many systems of payment. In the case of monthly and daily paid labour the men are actually paid individually.

E-1313. Your *sardars* are really recruiters of labour for your purposes?—And they carry out the operations under our direction when the labour has been recruited.

E-1314. They are recruiters first, and then they are overseers in the case of the workers in their gangs?—Yes.

E-1315. You tell us with some confidence that under your system there are no exactions by the *sardars*?—Positively not.

E-1316. How are you convinced of that?—On account of this personal touch. I myself know each *sardar* by sight; I probably see him at least once a week—except those upcountry. In the agencies we have highly paid managers who have been with us for over 25 years. Nearly all our senior assistants have a record of very long service, and they are in constant touch with the individual coolie.

E-1317. Have you ever had to get rid of a *sardar* for any delinquency?—Yes. We had to discharge one on the 15th of this month. A coolie complained that he had not been paid for the previous month. He should have been paid in the first week. He complained during the second week. The *sardar* actually paid him that night, but nevertheless that *sardar* was dismissed.

E-1318. By strict supervision of your *sardars* and by strict attention to any complaints which reach you, you manage to secure that you only employ those *sardars* on whom you can rely?—Absolutely.

E-1319. *Mr. Cliff:* Was the coolie to whom you were referring just now a monthly rated man?—He was on a daily wage, but paid monthly.

E-1320. *The Chairman:* You tell us that you provide houses for about 80 per cent of those employed in Calcutta. That, I take it, is a force which does not fluctuate to any great extent?—It is a seasonal fluctuation,

which again also depends on the number of men required for work. The accommodation is not always full. It depends entirely on the amount of work which is being done.

E-1321. Supposing you are called upon to undertake some new job upcountry where there is no housing accommodation for the people; take, for instance, the case of a new railway being constructed. Is there any condition in your contract as to the housing conditions of the number of people brought in to do that work?—In connexion with railways, when there is a question of opening a new transhipment station, all contracts with railways outside of Calcutta carry a clause that the railway must provide accommodation for the labour. That is the first thing that is done.

E-1322. That is to say, you require the undertaking for whom you are working to provide, in advance, adequate housing for the people whom you are taking to do that work?—Yes.

E-1323. It would be interesting if we could see a copy of a clause of that kind. Will you send it to us?—Yes.

E-1324. In the matter of education we are interested to see that some provision is made by you for free primary education for the children of workers employed at the coal berths. You state that there is an attendance of 58 pupils; that the classes are very popular, and that arrangements are being made to enlarge the school premises in order to increase the attendance?—Since this memorandum was sent in we have actually built a new school house and the attendance has increased to over 100.

E-1325. Whose children are those who attend the school?—They are the children of the workers at the coal dock.

E-1326. They are the children of the upcountry workers who have been recruited by the *sardars* and brought into Calcutta to work?—Yes.

E-1327. You have found a demand from the parents of those children for education which has led you substantially to increase your school accommodation?—Yes.

E-1328. Then your opinion would not coincide with some which has been put before us to the effect that in the case of illiterate workers collected from upcountry there is no desire either on the part of the parents or on the part of the children for education?—I would not say that; I think there is a demand on the part of the children, but the workers themselves do not seem to appreciate over education.

E-1329. Nevertheless they send their children to school?—Yes, it is a very useful method of keeping the children out of the way while the parents are at work.

E-1330. Whatever the motive, the children come so readily to school that you have had to increase the accommodation?—Yes.

E-1331. Therefore, there is no rooted objection to education?—No, there is not.

E-1332. *Mr. Cliff:* This is a mission school to which you make a contribution I understand?—Yes.

E-1333. Where is it situated?—In the coal berths in Calcutta.

E-1334. *The Chairman:* With regard to workmen's compensation how is it worked under the *sardar* system? Are you insured for the risks?—We are not insured for all our labour. We are insured for 77 per cent and we carry a separate fund ourselves for 23 per cent.

E-1335. Does a claim for compensation lie against you or against the *sardar*?—Against us.

E-1336. The *sardar* is not a contractor in the sense that he is responsible for workmen's compensation?—No, we are entirely responsible.

E-1337. *Mr. Cliff:* You say that the maximum number of your workers may be taken as 12,000. Is that the daily maximum?—That figure refers to permanent labour under the piece-work or monthly system. Besides that there are casuals.

E-1338. When you say "permanent" you mean men who are either paid monthly or paid through the *sardars* weekly?—Paid for piece-work, yes.

E-1339. Does that mean, with regard to your permanent men, that you have 12,000 men employed daily regularly?—Yes.

E-1340. As far as this number is concerned you have 12,000 men who are employed daily. There is nothing casual about that?—There is nothing casual about that.

E-1341. What is the proportion of casual men?—Another 2,000.

E-1342. How do the 12,000 permanent men book on for work?—The system varies with each contract. Taking cargo at the docks, at 3 o'clock every afternoon the *sardars* are allotted to their various sheds or cranes as the case may be for the following day. In the case of coal certain wagons are allotted to each *sardar* according to the strength of his gang.

E-1344. With regard to the permanent staff who are employed daily can it be taken that the men are employed daily on the hours stated in your memorandum?—Yes, but being piece-workers they are not tied down to those hours.

E-1345. What is the proportion between day and night?—Night work is less than half. With most vessels at the docks night work is not at all popular.

E-1346. You give an interval during the day. Do you give an interval during the night?—There is no definite interval at night.

E-1347. Do you pay overtime before 5 o'clock?—Not before 5 o'clock, but after 5.

E-1348. Is it an 11-hour working day then?—It is a 9-hour day.

E-1349. Is it a 7-day week?—There is practically no work done on Sundays except in very urgent cases.

E-1350. Do you pay added rates for overtime to the men employed by the *sardars* who are not monthly rated men?—No, except for night work, which is 50 per cent extra.

E-1351. You have a rate for coal trimmers; does that apply to any one else?—Except for coal trimming there is no daily paid or monthly paid labour which works at night.

E-1352. You say that the monthly workers employed on the handling of general merchandise are paid at the rate of 9 annas per day with an additional rate for overtime. Can it be taken that these monthly rate men paid at 9 annas per day are paid for each day in the month?—Yes.

E-1353. Are they paid on every Sunday even if they do not work?—They are paid a single wage for Sunday if they do not work and a double wage if they do.

E-1354. That is to say at the rate of 9 annas a day?—Yes.

E-1355. You say that the firm assists the *sardars* when recruiting with advances for railway fares, etc.; how is that money paid back?—From the earnings of the gang.

E-1356. How is it deducted?—We aim at recovering it in ten weeks, but if the earnings do not justify a deduction in any one week or a longer period, the deduction is not made. Consequently it may be three months or perhaps a little longer before the whole advance is recovered.

E-1357. You say " As regards labour turn-over the majority of the men work under the same *sardar* for years, returning regularly to their homes at cultivation or harvest times ". That makes it appear as if you have a regular labour force?—Yes, I should say 80 per cent of the men come back year after year.

E-1358. What proportion do the men who are paid monthly bear to the total force?—About 600.

E-1359. If you have a regular labour force, would there be any difficulty about making some provision for insurance against sickness?—If a man has been ill for some time he is always assisted by us in some way or another according to his needs. Usually the first thing he asks is to be sent home.

E-1360. I see you do make provision for sickness for men earning over Rs. 25, but apparently the great bulk of your labour earns under Rs. 25?—It varies; I should say that the average piece-work earning is between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25.

E-1361. With regard to the great bulk of your labour earning under Rs. 25 is there any real practical difficulty in instituting sickness insurance so that they can have provision made for them during times of sickness?—Not if it was done in a way suited to Indian labour.

E-1362. If you can make provision for clerks who are earning more than Rs. 25 a month why is there any difficulty about making such provision for the whole of your force?—They generally want to go home when they get ill, and I am afraid any insurance provision against sickness would not stop that desire.

E-1363. If a man is employed in Calcutta and he cannot earn any wages while he is sick, I suppose he naturally wants to go to some place where he is sure to be cared for, but that situation might be altered if he knew he had provision made for him against sickness?

E-1364. *The Chairman*: Is it the difficulty that it would mean keeping men in Calcutta instead of their being allowed to return to their country in order to recuperate?—That was in my mind, and also the fact that one could not be certain for how long they were really ill.

E-1365. You mean that they might be drawing sickness pay even after they were well and there would be no check on that?—Quite so.

E-1366. If there was an adequate medical system in the villages which could constitute a check on malingering then perhaps your objection would be removed?—I think so.

E-1367. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that a *sardar* in Calcutta can earn Rs. 10 or more weekly, and that a coolie can earn from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7. Is the difference in those two payments determined between the *sardar* and his gang?—The *sardar*, if he does not work, in some cases gets an equal share with the coolie. If he works, he gets two shares—one extra share for keeping the accounts for the gang. In cases of very large gangs the *sardars* draw 6 pies in the rupee. That is what gives that increased average.

E-1368. If a *sardar* does not work does that mean he only gets Rs. 6 to Rs. 7?—Yes.

E-1369. Have you many cases of that kind?—About 50 per cent.

E-1370. You say that at the rates the average for a monthly-paid labourer is about Rs. 20 a month. I understand you to say that you do not pay overtime until after 5 p.m. That seems to indicate that there is a good deal of overtime work?—If the men are called out on Sundays, even for a few hours, it means a double day's wage, and the same applies to any holiday.

E-1371. But you say that generally the men do not work on Sundays?—If anybody works on Sunday it is these monthly-paid men.

E-1372. How are the wages paid?—As I have said there are many systems of payment. The monthly-paid labour is paid in the first week of the following month.

E-1373. Who pays them?—The cashier under supervision.

E-1374. With regard to your staff which is employed under *sardars*, who pays them?—The cashier.

E-1375. He pays each man?—No, he pays the *sardars*.

E-1376. Do the *sardars* pay the money to each man in their gangs?—Yes.

E-1377. Do they keep regular wage-books?—Yes.

E-1378. Are those wage-books regularly inspected by you?—Not by me, but by the local agents.

E-1379. Are they always checked up by the agent?—They are fairly regularly checked. The *sardar* keeps the book.

E-1380. I am wondering whether you as the employing firm always check these registers?—The local supervision checks them regularly, or it is supposed to do. I think it is done fairly regularly, but the coolie knows each evening exactly what his earnings have been for the day. He gets that from our supervisory staff which on the previous day made the booking.

E-1381. Does the supervisory staff give the man a ticket?—No, the man is told verbally. The gang is called together and it is told "This is the amount you did during the day, and this is the amount due to you."

E-1382. Are you able to follow that method outright through your employees?—Yes.

E-1383. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The supervising staff say to the gang "This is what you have done as a gang"?—Yes, as a gang.

E-1384. *Mr. Cliff*: You state "The above earnings and wages are an increase of approximately 50 per cent on those prevailing before and during the war period". Has there been any change in the contract rates for labour during that period?—Yes.

E-1385. Have they been reduced since 1920?—In a few cases.

E-1386. Have wages been reduced?—No.

E-1387. Has there been any change in the rates you pay to *sardars* since 1920?—Since 1920 there has been a 50 per cent increase. That followed just after the war.

E-1388. Has there been any change in the rates you pay to *sardars* since that period?—Not generally, but there has been an increase in the case of pig iron.

E-1389. Does that reflect itself in the earnings of the gang?—Yes.

E-1390. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You say that the managers keep in touch with the coolies. Do you mean by that that the managers know personally all the coolies?—They know at least 80 per cent of their men by name and by seeing them every day.

E-1391. Do the managers talk to the coolies?—Yes, they do. The senior men themselves are in direct touch, and consequently every one below them are even more in touch.

E-1392. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many senior men are there?—One at each dock.

E-1393. How many men are there to each dock?—3,000 at one, and 4,000 at another.

E-1394. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If a workman has any grievance would he go to the *sardar* or to the manager?—He would go to the manager.

E-1395. Would the grievance be immediately and personally investigated by the managers?—Yes, immediately.

E-1396. You said that the hours of night work are from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. Is it usual for people working at night to do ten hours' work?—Those are the hours which we are bound to work if required to do so, but as I have said the people for whom we work do not like night work, and in consequence night work is very small.

E-1397. For how many nights in the year do your workers work the full ten hours?—Almost every night excluding Sundays and holidays, some men are working the full ten hours, without any interval.

E-1398. Is not that rather hard?—Being piece-workers they take time off. It is not the same men every night.

E-1399. You say you have 12,000 men. Does each one of them work for one or two or half a dozen nights in the year?—No: the labour which works at night is entirely different from the labour which works during the day, and the number of men who work at night is very small.

E-1400. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that you stop loading a ship at 5 p.m.?—Yes.

E-1401. Does that apply to bunkering and trimming?—No, the coaling might go on.

E-1402. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You said just now that the hours of work do not matter very much with workers who are on piece-work. Does that mean that they can work for more than ten hours if they want to?—No, we do not allow that on account of the loss of efficiency. What I meant to say was that there is nothing to prevent a man during those particular working hours from going off if he wants to.

E-1403. If their earnings depend upon the amount of work they do is there not a temptation to work longer hours and earn more money?—There is a temptation.

E-1404. Do you allow your men to work longer than ten hours?—No, we do not on account of the loss of efficiency.

E-1405. You say that fines are only resorted to in the case of gross misdemeanours and that the *sardars* are responsible for any loss or damage to goods caused by deliberate carelessness or negligence of the men. How many instances occur of *sardars* being fined for such carelessness and negligence?—Very few.

E-1406. The total amount of fines imposed does not come to much?—No.

E-1407. You say that monthly-paid labour is allowed one month's leave a year. Is that with full pay?—Yes.

E-1408. You go on to say: "But men working under *sardars* make their leave arrangements with the sardars and it may be taken that every worker visits his home at least once a year for one month or more. They do not receive earnings during leave periods, but generally save enough to carry them over until they resume work." That is to say, men employed under the *sardars* take leave without pay?—Yes.

E-1409. What grounds have you for saying that they can save enough to carry them over during the leave period? The amount of earnings which you have indicated does not seem to be sufficiently high to enable them to make any savings?—They do save.

E-1410. Do they save anything out of Rs. 20 a month?—Yes.

E-1411. The cost of living must be considerably less?—I can give a few instances of family budgets. Here is one of a family of four whose budget works out to Rs. 17-8-0.

E-1412. We have been told that in Calcutta the family budget for a man, his wife and two children works out to Rs. 60?—It depends.

E-1413. *The Chairman*: Have you carried out any enquiry in regard to the family budgets of workmen in different districts?—Yes.

E-1414. It would be interesting if you could put that into the Commission?—I will do so.

E-1415. Was the investigation carried out by a special officer?—Not particularly. I made enquiries myself. It is partly my knowledge and the knowledge of managers. Here is the family budget of a man of a higher caste who lives rather better. His family budget comes to Rs. 32-8-0, the earnings of himself and his wife being from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per head.

E-1416. The joint earnings of the man and wife are Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 you say?—No, they are individual earnings. The joint earnings would come to Rs. 50 to Rs. 60. In the case of a bachelor or grass widower the monthly budget will come to about Rs. 15. There is usually a remittance of Rs. 10 sent home every month.

E-1417. *The Chairman*: Would you include all these in the note you are going to send the Commission?—Yes.

E-1418. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum you say that the coolie's "level of efficiency does not change." Does it not improve although he has been working at the job for a long period?—It is just a question of stamina. Beyond the first week which a new coolie takes to learn to handle the goods his efficiency remains the same.

E-1419. Have you noticed any difference in efficiency between a piece-worker and a monthly-paid worker?—Yes, the piece-worker is more efficient than the monthly-paid worker.

E-1420. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum dealing with staff organization, you say that "Many *sardars* are literate but it is seldom one wishes to relinquish his gang and take up a salaried post of supervisor." Why is that?—They earn more as *sardars*. A supervisor at the docks would probably get less than a *sardar* who had sufficient education to do the supervisor's work.

E-1421. *Mr. Joshi*: I take it you are working at the Kidderpore Docks?—Yes.

E-1422. Are there any regulations for the safety of workers while loading and unloading ships?—Yes, there are.

E-1423. What are they? Can we see a copy of them?—I cannot say offhand what they are. There are regulations made by the Port Commissioners and there are also other regulations made by the Railways under the Railways Act. They are public documents.

E-1424. Have you seen the convention adopted by the International Labour Conference last year regarding the safety of workers while loading and unloading ships?—I do not remember.

E-1425. You would not mind if safety regulations were made by Government?—No, I would not. I understand that the convention you spoke of was gone into by the partners last year while I was on leave, and approved.

E-1426. Here is a newspaper which makes some remarks regarding the conditions of work at one of your lime-stone quarries. It says that the workers there have to work from 6 o'clock in the morning till 6 in the evening for 5 annas a day. The women get 10 pice a day. They go to work from distances varying from eight to ten miles. If they are late by 10 minutes their wages are cut off. They are housed in the coolie lines which have corrugated iron-roofs and each person has only 4 feet by 6 feet accommodation. I want to know whether this represents the state of things there accurately?—(*Sir George Godfrey*) We cannot say without enquiring into it whether it is true or not. Moreover all our lime-stone quarries are worked on contract. The coolies are very probably the contractor's coolies.

E-1427. If the quarries are worked on contract you are not responsible for the conditions at all?—On the contrary we have a very fine set of houses. It is perfectly true that most of them have corrugated iron-roofs, but the walls are of stone and they are whitewashed and kept absolutely clean so that the coolies living in them are so fond of them that they come back to them again and again. If I may say so, I would not attach much importance to newspaper statements like this.

E-1428. Does your company undertake the construction of buildings and bridges?—(*Mr. Mitchell*) Yes, they do.

E-1429. Do you observe any safety regulations in connection with the erection of scaffoldings and use of machinery?—(*Sir George Godfrey*) So far as I am aware outside the limit of the Calcutta Corporation there are no regulations which control the erection of scaffoldings.

E-1430. Would you have any objection if such regulations were made for the safety of workers engaged in the construction of buildings and bridges?—We would have no objection at all.

E-1431. Do you take Government contracts?—Yes.

E-1432. Would there be any difficulty if Government put in a clause for fair wages and working conditions in all the contracts which they give to private companies?—(*Mr. Mitchell*) As far as my experience of Government contracts goes they supervise very closely.

E-1433. Would there be any difficulty in putting a definite clause in every contract?—I see none at all.

E-1434. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say: "With the exception of a percentage of women who work with their husbands and families at the coal berths the entire labour force is male." What number out of the 4,000 at the coal berths are women?—About a thousand.

E-1435. Are they all wives and relations of men working there, or are some of them recruited direct by *sardars*?—They are nearly all of them wives and relations of men working there.

E-1436. What precisely do they do; are they carrying coal in baskets?—Yes, they are carrying coal in baskets.

E-1437. Do men do that work as well?—Yes.

E-1438. Are they paid on piece-work?—Yes.

E-1439. Do the women get the same rate as men?—Yes, they get the same rate.

E-1440. How much on an average would a woman earn a week?—It depends on the physique of the woman.

E-1441. What will she earn on an average?—The lowest in physique will earn from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per month and the highest in physique between Rs. 25 and Rs. 30.

E-1442. Can they normally get a full month's work if they want it?—Yes.

E-1443. They are fairly regularly employed?—Yes.

E-1444. Do the children work with the women?—We do not allow the children.

E-1445. How do you prevent them from working?—We have one of our managers to supervise the work always.

E-1446. You can say quite definitely that there are no children working?—There are no children working.

E-1447. What happens to the small children when the women are working?—Are they brought down to the coal berths with the women?—Women with infant children do not usually work.

E-1448. That has been contrary to our experience in other places. You are quite sure in your case that there are no infants brought to the coal berths?—There are individual cases, yes. But usually some arrangement is made among themselves to look after the infant if the mother is forced to go and work.

E-1449. You feel that there is no necessity to make some arrangement to put them in some place away from coal dust?—I have never found any necessity. If that necessity ever became urgent we would probably do something in the matter.

E-1450. If these women regularly work with you, have you considered any financial arrangement for them during child-birth?—We assist them in the way of loans and advances. We have no standard.

E-1451. You do not give them any maternity benefit even though they have been employed with you for a considerable time?—No.

E-1452. Would you consider the grant of such a benefit to women who have been employed with you for over a year?—There is some difficulty there. Usually when the child is expected the woman prefers to go to her village. There would be just the same trouble here as with sickness insurance.

E-1453. How much do they avail themselves of the loan facilities which you give?—They take about Rs. 10.

E-1454. How frequently do they take it?—I cannot say. There must be one or two cases every month.

E-1455. Do you not feel that a woman who has been employed by you for 12 months or more who leaves work on account of child-birth should have some maternity benefit, irrespective of whether she chooses to go home for her confinement?—Yes, we could pay a share of the benefit if we were sure that it would not be misused. There is that to be considered.

E-1456. In what way could the money be misused if it were proved that the woman was leaving work temporarily on account of child-birth?—It is difficult to prove.

E-1457. Even if the benefit were administered by your own doctor?—That would be all right.

E-1458. You would attach some sort of restriction to the expenditure of that money?—Yes.

E-1459. On your own showing you give these women medical facilities in connection with child-birth only if they apply to you?—Yes. There is one thing which you have to consider. There are caste prejudices and things like that and we do not want to interfere with them. We try and avoid interference with their customs.

E-1460. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there any caste prejudice against receiving wages for no work?—I do not mean that, I mean medical attention.

E-1461. *Miss Sorabji*: Who allocates your rent free houses to the workers? Does the *sardar* do it?—The manager does it.

E-1462. You say that maternity cases are attended to by municipal *dais* if request is made. By whom has the request to be made?—By the husband or other relatives.

E-1463. Are you satisfied that your workers know the provision as to pay during sickness?—Yes.

E-1464. Are you satisfied that your workers are fully aware of the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and other industrial legislation intended for their benefit?—Yes. We see that they do not fail to make claims whenever an accident occurs. Each accident is reported and an enquiry is held. The workers attend that enquiry and hear what is said. Eventually when the compensation is paid they come to know of it. The provisions of this Act are well known to them.

E-1465. You trust to what has been called elsewhere "natural percolation"?—Yes.

E-1466. At present the workers are made acquainted with these matters mostly from the destructive end, i.e., by people who point out to them that they are badly treated, etc.—persons who carry on agitation and foment strikes. Would it not be better to deal with the situation constructively? Would you be prepared to co-operate with social service workers like the Council of Women for instance in preparing a scheme for acquainting the workers with the benefits of industrial legislation?—I think it would be a good thing. We have got close personal touch with our workers and it is unnecessary with us. But we do not object to it.

E-1467. Would you be prepared to co-operate?—Yes.

E-1468. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Have you come across *sardars* taking bribes from the workers at the time of appointment?—No such thing is possible with us.

E-1469. When all kinds of workers are available here why do you send *sardars* to recruit workers from upcountry?—Because we do not get here workers suited to our requirements.

E-1470. I think every kind of worker is available here?—I wish they were.

E-1471. For how many workers have you paid workmen's compensation last year?—Fifteen.

E-1472. You say that your workers do not want a co-operative society. How do you know they do not want it?—We do not say they do not want it. We lend money to them without interest and therefore they have no need for a co-operative society.

E-1473. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Do you feel any shortage of labour at any time of the year?—Yes, between March and June during the harvest time.

E-1474. What do you do to fill up the gap?—We send *sardars* recruiting.

E-1475. Do you advance them money with or without interest?—Without interest.

E-1476. Do you advance any money to your workers without interest?—Yes, we do.

E-1477. Have you had any difficulty in getting your men treated in Government hospitals?—Not usually. In one case one of my workmen was discharged even before he was thoroughly cured. I took that case as far as the highest authority and I think the position is satisfactory now.

E-1478. In your opinion the hospital accommodation available near the works is quite sufficient?—We have not found it insufficient.

E-1479. Did your workers ever approach you for aid in connexion with any welfare work?—No, there is one thing which they like, and that is the cinema.

E-1480. How many accidents had you in your works?—15 last year. One was a fatal accident, one resulted in permanent disablement and 13 in temporary disablement.

E-1481. If a sickness insurance scheme came into force would you be prepared to insure your workers free of charge?—I cannot say unless I know of the scheme.

E-1482. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you perfectly certain that the *sardar* does not take any commission from the workers when he pays them their wages?—Not beyond the recognized figures I have already given.

E-1483. That is what you allow him. Are you sure that he does not take an extra pie here and an extra pie there?—I am quite certain.

E-1484. How is it that yours is the only concern employing contract labour where the *sardar* does not take any commission?—That is due to personal contact with the workers.

E-1485. You pay the *sardar* and he pays the men individually?—Yes.

E-1486. You cannot possibly say what actually each man has done?—I can say what each gang has done. Each evening a clerk goes round and explains to the gang the amount of work done by them as a gang. The clerk tells them the amount of work done by them and the wages earned by each. For instance if he says that each man has earned as. 14 for the day the man has to remember this as. 14 for a matter of ten days.

E-1487. Suppose the *sardar* says to one man that he has been away that day and that somebody did his work for him. Would that be checked?—The system is such that every man goes to work.

E-1488. If that is the case why is it that some men are so suspicious that they want to be paid for every basket?—It is not a question of suspicion. It is a question of the convenience of the particular class of labour.

E-1489. You are doing a lot of dock work?—Yes.

E-1490. You have a permanent labour force of 12,000 and a casual labour force of 2,000. Therefore out of 14,000 men employed on the docks you have got only 2,000 casual labourers?—All those are not on dock work. Only 7,000 are permanent labourers on dock work.

E-1491. You want 7,000 permanent labourers for dock work?—Yes.

How many casual labourers do you want?—In addition to the 7,000 we want 2,000 casual labourers.

E-1492. You get a much better proportion than in any other port in the world. Do the 7,000 work every day on the docks even on those days when you have no ships or only a few ships in port?—I do not remember any time during the past few years when there were only a few ships in port.

E-1493. Your port is just like any other port in the world and there must be a rush time and a slack time and necessarily your labour force must vary. I want to know whether it varies only as 7 to 9?—It varies with the traffic. We anticipate that and stop recruiting for a certain period before the slack season.

E-1494. When the traffic is bad you might only have 3,000 for instance?—Yes.

E-1495. Therefore some of your permanent labour force is casual?—In that respect, yes.

E-1496. They have not got work all the time?—By "permanent" I mean that they are always.

E-1497. *Mr. Cliff*: You said at the beginning that you had an actual daily working strength of 7,000 and that you had to plus it only by 2,000 in the busy season. I know of no port in the world where the conditions approximate to the conditions which you have outlined?—I had before my mind my experience of the past three or four years.

E-1498. If the conditions you have outlined obtained in your port you would have no difficulty in guaranteeing a minimum weekly wage, not the slightest. It is a strange port?—I do not quite follow that.

E-1499. Let us see what would be the picture of the working of your dock labour force. You say you have got a labour force of 12,000 men of whom some 10,000 work in Calcutta, and of these 3,000 are at the Kidderpore and King George's Docks, and 4,000 at the Kidderpore Coal Berths. These men are engaged in loading and unloading cargo and coal bunkering and coal trimming. You say you have reached a standard where these 7,000 men are doing work every day and that you have only to plus it by 2,000 for the busy season. Can you show from the wages books that you have a minimum daily working strength of 7,000 and that you have to plus it by 2,000 only?—We have no figures regarding the actual number of persons to whom the wages have been paid. We have only figures of

the number of gangs employed. We have no definite record of the number of men employed. I took some gangs at random and made enquiries as to the number of men employed in each gang in order to give you a few instances.

E-1500. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Suppose you have to do to-day only 50 per cent of the work you did yesterday, then either the men would only be working half the time to-day or only half the number of men would be employed?—The rates which we pay are sufficient to cover any temporary variation of work. The earnings I have given there are averages over a long period including the idle time.

E-1501. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You say in your memorandum that housing is provided for about 80 per cent of your manual workers in Calcutta. Have you had any difficulty in acquiring land for constructing houses?—We acquire land through our principals and build houses for our workers. The total cost was Rs. 5,00,000.

E-1502. How much per head per annum does the interest on capital outlay and cost of upkeep come to?—I have no figures.

E-1503. You have no such thing as sub-contracting?—No.

E-1504. Do you have the same piece rates both for loading and unloading coal?—We have two rates. The permanent and regular men are paid at the rate of 3¼ annas per ton.

E-1505. That includes the share of the *sardar*?—Yes.

E-1506. The casual labour engaged in unloading from the train and loading in the ship is paid at the rate of 5·3 annas per ton.

E-1507. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I gather that if it were possible you would be prepared to give sickness benefit?—Yes, it would depend on the scheme.

E-1508. In the case of a contractor he would simply pass the charge on to the employer?—He would eventually.

E-1509. In your memorandum, you say that the working hours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during day and from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. during night with midday intervals for meals of one hour in Calcutta and two hours upcountry. Do I understand that the workers at night do not have one hour off at night?—No, they do not have an hour off at night.

E-1510. Have you figures of average output and relative standards of work done by day and night?—They vary considerably.

E-1511. They do not work hard at night?—They work much less hard at night. The night work is unpopular with the men.

E-1512. On this question of the number of workers employed you say that you have 4,000 men at the Kidderpore coal berths. Have you any figures to show that practically every day there are ships being loaded and unloaded at the docks and coal being piled?—The Port Commissioners publish a statement every year. That statement is available.

E-1513. Can we get that from the Port Commissioners?—Yes.

E-1514. Will it be possible to get figures regarding the regularity with which the coal berths are occupied, the amount of coal that is being brought down and or stacked or shipped?—They have a regular monthly report on this question.

E-1515. You have 4,000 men at the coal berths and only 3,000 men at the docks. Do you handle more coal than other goods?—In the case of other goods they are actually lifted on to the ships by the cranes and the carriage is short, but in the case of coal it is carried from the wagon right on to the ship and consequently it necessitates more men.

E-1516. The figures you have given are only approximate and you have no actual figures?—We have no definite census of our labourers.

E-1517. *Mr. Ahmed*: You recruit your labour from outside Bengal?—Yes.

E-1518. Is it not because that the local labour is not available for the rates you pay—9 annas a day?—The local labour is not suited to the particular class of work we handle.

E-1519. Do other people doing similar work like you recruit labour from upcountry?—Yes.

E-1520. I am a proprietor myself and I have engaged the local labour for all classes of work. Is it not because you get cheaper labour from upcountry that you recruit them from there?—No, the only reason is that the local labour is not suitable for the class of work handled by us.

E-1521. Out of the 9 annas you pay the *sardar* takes half an anna. Is it half an anna for 9 annas or half an anna for Re. 1?—The *sardar* is paid the earnings of his whole gang and out of the earnings of his gang he takes half anna in the rupee as his commission.

E-1522. What rates did you pay before the strike of 1918-19?—We paid 6 annas then and we pay 50 per cent more now, i.e., 9 annas for that particular class of labour.

E-1523. And you have not increased it for the past ten years?—Since 1920 we have not increased it.

E-1524. You say that a co-operative credit society is not needed for your labourers because you yourself lend money without interest. To whom do you lend money without interest?—To anybody who is actually known to the local manager.

E-1525. Not to any of those 12,000 workers you engage?—To any one of those 12,000 workers who is known to be a regular worker and is in temporary difficulties for want of money.

E-1526. How many have taken such loans?—Many.

E-1527. What is the amount of loans you have given?—I have got here figures of loans including the amounts advanced at the time of recruitment.

E-1528. I do not want figures regarding the advances you made at the time of recruitment. I want to know the amount of loans you have given to people who have been working with you for a long period. Could you give us figures regarding such loans for the last one or two years?—At the coal berths last year we gave loans and advances amounting to Rs. 25,000. As regards loans made to the workers I have no separate figures. It will take some time to separate the two but I shall supply the figures later on.

E-1529. What is the rate of your piece work?—*It varies with the commodities. For bags it varies from 3·875 annas to 4·25 annas per ton; for bales of hides it is 5 annas a ton, for pig iron it is 6·45 annas a ton.*

E-1530. *Sir Vistor Sassoon*: Besides the *sardar* is there anybody else who gets a share of the earnings?—*If the sardar also works he gets two shares, one share for his work and one share as his commission. If he does not work he gets one share only. In some big gangs there is a munshi* or tindal employed by the *sardar* and he pays them out of his share of 6 pies in the rupee.

E-1531. *The Chairman*: I want to ask you one question with regard to the night work which you say is a very small proportion of your loading work. On the question of an hour's break during night are you aware of a recent case where a break was instituted and the men objected to it and it had to be abolished?—I cannot remember.

E-1532. Have you had any experience of the kind yourself?—No, there has been no demand for a break in the night on the other hand.

E-1533. You think that the worker prefers to take his break as he pleases while doing piece work?—That is the actual practice.

E-1534. With regard to bribery, are you confident that there is no bribe exacted from your men by your *sardars*?—I am absolutely confident.

E-1535. Does that lead to the conclusion that where the supervising authorities take sufficient interest in this question and the men know that a complaint against an individual *sardar* will lead to the dismissal of the *sardar*, the men are in a position to get rid of bribery?—That has been our experience right through.

E-1536. In your case it is dependent on two things; first on the will and the supervision of the managers and secondly on the readiness of the workers to bring before the managers any attempt at extortion. You have told us of a recent case where you had dismissed a *sardar* on the matter being brought to your notice by an actual worker. That would seem to

show that if you have the two things together, the will on the part of the employer and the courage on the part of the worker it is possible to get rid of bribery?—Absolutely. Of course the courage on the part of the worker has to be built up. It has to be supported strongly by the employer.

E-1537. My point is that it depends on these two things and with these two factors it is possible to eliminate corruption?—Yes, that has been my experience.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-THIRD MEETING

CALCUTTA

Monday, 10th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*)

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

(At the Burma Shell Oil Installations, Budge Budge.)

Mr. J. SMITH, Assistant Manager of Burma Shell Installations, Budge Budge.

Mr. J. R. FARQUARSON, Manager, Calcutta branch of the Burma Shell Oil Company.

E-1538. *Sir Victor Sasoon*: Mr. Smith, how long have you been manager here?—(*Mr. Smith*) I have been acting manager for about nine or ten months; the manager is sick.

E-1539. What staff have you here?—About 2,400 of our own employees; in addition, there are contractors' men on loading work and that sort of thing who would number about 400 or 500 per day.

E-1540. Are your men on piece-work or time work?—The only men we have on piece-work are those working the squeezing machine, which requires a certain amount of quick work; they consist of about 40 men. We know what a set of machines is capable of doing, and we get an output of approximately that amount. In each department we have an assistant who is a European or Anglo-Indian; we have *sardars*, senior men who have been in our employment some time, and who have had a certain amount of control over the men. On the average there are about 150 or 200 men under each

assistant. In each department there are about two *sardars* over 100 or 150 men. We pay wages monthly. We have a covenanted European assistant at all times supervising the actual paying out of the wages. The wages are put in envelopes which are handed by the European assistant to the workmen; they are just plain envelopes. When a man receives his envelope he opens it and checks the amount in front of the assistant. The checking of course, takes longer; it takes about six hours to pay 2,000 men. Each assistant is probably responsible for paying 400 men. The work of paying out is divided up; the men are not lined up all at one time.

E-1541. How do you pay your contractors?—The contractor's bill is submitted to our Calcutta office. We check all the details of the bill. We do not control men in the employment of the contractor except through the contractor. We have absolutely nothing to do with the contractor's labour. It is almost entirely coolie labour.

E-1542. During the strike what were the main points raised by the men?—They wanted an increase of wages of 50 per cent. They demanded settlement of the strike at Tatanagar. (*Mr. Farquarson*) They wanted recognition of their union. The union was registered last week and we have only just got particulars of it.

E-1543. Are you prepared to recognize it?—Yes, if it is representative. The president is Subhash Chandra Bose, the vice-president is Ashami; they were both here during the strike. The secretary is a shopkeeper in the bazaar here while the treasurer is a man in a rice-mill. They have submitted to us 25 names of members of the committee which we only got last week. We are now tracing the names in order to see whether they are actually our men or not. Twenty of the 25 are or were Burma Shell Employees, but as far as I know only nine are at present in our employ; the others either did not come back or were not taken back at the end of the strike.

E-1544. Do you propose to recognize that union?—We have not come to a decision yet; we should like to have a list of the members of the union.

E-1545. I understand you do not propose to recognize the union until you know who its members are?—Yes. We want to know what number of men are represented.

E-1546. Do you want the individual names?—Yes.

E-1546-*a*. The men would be frightened to have their names shown.—If we could be satisfied by some other means, it might not be necessary.

E-1546-*b*. If you were satisfied that the Union represented the majority of your men, would you recognize it?—If a very large number of our men are represented on the union, and we think the union is reasonable, and will conform to rules which are reasonable rules, we will recognise them. We definitely must have rules as to how they are to submit their complaints and their complaints must be representative.

E-1547. As long as you know the number of men I suppose you do not propose to scrutinize the names of the members?—Not necessarily, if we can be otherwise satisfied. We have not asked for anything so far; we have just checked up the committee to see if the committee is a real one.

E-1548. As long as they represent oil workers and as long as there is a sufficient percentage of oil workers on their committee you do not insist on all the committee being oil workers, do you?—So far we have insisted upon nothing. Actually all the committee are put down as oil workers except the executive staff, none of whom are oil workers.

E-1549. You propose to accept a non-oil working executive staff?—I do not think we have got as far as that yet. We have only got the list of names. The whole lot are people who ran this strike and refused to register the union. We have come to no decision. We could only get particulars from the Labour department last week and we have not yet checked up the names of the people to see whether they are in our employment or not.

E-1550. There is the Committee?—Yes.

E-1551. What else do they demand?—They asked for a 50 per cent increase in wages and we gave them a 5 per cent increase. It is the same as the jute mills gave their people.

E-1552. Did the strike affect all the oil companies here?—Yes. They also wanted good drinking water and we agreed that they were entitled to that. We have made arrangements to satisfy that demand.

E-1553. You agree that their criticism was justified there?—(*Mr. Smith*) Yes, in one or two instances their grievances were justified, but in this sense they were not justified, they did not give us an opportunity of rectifying anything which might be the subject of legitimate grievance. I agree that their demand with regard to drinking water was a justifiable grievance. We have taken steps to remedy it. When we have completed the drinking water arrangements there will be eight complete drinking water centres for the men which will be more than adequate.

E-1554. *Col. Russell*: Do you propose to cool the water during the hot weather?—(*Mr. Farquarson*) The position with regard to drinking water is difficult; we have already spent about Rs. 20,000 in sinking tube wells but the water has been found to be unfit for drinking and now we are sinking another tube well. We have to barge all the drinking water from Calcutta. Calcutta does not like to part with it. We have relied on the Budge Budge Municipal supply of water for the men which is the same water as they drink in their homes; that is the water about which they have complained. That is the first complaint we have had with regard to the water. We detailed a certain number of men to fetch this water and the complaint was that they were not fetching the right water.

E-1555. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What other points did they raise?—(*Mr. Smith*) They demanded compensation in the event of accident, but that was a foolish demand. I showed them the Workmen's Compensation Act; as a matter of fact we are paying them better compensation than the Workmen's Compensation Act provides; we pay them during the first ten days. They also asked for a system of gratuities on retirement, but that had been granted long before the strike. It had been our practice for years. (*Mr. Farquarson*) As far as we could make out the demands were written by men who had no idea of the conditions here at all; they asked for workmen's compensation, gratuities and provident fund all of which they had already got. They also asked for free medical attention which they had already had for years.

E-1556. Have you much absenteeism?—(*Mr. Smith*) There is a fairly high percentage of absenteeism.

E-1557. You say 5½ per cent in your written evidence, but you have a certain number of men spare, have you not?—In every department, though they may not be referred to as spare men, we know we have about 10 per cent more men than are actually required for the work.

E-1558. Do you mean that out of that 10 per cent only 5½ per cent are absent?—5½ per cent is the total absenteeism. In the soldering room, for instance, men are not working all the time from 8 to 5.

E-1559. That 10 per cent is really to relieve other people during the day?—Yes.

E-1560. They are not to take the place of men who are completely absent?—No.

E-1561. Have you any record analysing your absenteeism showing who have gone back to their fields, who are away for illness or other reasons?—The figures that we submitted recently to the Commission are the only figures we have. We do not keep complete records as they do in the jute mills.

E-1562. How do you know if a man is present or not?—We know that from our time-keeping department; a man comes in the morning, collects a ticket and is marked as being present. There is a clock where he stamps that ticket.

E-1563. You have a proper system of checking in and checking out?—Yes.

E-1564. *Mr. Clow*: Where does your labour come from mainly?—Our skilled labour for the main part comes from Budge Budge. There is a big percentage of upcountry labour, a lot of which comes from Cuttack. We have I think about 30 per cent upcountry labour. We do not bring the men from upcountry; there is a floating population of men in Budge Budge that come from uncountry and those men are available.

E-1565. You do not send out *sardars* to bring them from upcountry?—We tell the *sardar* from time to time we require more men and he brings them. He may bring them from upcountry but as far as we are concerned they are men who may be living in his coolie lines or actually in the village.

E-1566. How long did your strike last?—Three months.

E-1567. In your opinion why was it so prolonged?—It would be difficult to say. They having started the strike, we certainly took up an attitude which was reasonable but at the same time it was probably a strong attitude in this sense that we refused to concede anything or discuss anything with them until they came back to work because they had been rather unfair to us in going out so suddenly. There were a few trade union people present who were stimulating interest all the time and I should say they were responsible for keeping the men out longer than the men wanted to remain out.

E-1568. To what extent do you employ contractors?—We do not employ contractors actually in the factory except in regard to soldering and with the amalgamation which is now taking place that will cease automatically; we shall no longer have a contractor. The men you saw soldering are directly employed by us. The other contractors' men are those who work in the railway siding loading tins.

E-1569. *Miss Power*: Do you allow money-lenders to come on the premises?—No; we generally stop people from coming in but when wages are being paid you can generally see *Kabulis* hanging around outside.

E-1570. Have you taken any survey of the amount of indebtedness of your employees?—No. In a general way we know that quite a number of our men are very seriously in debt.

E-1571. Do you offer them any loans at any time?—No. It has not been our practice to do so up to the present.

E-1572. Is drunkenness noticeable on Mondays or Tuesdays?—After poojas after any holiday and immediately after pay day.

E-1573. Where do they get the liquor?—They get toddy from the ordinary liquor shops round the place.

E-1574. With regard to this welfare officer who has come from another company, has he a free hand to make a survey and report to you?—(*Mr. Farquarson*) He has been given a free hand; he has now gone back to Rangoon and has put up his recommendations as to what we should do for the welfare of labour.

E-1575. Is it your intention to set up some form of welfare work?—It is definitely our intention to set up a labour department which will be in direct touch with the labour; labour will have direct access to the man in charge in order to put forward any complaints or grievances.

E-1576. Is it likely to organize works committees or anything of that kind?—The report has not yet been submitted, but I do not think it will.

E-1577. *Col. Russell*: You do not house any of your employees?—No, our labour lives within a radius of 5 or 6 miles off here. It would be rather difficult to acquire land for housing; as far as I am aware there is no land available at present for housing even if we considered the question.

E.-1578. Is this installation in the Budge Budge Municipal area?—Yes.

E-1579. Are you not entitled to the municipal supply of water? I suppose you pay rates?—We pay rates and we take water from municipal tanks, but whether we are legally entitled to it I am not sure. The question which arose was not with regard to the quality of the water from these tanks, but it was said that the labour we employed to bring it were not bringing it from the proper source.

E-1580. Where do they bring it from?—Distances varying from 200 to 300 yards from here. There are no pipes. The municipal water is contained in these surface tanks and there is no arrangement for distribution of water in Budge Budge. The municipal supply comes from these tanks which are filled in certain periods of the year, with river and rain water.

E-1581. It is not a protected water-supply?—No, it is only surface tanks. All the drinking water is brought in barges from Calcutta. We have a barge capable of carrying 25 tons a day and it does about 25 trips per month to Calcutta. Altogether about 700 tons of drinking water is brought down every month. The water we got from the tube wells we sank gave everybody indigestion.

E-1582. I see from your dispensary books that there are a considerable number of cases of what is called indigestion. Who makes the diagnosis?—In most instances it may be the municipal doctor who attends here twice a day for two hours in the day.

E-1583. I take it these entries are made by the compounder?—They will have been entered up by the compounder; I could not say whether the doctor scrutinizes every case. The compounder in some cases makes the diagnosis

E-1584. Then we cannot rely upon these?—No, I agree. The doctor who comes in twice a day is our company's doctor for the staff and he is also the municipal hospital doctor.

E-1585. The whole of your treatment appears to be done by the compounders?—Yes, for the most part as far as this dispensary is concerned.

E-1586. We saw a process in which soldering baths were in use; a certain amount of fumes must be coming off?—No doubt, there are fumes coming off but it is our belief that the shed is sufficiently ventilated not to make it dangerous.

E-1587. Have you ever seen any cases of lead poisoning or anything like that?—No.

E-1588. And the doctor has not reported any cases?—No. I do not recollect in the course of eight or ten years in this place any cases of lead poisoning. I myself have spent a good deal of time in soldering sheds and I cannot say I have ever felt the fumes particularly.

E-1589. Are your staff male adults?—We do not employ women at all and we only employ about 10 or 15 boys who are at least 18 years of age so that practically speaking they are adults.

E-1590. Have you any system of training these young men?—No.

E-1591. You told us that during the strike you found it rather difficult to replace the labour engaged on the soldering process?—We have no system of training; we depend upon getting men from outside who are capable of doing the work.

E-1592. You import skilled men?—Yes. We have a workshop in which we make dyes for places all over India and in that workshop we do a certain amount of training; we employ boys who are more or less apprentices on As. 8 to As. 10 and increase the pay until they reach the stage of earning a fitter's or machine-man's wages.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

S. C. DASS, Oil-worker was examined and made the following statement.

I live at Budge Budge. I have no land. I do soldering work. I learnt to do that work in these works. I came here 11 years ago and worked as an acid boy. Gradually by watching other people I learnt to do the work which I do, and then I asked to be allowed to go to that department. I rent a house for which I pay Rs. 4 a month ; it has two rooms, one kitchen, one living room; I live there with my mother and my wife. My father is dead. That is the whole of my family. My pay is Re. 1 a day and my average earnings per month are about Rs. 20. I spend Rs. 18 on food alone. My income is exactly what I spend. If I work harder and get more overtime work I might buy a few clothes; otherwise I have not enough money to buy clothes. Sometimes we get overtime here and when I work overtime my monthly wage amounts to about Rs. 26, but I cannot always get overtime. At present we are doing full work; previously in this factory there was not sufficient work and in consequence we did not work every day. I borrow money from a Punjabee and am in debt to the extent of Rs. 30. When I was sick I borrowed Rs. 30; I am regularly paying interest but have not been able to repay the principal. I pay Rs. 2-13-0 a month which is equivalent to Re. 0-1-6 in the rupee. When I was ill I was confined to bed for one month and for two months I got no work. What income I have got is always spent. If the work is all right and there is overtime I can earn Rs. 24 per month and can maintain myself, my mother and my wife. My wife does not work; in Bengal our wives do not work. During the strike I went on strike in sympathy with the others, but I was not taking an active part in the strike, and I do not know what were the main questions on which the strike occurred; all I know is that they went on strike because they wanted an increase in pay and a supply of drinking water. Water was being supplied

from a tank which is here. I do not say this but other workers say that though at this time of the year there is not much to complain of, in the summer the water is brackish and it is very difficult to get water. My house is near the works. I come here in the morning after taking a little tea; then at 12-30 I walk home, have my breakfast and return here at 1 o'clock. We cannot eat very much; we always have to starve because of the very poor pay we get. I think it would be better if we had a rest interval of one hour in the middle of the day.

E-1593. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You were asked whether you wanted an hour in the middle of the day and you said you preferred half an hour?—I was not asked that question and it was the other men who replied.

E-1594. Would you prefer to have an hour in the middle of the day and work half an hour longer at the end of the day, or would you prefer to take half an hour in the middle of the day and finish work half an hour sooner?—I refuse to answer the question.

E-1595. Which would you prefer personally?—I will reply to the question, although many men will complain of my doing so. I live near here and therefore I prefer to take a rest of one hour in the middle of the day and go home later; but the majority of the people who have to go five or six miles from here would like to leave earlier, that is to say, at 5 o'clock. They come after their breakfast in the morning and take their dinner at night; they bring wheat and rice with them and eat it in the middle of the day.

E-1596. Do any of the other people have to pay the *sardar* when they have first come to work here? (A *sardar* who had been present had left the room)—I refuse to answer the question. (*In answer to Colonel Russell*) I was ill for a month; I suffered from liver trouble and my stomach was not in good order; I was not properly digesting what I was eating. I was too weak to come to the dispensary and I did not get any medicine. No doctor came to see me from the company; I was treated by another doctor. There is a new market at Budge Budge where there is a man who called on me for three days. I had to pay Rs. 6 for the doctor's fees and Rs. 3 for injections; in three days it cost me Rs. 9. I was very weak but I sent word through my *sardar* and the company granted me leave. The company only gives medicines in case of cuts and wounds.

E-1597. *Colonel Russell*: There are a lot of men on the dispensary books which I have seen this morning who are getting medicines?—Yes, they give the medicines provided the man goes there but I was too weak to go. After working here till 5 o'clock I go to a grocer's shop nearby where I work after 5 o'clock. For doing that if I am in need of any money at any time the man who owns the shop lends me Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 free of interest. If he goes out to do any business he asks me to weigh the rice and put it in bags. I do not get any money for doing that, but if I require a loan of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 I get it from him free of interest. I also buy from him rice but no rice is given me free. I get it on credit. I do not get my rice cheap. He sells at the rate of Rs. 7 for a maund to everybody and he charges me the same rate. I am very tired at the end of the day after my work and it is against my will that I work at the grocer's shop.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. SMITH, Assistant Manager of the Burma Shell Installation, Budge Budge (re-called for further examination).

E-1598. *Colonel Russell*: This man who has just been before us said he had been ill for one month and was too weak to go to the dispensary for medicine. Have you any arrangement by which your doctor goes to see the men if they are too weak to come?—No. We generally advise them to go to the municipal hospital, but we find it very difficult to induce them to go there; they prefer their local attendant with his quack methods.

E-1599. Are you considering any scheme by which men might be given medical attendance in such circumstances?—Yes; that is part of this welfare scheme that we are now considering. There have been various schemes

submitted from the Bombay and Karachi branches running into a few lakhs of rupees which would include that. At present we have no such arrangement, but if our attention is drawn to a case we may arrange for the doctor to go.

(The witness withdrew.)

(At the Caledonian Jute Mills Company, Limited.)

Mr. J. SIME, Managing Director, Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. and Mr. G. GORRIE, Manager, Caledonian Jute Mills Company, Ltd.

E-1600. *The Chairman*: Mr. Sime, I understand that you have very long experience of the jute mill industry. How long does it cover?—(*Mr. Sime*) It covers a very long period. I have been working in the jute mills all my life. I was born in Dundee where my grandfather was owning jute mills.

E-1601. You yourself had experience in Dundee before you came out here?—Yes.

E-1602. When did you come to India?—In 1903.

E-1603. Then you have 27 years' experience here. Has it all been in connexion with this mill?—No. This mill was only built in 1914. Before I became the works manager of this mill in 1916 I was working in the Budge Budge Jute Mill as manager.

E-1604. Has all your experience in the jute mills been concerned with the split-shift system, or have you had any experience of the single-shift system?—We had mills working in single-shift system in 1910 when the trade was very bad. It is a little cheaper to work on the single-shift.

E-1605. When did you change over to the split-shift system?—When the trade was good.

E-1606. And you have been on the split-shift system ever since running your machinery for 13½ hours a day, starting at 5-30 in the morning and finishing at 7 o'clock in the evening?—Yes.

E-1607. Have you any opinion to give us, generally speaking, as to the hours of labour in the jute industry?—I am of opinion that it is wrong to bring women and children to work at 5-30, and send them home after 7 p.m.

E-1608. Supposing the hours were limited for women and children between 6 and 6, how would that affect your shift system?—If trade was very bad the shift-system would disappear. Here there is a limitation of adult labour, but there is no limitation of adult labour, I think, at Home.

E-1609. The effect of limiting woman's labour, as you know, in the textile industries at home was automatically to limit man's labour except in small cases of overtime where a particular department run by the men could work independently. It would have the same effect here, I imagine?—I am a little doubtful. Certainly, it would not have the same effect if the mills were making money.

E-1610. How is that?—They will discontinue the use of women and children.

E-1611. They would have men entirely in the spinning and in the preparatory processes?—If the mills were making money they would.

E-1612. But still your main point is that the present day is too long to bring women and children away from their homes?—Yes. I think more attention should be paid to their home life. I may be wrong, but I think they should have some time in their own homes. In the old days when we were working without electric lights there was not so much discontent as there is to-day.

E-1613. You were limited by daylight?—Yes.

E-1614. Do you have any system at all of maternity benefit for women at the time of child-birth?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Yes, Rs. 2-4-0 a week up to a maximum period of seven weeks.

E-1615. I understand that the institution of maternity benefits was part of the settlement of the strike of last year, and I suppose you held yourself bound by the signature of the Jute Mills Association. True, it was only agreed that they would favourably consider the institution of maternity benefits, but have you got any written rules on which to go?—Yes.

E-1616. Was any suggestion sent out by the Association following the settlement as to the lines, or was it left entirely to each individual mill or groups of mills?—I do not know; we got instructions from the head office of our agents.

E-1617. I am rather anxious to know what exactly happened in pursuance of the terms of the settlement of the strike, whether there was a uniform policy with regard to maternity benefit; for instance, does it depend upon a woman having worked six or twelve months in the mill prior to the birth of the child?—We have limited the period to six months.

(A copy of the rules of maternity benefit scheme was handed in.)

E-1618. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is this universal in all jute mills?—Yes, I think so.

E-1619. *Mr. Tassie*: Your Association do not lay down rules for all the mills; each group decides for itself?—Yes. A woman employed six months before child-birth gets the maternity benefit.

E-1620. I think some mills have restricted the period of previous employment to one year?—May be. (*Mr. Sime*) Here we do not have much migration of labour; there is not much change; the majority of the hands are local people.

E-1621. *The Chairman*: Have you ever considered keeping the babies out of the mill and providing a crèche with an attendant so that they may not be in the midst of machinery and dust?—We have certain rules to go by. As a matter of fact, children over five, I think, are not allowed inside the mills.

E-1622. I am referring to the infants who are under five; the mothers do bring them in?—Yes, in some cases. We have not considered the question of the provision of a crèche.

E-1623. You have got plenty of room here if you should decide to provide a crèche; nearly all your mills here have plenty of area within the compound?—Yes, we can easily do that.

E-1624. What are your medical arrangements here? Have you a full-time doctor?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Yes. We have also a dispensary here.

E-1625. Is he an Indian doctor?—Yes.

E-1626. Besides dispensing medicines to those who go to him in the dispensary, has he anything to do with inspecting the mill lines?—That comes under his charge.

E-1627. Does he do that daily?—He is supposed to inspect the lines. The engineer is the man in charge of sanitary arrangements.

E-1628. And the doctor goes looking out for hidden cases of illness?—Yes.

E-1629. Do you have epidemics here? How do you stand in respect of cholera in recent years?—(*Mr. Sime*) There has not been any epidemic here in recent years. We find that the local Bengalis are much cleaner than the upcountry men, so much so that sometimes the Bengali labourer will not bathe in the same tank with the Hindustani labourer.

E-1630. *Mr. Tassie*: Does your doctor also attend to your people living in the *bustis*?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) If cases are reported we send our doctor.

E-1631. *The Chairman*: You are not troubled, I gather, having so much local labour, with the annual migration during harvest that takes place with the upcountry people?—A certain number of Bengali labourers go away to attend to their fields at the harvest time, from the end of October till about the beginning of February; they are mostly weavers.

E-1632. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That is to say, your Bengali weavers of whom you have a good few, go to attend to their crops at the sowing time and the harvesting time?—Yes.

E-1633. Where do you get your *badlis* from?—It is not sufficient to cause any disturbance to the mill. The only time we are rather short of labour is about the month of December. But even then it is not so bad as to

cause trouble. (*Mr. Sime*) The real truth is that there is surplus labour in the double shift. There are more hands than there should be, and we know that all are not working. We also know that the *sardars* and others get a share on account of this surplus labour.

E-1634. You take that for an accepted fact?—Yes.

E-1634-a. But is not the share of the *sardars* considerably more under your split-shift system than it would be under a single-shift? Do they not have a greater chance of showing favouritism in the matter of allocation of jobs?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Yes, but the company is paying for the surplus labour; it does not in any way affect the workers. As long as the workers are not harassed there is no necessity for our interference.

E-1635. You have actually 25 per cent more labour than is required to run the show?—I think it will be 10 per cent.

E-1636. You may have 10 per cent of the names on your books who actually do not exist as far as working is concerned and that money goes somewhere?—Yes; it is divided amongst the *baboos* and the *sardars*, and the man who is doing two men's job.

E-1637. You have never considered the possibility of making an effort to get rid of that?—(*Mr. Sime*) We have considered it but we think it is not possible to get rid of it entirely. For instance, I once told a *baboo* "You have plenty of hands to keep the mills going, but do not be too greedy."

E-1638. Have you ever dismissed any one for overgreediness?—Yes, we have, in some cases.

E-1639. Do the workers themselves ever complain?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Generally not.

E-1640. I take it that the *sardars* are unanimous in favour of the split-shift system?—Surely they are. The Bengalis themselves are in favour of the system because they get a long break in the middle of the day. For instance, some of them have to go down to Budge Budge for their meals. If there is no break of 3½ hours in the middle of the day, they cannot go home for food.

E-1641. If the *sardars* are unanimously in favour of the split-shift system, the workers would hardly have any independent vote on the matter, would they?—I do not know. This did not prove to be the case during the general strike.

E-1642. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Who pays the wages to your workers?—(*Mr. Sime*) A European assistant.

E-1643. Will you tell us what was the cause of your last strike?—I think the jute mills up the river are to be blamed. They only paid two pice more for working for five days instead of for four days. But so far as we were concerned it became purely a political business.

E-1644. Do you say that up the river the mills only paid two pice more for working for five days?—Some of them did.

E-1645. Are you speaking of the single-shift?—No; I am speaking of the double-shift.

E-1646. You mean to say that they tried to get the workers to go on to a five-day working without making allowance for *khoraki*?—So we hear.

E-1647. You do not know definitely?—I was not here then.

E-1648. You have no personal knowledge?—No.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. KRISHNA CHUNDER RAY CHAUDHURI, President of the Kankinarah Labour Union.

E-1649. *The Chairman*: What is the present membership of your union?—It is just a little over 1,000.

E-1650. Does the membership vary?—During a period of strike it increases, and during a period of no strike it decreases.

E-1651. What was the number of your members in the last return?—The number was 775.

E-1652. What amount does that represent in subscriptions for the same year?—We had an opening balance of Rs. 410 and we received as subscriptions Rs. 228-12-0.

E-1653. What is the area covered by your union?—We primarily cover the municipal area of Bhatpara with about 12 or 13 mills.

E-1654. There are 50,000 mill hands in that area, I understand?—Yes.

E-1655. So your union has a membership of 1,000 out of those 50,000 mill hands in that area?—Yes.

E-1656. As to your executive committee how far is that composed of actual workers in the mill?—With the exception of myself and two others the rest are all present mill hands.

E-1657. You yourself, I think, have not had actual experience inside the jute mills?—No.

E-1658. Is the secretary an actual worker in the mill?—There are two secretaries who are not workers.

E-1659. What is the size of your executive committee?—Sixteen.

E-1660. I take it then that the executive committee is the real working body of the union?—Yes.

E-1661. Dealing with the question of bribery and the alleged exactions of the *sardars*, exactly what steps has your union taken, and with what success, to abolish or diminish this system?—For the first two or three years of the existence of our union we concentrated on that one point alone, that is, to stamp out bribery and corruption, and what we did was to get the weavers of certain mills to send a petition with their thumb impressions. In this particular case there were about 260 weavers who put their thumb impressions on a petition addressed to the manager of a particular mill complaining of exactions made by the *sardar* of that mill in that area.

E-1662. Have you in any single mill been successful in stopping bribery?—Yes, we have been very successful in Megna Jute Mill where there was a strike by the weavers because they could not tolerate the exactions of the *sardar*.

E-1663. And are you convinced that in that mill there is now no such system?—What the manager did was to send for the *sardar* in the presence of the weavers and ask the weavers to confront the *sardar*, and when he was satisfied that the weavers' allegations were well founded, he dismissed the *sardar*, and he went so far as to give a chance to the weavers to select their own headman, and he accepted the selection made by the weavers.

E-1664. Would you say that where there is sufficient courage on the part of the workmen to resist this system, combined with the good will on the part of the employers, it is possible to wipe it out entirely?—To some extent, with this exception, that sometimes one or two of the supervising staff are in league with the *sardar*. In that case it is difficult to do anything.

E-1665. I am assuming the good will of the manager, the head of the mill, and the determination on the part of the workers. Do you think that given those two things it is then possible entirely to wipe out this system?—It will not be possible to entirely wipe it out, but it is possible to reduce it to a very appreciable extent.

E-1666. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you speaking of all classes of labour or just the *sardars* over the weavers?—The bribery is more rampant in the weaving section than in the other section.

E-1667. *The Chairman*: Do you have any *sardars* in your union?—Yes, one of our vice-presidents is a *sardar*.

E-1668. You make some reference to the contact of the workers with their village homes, and you speak in terms of appreciation of the fact of very frequent contact with their village homes and their periodical resort to pastural occupations. That would appear as if you approve of the custom of the workmen taking a periodical holiday in their villages?—Yes.

E-1669. Then you are not an advocate of the jute mill worker becoming a complete industrialist?—Not by any means.

E-1670. Because your preceding statement might have been doubtful wherein you refer to Indian labour "when and if it settles down in different mill centres"?—We cannot resist it; they might settle down some day.

E-1671. You believe it is a good thing for the workers to keep their contact with their villages?—Yes.

E-1672. *Miss Power*: But later on you say you wish "to discourage long absence in village homes"?—I mean long absences.

E-1673. *The Chairman*: You wish to see that the workers who return for one or two months a year to their village homes and then come back again to the same mill should be treated as continuous workers and not as new comers?—Yes.

E-1674. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that you desire the workers to have annual leave?—Yes, if they did not get it by voluntary arrangement some steps might be taken to give them one or two months leave because they are pastural people and happier at home and come back fit.

E-1675. *The Chairman*: Your point is that it should be recognized system of leave and not treated as absenteeism?—Yes.

E-1676. That is to say, the proper leave should be asked for and given in case of desire to return for a reasonable period to the village?—Yes.

E-1677. You make a reference to a suggestion of joint works committees as being possible and suitable in the jute industry. Has your union ever put before a particular mill or group of mills a definite proposal to co-operate in the formation of joint works committees?—Yes.

E-1678. Have you ever tried to induce a particular mill or group of mills to make an experiment in this system with your co-operation?—I wrote to the President of the Indian Jute Mill Association.

E-1679. I am asking whether in a limited definite sphere you have ever tried, within the area where your membership is strongest, to put a definite proposal forward?—We tried that in the Anglo-India Jute Mill, which is the nearest to us.

E-1680. What was the reply of the authorities?—They did not give serious thought to it. They said "it is a good thing." I think if the Jute Mills Association give their members a mandate they might give it a trial.

E-1681. I understand the Jute Mills Association never gives a mandate?—No.

E-1682. Therefore, I am putting this question in a limited and definite form—whether you have ever asked a particular group of mills who might be willing to make an experiment to co-operate with you in that direction?—We tried it with the Anglo-India Jute Mill, but could not succeed because we found that they had no experience of works committees, and secondly, that they did not seem to appreciate it.

E-1683. I thought you said just now that they received the suggestion rather favourably?—They received it favourably just because they found that Government spent a lot of time over it in drafting a scheme of works' committees. They expressed some sort of satisfaction, but they never meant to take any serious steps about it.

E-1684. You would not expect that a thing of that kind would come into being over a whole industry all at once?—No; we wanted to make experiments in one or two mills and the rest might follow. That was our idea.

E-1685. Dealing with the question of housing you say "Fortunately most of the women mill workers have the sense to go home to their agricultural villages when they are going to give birth to babies." Have you any estimate or figure that you can give to us? Would you put it at 50 per cent or 70 per cent?—I cannot give you any figures, but that is the general information we have.

E-1686. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: When you say "most", you mean over 50 per cent?—I cannot say anything definite.

E-1687. *The Chairman*: Referring to what you call "bad *bustis*" you say "Often they are owned by the *sardars* in the mill, sometimes they are owned by the company". Can you give me an instance where one of these bad *bustis* is owned by the company?—I do not think I meant that any bad *bustis* are owned by any mills,

E-1688. It reads that way?—This is purely a quotation from Mr. Thomas Johnston; the whole of that is a quotation.

E-1689. You do not vouch for that?—No.

E-1690. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: May we take it that none of these *bustis* are owned by a mill?—Not that I know of.

E-1691. *The Chairman*: Dealing with the question of hours, you make some reference to the vexed question of single or multiple shifts. May I ask you directly whether or not your union is an advocate of the one or the other system of single or multiple shifts?—Our union is really an advocate of shorter hours, and if a double shift permits of shorter hours we prefer a double shift; from our point of view our union advocates reduction of the present working hours.

E-1692. You propose to us that the hours should be reduced to 9 hours per day?—Yes. If that were done we would certainly prefer a single shift.

E-1693. There is another rather doubtful paragraph in your memorandum which would imply that you regretted the decrease of the number of children in the mill, but perhaps I am right in saying that you only mean while there is no provision for education?—Yes, exactly, or while there is no provision for any other occupation.

E-1694. You do not as such deprecate the gradual diminution of the number of children in the mills?—No.

E-1695. Referring to the question of industrial trade combinations you tell us that there are not more than two unions of the employed including this union. Are you quite sure about that?—There is another one, but of the same name, so, if you take that into consideration, there would be three; besides ourselves there is a body who have got the same name with two different executives, but they exist more or less on paper, having no membership.

E-1696. Do you co-operate with those two other bodies?—I am rather sorry we do not.

E-1697. Dealing with the question of what you call "constitutional trade unionism" as distinct from, I think, you would say, political trade unionism, may I take it that your view of the functions of a trade union is to deal with practical points step by step, affecting the interests of the workers?—Yes.

E-1698. Not to issue manifestoes with 14 or more than 14 points at a single time?—No.

E-1699. You finally tell us that in your view it is essential that there should be a wholetime labour officer in Bengal with an adequate staff to carry on the administration of a labour department?—Yes.

E-1700. Tell us exactly what you have in view when you make that recommendation?—I have in view something like the Labour Bureau of Bombay with officers specialized in collecting labour statistics, and preparing family budgets. What I am specially interested in is the preparation of family budgets and preparation of a cost of living index.

E-1701. Would you limit it to that or would you recommend that such officer should be like a Minister of Labour in England—a person who brings parties together when a dispute is likely to arise?—Yes, if we can develop that bureau to that extent certainly I would welcome somebody who would arbitrate or act as a sort of peacemaker when there is any industrial dispute.

E-1702. Not to arbitrate. You cannot well have a Government officer to arbitrate. You are, no doubt, aware of the way that the Minister of Labour in England acts. It is conciliation rather than arbitration?—What I really meant was conciliation. I think a Minister of Labour would best fulfil the purposes of conciliation.

E-1703. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You state "Legislation for the creation of wages boards for all important industries like jute, cotton, coal, tea, etc., is essential to provide for the minimum wages each industry can afford to pay and the cost of living warrants in different industrial areas." Is it your intention that legislation should create boards whose business it would be to fix different wages for each industry?—Yes, different wages for different industries according to the needs of that industry, and according to the standard of living of the workmen employed in that industry.

E-1704. Suppose there are two industries in one centre. In Calcutta there are more than two industries, but I will take as an instance jute and cotton. Would you have the same wages in both those industries, or would you have different wages?—It would all depend on the living conditions of the workers.

E-1705. But in Calcutta there would be uniformity in the cost of living?—Perhaps in the City of Calcutta itself, but not in the suburbs. In the suburbs different conditions obtain, for instance, the rents are less.

E-1706. Your point is that it does not matter as long as the two industries are in the same centre? You think that with the same cost of living practically the two industries could find labour content to work on different scales of wages?—In different industries there may be a slightly different standard of living. For instance, the standard of living of taxi-drivers is higher than that of the engineering workers employed in Burn & Co., Ltd., of Howrah.

E-1707. I should like you to bear in mind only the two industries I have mentioned, which work practically on the same lines, and which get their supply of labour from the same class. What would happen if the labour engaged in the jute industry got more than the labour engaged in the cotton industry?—I would prefer an enquiry by a Trade Board into each industry separately.

E-1708. Do you think that different standards of wages would be workable; that is to say, would people in one industry work contentedly at lower wages than those paid in a sister industry in the same centre?—It depends on so many things. Generally speaking, I would say no; but I would say yes with certain qualifications.

E-1709. Is it your point that the standard of living of workers in sister industries like cotton and jute is different?—It is not markedly different.

E-1710. Your view is that the minimum wage should be uniform in those particular cases?—Yes.

E-1711. If the jute industry were flourishing and the cotton industry were depressed, would you still apply the same standard of wages to the cotton industry, and run the risk of causing unemployment by closing the cotton factories?—But the minimum cost of living should not depend on any diminution of prosperity of a particular industry. The fixation of a minimum wage should have no bearing on the depression or prosperity of an industry.

E-1712. Your argument is that minimum wages may differ in the same centre in regard to different industries?—If the two different industries have workmen having different standards of living; not otherwise.

E-1713. *Miss Power*: Would you not be prepared, as is the case of Trade Boards in England, for an industry to have a Trade Board established to take into consideration the capacity of an industry to pay?—Yes. In the early Acts there was a section dealing with the capacity of an industry to pay, but later on, so far as Australia was concerned, that section disappeared. In the last Act of Australia there is no mention about the capacity of an industry to pay, but there was in the beginning.

E-1714. Do you not think it would be better to start with a minimum wage slightly below the agreed cost-of-living figure, where the previous wages had been extremely low, and to work that minimum up by slow degrees, rather than run the risk of killing an industry by giving a minimum which that industry was not in a position to pay at the particular moment?—That will not tend to raise the standard of living.

E-1715. You are ignoring the whole history of minimum wage legislation in England when you say that?—I said that in the beginning there were provisions of that sort about the capacity of the industry to pay.

E-1716. It was taken into consideration in fixing the minimum wage?—Yes.

E-1717. You are not prepared to take that into consideration when fixing minimum wages in India?—I would rather have a Board even with the limitation you suggest than no Board at all.

E-1718. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In regard to efficiency, can you tell us why the workmen in Europe and America are able to work more efficiently than workmen in India?—The Indian workman is not able to work so

efficiently as the European workman firstly because of his lack of education; secondly because of his poor physique due to poor dietary, thirdly because of climatic conditions and fourthly because of his low standard of living, including housing.

E-1719. Do you think if the standard of living was raised Indian workmen would be able to work equally as well as workmen in other parts of the world?—If the standard of both living and education was raised. We have found in certain industries—in the coal industry for example—that the Indian coal miner mines almost as much coal as a Belgian coal miner per year (118 tons as against 130 tons). In certain industries the output per head, for piece-work for the same number of hours, has been equal to that in other countries.

E-1720. In cases where Indian workmen are put on piece-work, are they able to give the same production as workmen in other parts of the world in spite of their lower standard of living, their lack of education and the other things you have mentioned?—I am studying that point. In certain industries we find that for the same number of hours on piece-work the production of an Indian worker is almost equal to the production of a European worker. I say that given a certain amount of education, a certain amount of training as an apprentice—because at present an Indian workman has not the advantage which a foreign workman has of undergoing a training before he becomes a full-fledged workman—and a good standard of living, I have not the least doubt that he will be able to work just as efficiently as any other man.

E-1721. Your position is that where a workman is put on piece-work, in spite of all the drawbacks you have enumerated, he is able to work more efficiently than when he is on daily or monthly wages?—Yes, on piece-work where there is a premium bonus system he is. It is only natural. I put my whole heart into my work when I know I am getting more money. It is a psychological factor.

E-1722. On piece-work there is an incentive for a workman to earn more money. On monthly wages, there being no such incentive of getting more money, his work is not efficient?—I admit it.

E-1723. You say "The *sardars* have to pay very high prices to the superior officers for their jobs." Does this mean that corruption goes right through to the top?—In one or two cases we find it so.

E-1724. You cannot generalize on one or two cases. Are you prepared to give any proofs to the Commission?—In a particular case of which I heard in my experience of over ten years in labour work a *sardar* had to pay Rs. 3,000 to the manager to get his *sardarship*.

E-1725. If that is so you cannot find fault with the *sardars* for taking bribes from the workmen?—Quite so. It is not however universal.

E-1726. Is it common?—It is prevalent to some extent. Some of the supervising staff are in collusion with the *sardars*.

E-1727. What would you do to remedy it?—Dismiss the *sardars* who take bribes.

E-1728. That is a matter for the management and not for the Commission. It is the function of the management to deal with their officers?—Sometimes they do, and sometimes they do not.

E-1729. Is it the experience of your union that such practice prevails on a large scale?—I would not say it obtains on a large scale, but it does obtain to some extent.

E-1730. *Mr. Clow*: There is an extract from one of your annual reports which you have quoted in your memorandum. From what year's report was that taken?—From the 1926 report.

E-1731. You go on to say that "This was the state of affairs when the union began to function in 1921 and things have materially improved in 1928-29." Does this quotation refer to the state of affairs in 1926 or in 1921?—It refers to the state of affairs in all the years before 1926.

E-1732. Again you refer to the efforts of your union in the matter of the prosecution of the offenders in open court. Prosecution for what?—There was one case in which one of the *sardars* was accused of bribery. We took the matter up to the management and they asked us to prove it.

We proved the case, but the weavers who took the matter to us were dismissed. Not only were they dismissed, but they were assaulted. We advised the men to bring a charge of assault and incidentally raise the question of corruption. The case was heard by the Sub-Deputy Magistrate of Barrackpore and the *sardar* was acquitted in spite of convincing evidence because three members of the managing staff gave evidence to prove *alibi*.

E-1733. It was not a prosecution for extortion?—No, but incidentally we brought this question of extortion and evidence of bribery was adduced.

E-1734. In your experience what is the ordinary amount that a *sardar* collects from those under him?—Rs. 5 to Rs. 15 when he gives jobs. After that he takes As. 2 to As. 4 a week from each worker under him.

E-1735. You give in your memorandum what appears to be family budgets. Apparently the first one relates to a Moslem weaver living alone?—Yes.

E-1736. Does he actually spend Rs. 6-11-9 a week; in other words, is it an ideal or actual budget?—The figures were compiled by my friend Mr. Ramaprasad partly by enquiring from the men themselves and partly from the accounts of the shop-keepers.

E-1737. You suggest that the ordinary weaver spends on himself alone Rs. 7 a week?—Perhaps he is an able-bodied man and he spends much on his food per week.

E-1738. Similarly a Hindu vegetarian spinner spends about Rs. 6 a week on himself?—Yes.

E-1739. Is that on an average?—Yes, on an average. We have taken the case of a few able-bodied spinners and weavers.

E-1740. You suggest that wages should be based on cost of living?—Yes. The standard of living of a *sardar* is different from the standard of living of a weaver, and the standard of living of a weaver is different from that of a spinner.

E-1741. But surely the standard of living depends on the wages that the man gets?—Yes.

E-1742. Then you seem to be arguing in a circle if you go round and pick people spending Rs. 10 and say that the wage should be raised to Rs. 10?—Suppose a man is reduced from a *sardar's* job to a *line sardar's* job, he would not reduce his standard of living to which he has been accustomed when getting higher wages. In the figures I have given the items relating to food are actual expenses of the men per week. But as regards clothing I have given the average cost per week.

E-1743. Is it a fact that the dismissal of a *sardar* for misbehaviour or anything else is not infrequently followed by a strike?—So far as Bhatpara is concerned I have heard of only one case during the past five or six years.

E-1744. *Mr. Birla*: You say that the membership of your union varies from time to time and that during the time of strike the membership increases. What was the experience of your union during the last strike? Did the membership increase?—The last strike was a peculiar strike. It was more or less a general strike. We had no time to invite new members. The number remained the same.

E-1745. Your union was not in favour of the strike?—No, not a bit.

E-1746. Still you could not influence your members to get to work?—There was a good deal of intimidation and picketing going on and although our members were willing to work, it was impossible for them to go to work.

E-1747. Who started this intimidation?—A particular set of men in a particular group of *bustis* carried on this intimidation because they had a grudge against some of our union leaders.

E-1748. In your memorandum you say that although under the double shift system the worker gets Re. 1 less than under the single shift system he prefers to work in double shift because he has to work shorter hours?—Yes.

E-1749. Do you think that if the working hours were reduced from 10 to 9 the workers would be prepared to accept less wages than they now get under the single shift system?—They will be prepared to accept any reasonable reduction in their wages.

E-1750. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: By "reasonable" do you mean "proportionate"?—Not proportionate.

E-1751. *Mr. Birla*: Even though it will give them a smaller wage they would like to work shorter hours?—Yes, the local Bengali village labour will like to work shorter hours. You find these people in Budge Budge and Bowrea. But the imported labour can work longer hours compared with the local labour.

E-1752. You are in favour of nine-hour single shift?—Yes.

E-1753. Do you want the working hours for women and children to be reduced as suggested by the Government of Bengal?—I suggest that the number of hours should be six for women and five for children. The women cannot work the same number of hours as men because they have domestic work to do besides the mill work.

E-1754. In your memorandum you suggest that the industry should set apart Rs. 3½ crores for increased wages to the workers, half a crore for sickness insurance and another half a crore for welfare work, on the assumption that the prosperity of the last few years would continue?—Yes. Out of profits half a crore for housing and half a crore for cheap credit and stores. This year may be an exceptional year, but the experience of the last eight or ten years shows that the same prosperity will continue. If by chance the prosperity does not continue you can reduce the welfare budget. You may set apart a percentage of the profits for welfare work.

E-1755. I hope you realise that one crore is not a small sum. You cannot rely on the prosperity of the last few years to continue for ever. If you undertook such a huge and extravagant scheme you might have to stop the whole thing all of a sudden?—I do not think that jute will have such a bad time as that. I do not insist that such a large sum should be spent every year. A budget might be framed and if in any year the profits are not so large as they are this year the amount might be reduced to some extent.

E-1756. In your memorandum you say that almost all the managers are recruited outside India. Is it due to lack of aptitude of the Bengalis for this kind of industrial work or is it due to racial considerations?—The jute industry is more or less under the control of British managing agents and naturally they prefer to bring their own kith and kin. Moreover up to now no training has been given to Indians in this branch of industry.

E-1757. You want them to be trained as they are trained in Bombay?—Yes.

E-1758. Even after training how can you compel the employers to give a job to a particular man?—I do not suggest that they should be compelled to do it, but economic laws will operate in the direction of affording employment to trained Indians. The same thing will happen here as has happened in the case of Indian electrical and mechanical engineers who have all found good employment after thorough training.

E-1759. With regard to *bustis* it has been suggested that the workers prefer to live in the *bustis* instead of going to *pucca* built houses. What has been your experience?—It is true to some extent because in the mill lines they do not enjoy the same amount of freedom as in outside *bustis*. Especially those living with their families prefer to live in outside *bustis* rather than in the mill lines.

E-1760. *Mr. Joshi*: In your memorandum you compare certain conditions existing in Bombay with those in Calcutta and say that in Bombay they have labour troubles and foreign competition. Why do you not expect labour troubles in the jute industry? Is it because the conditions are good here?—Compared with Bombay the conditions are good here.

E-1761. In what respect—wages?—Yes, wages compared with the cost of living.

E-1762. Have you figures to prove that?—I have figures of the cost of living in Bombay, and it is certainly higher than that of Calcutta.

E-1763. I do not want to go into that question unless you have figures to prove the statement. Do you consider that the conditions generally in the jute industry are good and therefore you do not expect labour troubles?—No. We have had strikes, in fact, we had one of the biggest strikes in the jute industry last year. But they are not so bad strikes as in Bombay. There is another point here that labour is not perhaps so organized as in Bombay.

E-1764. You do not expect labour troubles not because the conditions are good but because there are other factors?—Yes, there are other factors.

E-1765. In your memorandum you say that trade unionism will not take root for many years to come. Why do you say that?—This is essentially a Western institution and it has been transplanted on an Eastern soil. It has not taken root yet. It is due to the ignorance of the workers of the benefits of trade unionism. I am speaking from my experience of Bengal.

E-1766. You are speaking of Bengal and not of India as a whole?—Of Bengal in particular and of India in general. There is also another factor, namely, the ill-feeling of the various labour leaders towards one another.

E-1767. If good leaders were forthcoming do you think that trade unionism will take root in India in a short time?—I do not subscribe to that view entirely. My experience of the last ten years shows that we should follow a different course to that followed in the West. I think the plan followed in the textile mills of Ahmedabad will be a successful one.

E-1768. You think that with good leaders trade unionism on the model of Ahmedabad will take root in this country in a short time?—Yes.

E-1769. In your memorandum you describe the housing conditions and refer to single rooms without light or water. Do you think that the housing in the jute area is good?—It is very bad indeed.

E-1770. Are you satisfied with the housing provided by the owners?—To a certain extent I am satisfied with the housing provided by the owners. But there is room for improvement.

E-1771. Do you consider single room tenements, 10 feet by 8 feet, satisfactory?—Yes, provided there is a verandah. These single room tenements were intended for single workers, but unfortunately they are occupied by two or three workers.

E-1772. Under the circumstances I take it that it is not satisfactory?—From that point of view, not.

E-1773. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you consider that a single room, 10 feet by 8 feet, is decent accommodation for a single worker?—Considering the general standard of accommodation to which they are accustomed it is not bad—provided there is a verandah.

E-1774. *Mr. Joshi*: You would prefer a single shift of nine hours to a multiple shift of nine hours?—Yes.

E-1775. You would like to have five hours a day for children?—Yes.

E-1776. Will it not be difficult to arrange for five hours for half-timers when you have nine hours a day?—I gave only an approximate figure. It should be four and a half hours.

E-1777. In your memorandum you refer to certain legislation in Australia and suggest that certain strikes should be made illegal. You want that to be done to protect the illiterate workers from being exploited by those who are not by any means trade unionists?—Yes.

E-1778. By making strikes illegal you do not want the strikers to be punished?—Not by any means.

E-1779. You do not want the whole strike to be made illegal?—I want the fomenters and the instigators to be punished.

E-1780. But not the strike to be made illegal. Would you prosecute the workers if they themselves went on strike?—No.

E-1781. You have referred to certain legislation in Australia declaring certain strikes illegal. Do you know of another legislation in Australia fixing minimum wages for workers?—Yes.

E-1782. Then there is legislation providing unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and old age pensions. Do you not think that all this legislation

should be there, not merely the legislation declaring certain strikes illegal?—At the present moment I want that there should be some legislation to punish people who foment lightning strikes which have no basis in economic causes. These strikes do a tremendous amount of harm to the workers and not to those who foment them.

E-1783. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: When did you have strikes in the jute mills which were not based on economic causes?—It was the case in one of the strikes in Bowrea.

E-1784. *Mr. Joshi*: The Australian legislation which makes strikes illegal is not of the type which you are proposing for India. You do not want the strike to be made illegal?—We only want the instigators to be punished.

E-1785. If a good man instigated a strike for good reasons would you punish him?—I would not make strikes illegal except in public utility services.

E-1786. If a man instigated a strike purely out of mischief you would have him punished?—Yes.

E-1787. Would you also prefer to have other beneficial legislation that exists in Australia in addition to the one declaring certain strikes illegal?—Yes, I would prefer to have the Trade Board Act which is of urgent necessity.

E-1788. Would you like to have sickness insurance?—Yes.

E-1789. If a law was passed imposing a certain contribution on the workers for sickness insurance, would they agree to pay, or would they go on strike, revolt and go out of the jute industry altogether?—They would not do that if the contribution was small and if they were acquainted with the benefits of the scheme by means of propaganda.

E-1790. *Miss Power*: I think you said there were three unions of jute workers?—Yes.

E-1791. Have those unions ever got together and presented a united programme to the Indian Jute Association?—No, not that I know of.

E-1792. Your union has been asking for a 9-hour day. You say that they would be prepared for a corresponding reduction in wages?—I said that they would be prepared for a reasonable reduction in wages.

E-1793. If another union asked for an 8-hour day and an increase in wages, what action is the Indian Jute Association to take?—That is more than I can tell you.

E-1794. Do you not think it would be a sensible thing to present them with a united programme even if you cannot unite your workers in one union?—We are perfectly willing to meet together and discuss matters, but, somehow or other, there seems to be a fundamental difference between our programmes.

E-1795. In other words you are a house divided against itself?—In fact we have given a little undue prominence to the other union which exists only on paper.

E-1796. In your memorandum you refer to the exploitation of child labour by the timekeeper and the *sardar*. I think we know enough by this time about the exploitation by *sardars*. What do you mean by exploitation by time-keepers?—The *sardar* and the timekeeper collude in exploiting the child.

E-1797. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you mean that a child is marked present when it does not exist?—No.

E-1798. *Miss Power*: Do you refer to bribery or double employment of children?—By an understanding between the *sardar* and the time-keeper the child is employed for half a day in one mill and for another half a day in another mill.

E-1799. How does it benefit the *sardar* or the timekeeper?—The mother of the child gives something to the *sardar* in order to get the child employed in two shifts in different mills.

E-1800. You suggest differential hours for men and women—nine hours for men and six hours for women. Would you not be restricting the avenues

of employment for women by thus further decreasing their hours? You do not suggest that the wage earned by the man is a family wage?—No, it is not.

E-1801. You also say that the workers will be prepared for a reduction in their wages if the number of hours of work is reduced. Would it not be a dangerous thing to have these differential hours for men and women thus further depleting the income of the family?—I have not considered the economic aspect of the question. I looked at it from the point of view of the domestic work that the women have to do, especially the married women.

E-1802. Until it is established in India as an economic principle that the wage paid to the man should be a family wage, would there not be difficulty if you imperilled restricting the employment of women by their hours of work which would mean that the family might have to subsist on a smaller income?—I have not given serious thought to this aspect of the question.

E-1803. Have you consulted any of the women on the question of reducing their hours?—I consulted a few and they said they would prefer less hours with the same wages.

E-1804. With regard to maternity benefit do you think that it should cover all industries or the jute industry only?—It should cover all industries employing women.

E-1805. Should it be contributory or non-contributory on the part of the women?—It should be non-contributory on the part of the women.

E-1806. Why are you not in favour of the women contributing?—Because in that case they would not contribute.

E-1807. Do you suggest that the payment should be made in cash or in the shape of medical facilities?—In cash.

E-1808. In your memorandum you refer to the provision of baby clinics; do you mean crèches?—I mean crèches, not baby clinics.

E-1809. Do you think that the maternity benefit scheme should be run by the employers or by the municipality?—It is better that it is run by the employers themselves. The municipality might make a contribution to the employers.

E-1810. In your memorandum you say that "there are two or three primary schools in the locality run on most unsatisfactory lines." Are these municipal schools?—The municipality spends a handsome sum of Rs. 1,256 as an aid to these three schools. The teachers are ill-paid and the accommodation is poor and insanitary. If you visited the school you would be shocked to see the conditions.

E-1811. Until the inauguration of universal primary education, do you think that the employers are under any special obligation to provide educational facilities for their workers' children?—That is what Mr. Gokhale advocated in Bombay. I would like the millowners to do this, if possible.

E-1812. You would like them to do it, but do you think that they are under an obligation to do it?—Considering the prosperity of the industry I think they should spend some money on the primary education of the workers' children.

E-1813. You do not think that there would be any difficulty in getting these children to attend these schools if they were available?—There will be no difficulty at all. Did you not see them attending school at the Angus Mills and in other places?

E-1814. Coming to the question of teachers, we have been told that it is no good opening crèches because the women will not leave their babies there owing to caste distinction and other difficulties. Do you agree with this view?—There is a prejudice like that but it will easily disappear by a little propaganda and education.

E-1815. You do not think that it is an insuperable difficulty?—No, certainly not.

E-1816. *Miss Sorabji*: In your memorandum you say: "Neither is there any system whatsoever of apprenticeship. The Apprentices Act, 1850, has no application to the jute mills." Do you mean that the Act is a dead letter or that it has no application?—It is a dead letter and I have not heard of it except in connexion with this questionnaire.

E-1817. It does not mean that it has no application to the jute mills. Do some companies not have their own apprentice system?—Not the jute companies. The electrical and mechanical engineering companies have it.

E-1818. In answer to a question you said that the standard of living of the workers should be raised. Is it not very difficult to raise it? How would you compel the worker to raise his standard of living?—If you offered him better facilities in the shape of better food, clothing and housing and higher wages he would naturally increase his standard of living. On the other hand if you make him live in insanitary *bustis* and eat the adulterated food sold in the bazaar how will he raise his standard of living?

E-1819. In other words you would induce the worker to raise his standard of living, you cannot compel him to do that?—Yes.

E-1820. I should have used the word " induce " rather than " compel ". How do you account for the fact that when workers attain a higher standard of living they are apt to revert to a lower standard of living when they return to their villages?—I admit there is that tendency; they prefer very poor housing at a low rent rather than a decent housing at high rent.

E-1821. Do you think the workers require education as to the meaning and purpose of trade unionism?—Yes, but they will require primary education first.

E-1822. Who, do you think, should undertake the responsibility of enquiring into family budgets?—We invited the co-operation of the mill authorities, the Government and the Co-operative Credit Societies department to institute economic enquiries, but they took no action for a long time. After receiving the questionnaire of this Commission the Co-operative Credit Societies department deputed an inspector to the mill area and he is making some enquiries. I think this work should be undertaken by those who are accustomed to such work, for example, the economic societies in Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay.

E-1823. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: What are your views about works committees?—I think there should be compulsory legislation if possible for the introduction of works committees in all large industrial undertakings.

E-1824. What do you suggest with regard to workers' housing in industrial areas?—The Bengal Municipal Act should be amended on the lines of the Calcutta Municipal Act, sections 4, 68, which says: " The corporation may acquire any land and buildings, whether situated in Calcutta or not, for the purpose of opening out any congested or unhealthy area or of otherwise improving any portion of Calcutta, for the purpose of erecting sanitary dwellings for the working and poorer classes." In the Calcutta Corporation we instituted a special committee for the housing of the working classes and this is their report (handing same to the Commission).

E-1825. Are you Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation Housing Committee for the housing of the poor and working classes?—Yes.

E-1826. What has the Calcutta Corporation done for housing the working classes?—The committee has decided to erect some sanitary dwellings for the Calcutta Corporation municipal workers near Ballygunge station and another few blocks of buildings in Kidderpore area.

E-1827. What would it cost to house 4,000 hands in a jute mill area?—I think Rs. 50 for land and Rs. 100 for housing, that is to say, Rs. 150 per worker. One hundred and fifty square feet of land is sufficient for a single person, and at a price of Rs. 20,000 an acre it would cost about Rs. 50. Housing for 4,000 workers could be provided at an expenditure of six lakhs of rupees. In that calculation I have reserved 50 square feet out of every 200 feet for open spaces. That would be the cost of a room in a block.

E-1828. *The Chairman*: Would you be prepared to undertake a contract on those figures?—Yes; if I get an order to build 4,000 rooms I would do it for Rs. 100 per room.

E-1829. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Does that include drainage and water-supply?—Yes, everything.

E-1830. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: What amendment do you desire in the Workmen's Compensation Act?—I desire amendments with regard to the meaning of the words " in the course of employment " and with regard to wilful disobedience to some express order. Several cases have been

brought to my notice which illustrate the need for those amendments. A man employed at a jute factory was killed by a train while he was going out to a water closet. Such a case should be brought within the course of employment. A man lost his fingers while fastening a belting to a pulley, and his claim was resisted on the ground that an express order had been given to him not to do anything of that kind. In both these cases compensation was eventually paid as a matter of favour without the case going to court.

E-1831. What are the working hours in Government factories at Ishapur, Jamalpur and other places?—At the Ishapur Rifle Factory there are 43¼ hours a week; in another factory they are 8¾ hours a day minus one hour for tiffin; in the East Indian Railway Workshops at Jamalpur they are 45 hours a week, while at Lillooah they are 42½ hours a week.

E-1832. Do you propose that the millowners should provide for the education of part-timers?—Yes, if possible.

E-1833. Do you advocate the creation of trade boards to fix minimum wages in different industries?—Yes.

E-1834. Did you go to Geneva as a labour delegate?—Yes.

E-1835. What is your opinion of the work of the International Labour Conferences?—Their conventions and recommendations are very good, but unfortunately they are not all adopted in India.

E-1836. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Your union is located at Kankinarah, where there are twelve jute mills and a population of 50,000?—Yes.

E-1837. How many members have your union?—About 1,000 at the present time.

E-1838. That is 2 per cent of the total labour force of the jute mills in the district?—Yes. Do you want to hear the reasons?

E-1839. No. Your union has been recognized by the managing agents of the mills?—Yes.

E-1840. Do you agree with the opinion of Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., which you quote in your memorandum with regard to housing?—I agree to this extent that I think it should be an obligation on the millowners to provide housing.

E-1841. Do you know that the majority of the jute mills have provided well-built coolie lines for their workers at nominal rents?—Not more than one-fourth or one-third of the workers are so housed.

E-1842. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can the managing agents get all the land they want for that purpose?—In our particular area I think land is available.

E-1843. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say in your memorandum: "The effect of 60 hours on jute mill hands is unsatisfactory"?—I mean that they are overworked.

E-1844. Do you not know that the labourers are very glad to get the extra half day's pay?—If they were, they would not have gone on strike when the proposed increase of hours was announced; the workers said they would rather not have the extra pay if they could remain on 54 hours.

E-1845. *Mr. Birla*: Then why did you oppose the strike?—Because we could have settled the small differences by negotiation.

E-1846. You did not oppose the introduction of 60 hours, did you?—We did; we held a large conference and sent in our resolutions; we canvassed the mill agents and begged them not to adopt the 60 hours' programme without consulting labour.

E-1847. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say that the weekly cost of living of a spinner is Rs. 6-3-3; what is the average earning?—Rs. 5.

E-1848. Then how can he live at the rate of Rs. 6-3-3?—Eighty per cent of them are indebted to the extent of Rs. 40.

E-1849. What rise in wages was there between 1919 and 1929?—Between 25 and 40 per cent. There was some increase between 1918 and 1920; there has been very little increase since 1920.

E-1850. Do you know that according to the figures obtained by the Indian Jute Mills Association the money sent by the workers to their homes has increased between 1914 and 1929 by roughly 275 per cent in your district?—That is taking the total remittances sent from any area. Our calculations show that the average worker does not send more than Rs. 50 per annum. The whole of the remittances sent from any particular post office are not sent by jute workers.

E-1851. Three lakhs of workers are employed in the industry and over two crores of rupees are being sent annually through the post office?—Yes, and that gives approximately the figure of Rs. 60 per head. Taking into consideration that that figure includes many other remittances. I have taken Rs. 50 as being the average remittance of a jute worker.

E-1852. It means that the average jute worker is saving Rs. 5 per month?—No; a large number of them are incurring debts in order to keep their families going in their villages.

E-1853. *The Chairman*: Do you tell us that every year he is getting more and more into debt?—Yes. Some of them are paying at least Rs. 3 every month as interest on debts. May I refer you to the Government report submitted by the inspector of co-operative credit societies with regard to that area.

E-1854. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What is the average income of a jute mill worker?—About Rs. 5 a week.

E-1855. What is the average expenditure of a jute mill worker?—It should be Rs. 7 a week.

E-1856. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Does it cost a worker Re. 1 a day to live?—No; I am referring to a worker, his wife and three children.

E-1857. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: In your memorandum you say that the Indian Jute Mills Association is one of the strongest organizations in India and is in a position to dictate its own terms to labour. What do you mean by that?—They are so strong financially that they can keep their mills shut for six months.

E-1858. Do you not know that the jute mills in Bengal pay higher wages than any other industry?—The Government factories at Ishapore and the railway companies pay better wages than you do.

E-1859. Do you know that jute mills provide better housing facilities than any other private industry in Bengal?—Yes. Of course every private industry is not so prosperous.

E-1860. *Mr. Tassie*: Under welfare work in your memorandum you refer to the benefits organized by the "union". Is that your union?—No; it is the Ahmedabad Union.

E-1861. When you advocate taking recruitment out of the hands of the *sardars* and putting it under the control of employment agencies, do you say that because you think there would be less bribery?—Yes, certainly there would be less.

E-1862. Do you mean that if a man is a *sardar* he will take bribes, but that the same man when he becomes a trade union official will not take bribes?—He would then be responsible to somebody whereas now he has no responsibility.

E-1863. You say that jute is cheaply bought because the cultivators are too weak to bargain. Where did you get that from?—From the Jute Co-operative Sale Society. Jute growers cannot hold their stocks and are obliged to sell to middlemen who can hold it.

E-1864. Then it is not bought so cheap by the millowners if the middlemen hold it. In view of what you say as to Mr. Goswami, M.L.A., how is it that you cannot get him to improve his property?—He did what he did because we started an agitation.

E-1865. Am I to take it that he bribed you with a gift of land?—It is not bribery, he thought it would be a good thing to start a school. It is the business of the municipality to enforce its laws with regard to sanitation. When the municipality approached him under the Municipal Act requesting him to get these *bustis* improved, he said that while the land

belonged to him the huts did not belong to him; but the municipality have power to deal with the owner of the huts or the owner of the land. He is an absentee landlord and does not know what is happening there.

E-1866. When you advocate education what do you mean by education?—I mean reading, writing and arithmetic and technical education.

E-1867. You are not afraid that if the workers become educated they will become too superior to be millhands?—There is that tendency. But they now find that all other avenues of employment are blocked and therefore they are obliged to go to the mills. In the past educated people have objected to doing manual work, but a change of mentality is now taking place which is due to necessity.

E-1868. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You refer to the report of Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., and Mr. Sime. They say in their report: "The profits in the jute industry in India are enormous and the wages and living conditions of the workers are miserable". Do you agree with that statement?—Compared with the prosperity of the industry, yes.

E-1869. They also say that the low wages and semi-serf conditions are of course an inducement to British and foreign capitalist adventurers to extend and develop as far as possible the industry of the Hooghly?—The surplus profits of a few mills have built up the whole industry as we know it.

E-1870. What did your union and the other unions recommend with regard to hours of labour during the time of the strike?—We have always recommended 48 hours and the adoption of the Washington Conventions; that is our recommendation now.

E-1871. In the beginning of your memorandum you refer to the workers not being discontented because they return to their villages?—There is comparative discontent, but this contact with the village home takes a lot of their discontent away because it is a sort of compensation.

E-1872. You refer to resolutions having been passed with regard to dismissals, bribery, fines, etc. Would that indicate discontent?—Certain people who have suffered from those are discontented.

E-1873. You refer to their condition of helplessness?—Yes, helplessness in regard to collective bargaining.

E-1874. You refer to uncordial relations between the staff and the rank and file. That does not indicate a state of contentment?—Their consciousness has grown a little lately.

E-1875. You speak of an increasing bitterness?—It is not general discontent; perhaps a dozen out of 500 would like to be better treated; but the rest do not care about it.

E-1876. Do you mean that 488 out of every 500 do not care about better wages, better housing, dismissals and fines?—No, I do not say that. I was referring to the relations between the staff and rank and file.

E-1877. That leads to discontent?—Yes. I cannot say they are contented with the present state of affairs but they are not conscious.

E-1878. They are not satisfied with their present conditions?—Yes.

E-1879. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You are speaking of 12 miles in Kankinarah?—Yes.

E-1880. In which mills are the relations between the workers and the staff uncordial?—The Alliance and Megna and Kankinarah.

E-1881. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Am I to take it generally that this statement of yours as to the workers not being discontented has to be qualified?—It depends on what interpretation you put to it.

E-1882. I am merely putting the interpretation which you or any ordinary man would put upon your own statement?—Is any man contended with his present condition?

E-1883. Am I to take it that the workers in the jute mills are not contented with their present conditions?—Yes, I would say so; they are not very much contented.

E-1884. Apart from the fact that periodically the jute workers return to the villages, is there not more or less a permanent labour force?—They are not a permanent labour force; they are of a migratory nature; they frequently desire to go home.

E-1885. *Mr. Cliff*: Will you accept the employers' statement that 90 per cent of the workers are entirely dependent upon the jute mills for employment, having no other occupation to which they can readily turn apart from cultivation in their villages?—Yes, I accept that.

E-1886. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: To how many of the members of your union have you explained the meaning of the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act?—We have explained it to a large number of them, but it is a question whether they understand.

E-1887. Did you ever take a vote of the general body of your members as to whether they were or were not in favour of the Trade Disputes Act?—No.

E-1888. You are the first labour representative who has come before the Labour Commission and expressed an opinion in favour of the penal clauses, sections 15 and 16 of the Trade Disputes Act?—I have never expressed any opinion on the Trade Disputes Act.

E-1889. You have referred to Australian legislation?—I have said there ought to be legislation of that character, but that does not mean I am in favour of the penal clauses in the Trade Disputes Act at the present time.

E-1890. Am I to take it you are not in favour of them?—I am not.

E-1891. *Mr. Cliff*: In answer to a question by Mr. Chaman Lall a few minutes ago you used the phrase 'Comparative discontent'. We have been to Howrah and to Bhatpara. Do you think that the people in the *bustis* there are contented?—They are not contented with the housing conditions there by any means.

E-1892. If they are not contented does your union wish that these *bustis* be removed?—We have been at it for a long time and it was through our agitation that Government sanctioned Rs. 700,000 for improving these *bustis*.

E-1893. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But I see that the amount was sanctioned long before your union moved in the matter? In the petition you presented to Sir Stanley Jackson you said that the amount had been sanctioned?—Yes.

E-1894. Therefore it was not through the efforts made by your union?—But long before Sir Stanley Jackson went there we had been interviewing Ministers and officials of Government on this question and finally Sir Stanley Jackson's Government sanctioned the amount.

E-1895. *Mr. Cliff*: You co-operated with the Jute Association, the Government and the municipality for its abolition?—Yes.

E-1896. Do you regard your union as a genuine combination of workers?—It is the first trade union in the mill area to preach and spread genuine trade unionism.

E-1897. I see that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce replying to the Government in 1922 said that genuine combinations of workers formed with the object of advancing the prosperity of the workers would be welcomed by all employers of labour. When was your union formed?—Our union was in its infancy in 1921 and in 1922 it made slow progress.

E-1898. When was your union recognized by the employers here in Calcutta?—About 1927 or 1928.

E-1899. In your memorandum dealing with jute mill strike you refer to a meeting which was held by your union on the 12th March 1929 at which two resolutions were passed which are recorded in your memorandum. You go on to say that "Some of the managing agents courteously acknowledged the receipt of the above but none of them were willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours and consequent change in wages." Is it true that there was not one managing agent who was willing to discuss that question with the union?—Not at that time. We have the reply of the managing agents or the Jute Mills Association and I shall send it on to you.

E-1900. I understand that the change was made on 1st July?—Yes.

E-1901. Did you approach the managing agents of each of the mills mentioned here before the 1st of July?—Before the 1st July we approached some of the mills. After the 1st of July we approached the Alliance and Alexandra Jute Mills managed by Messrs. Begg Dunlop & Co.

E-1902. Were the managers of the Alliance and three other mills approached by you?—Yes, they said that they were considering the matter and would let us know their decision soon;

E-1903. Did you have further discussion with the managing agents?—Discussion continued day after day.

E-1904. You say that the managing agents of the Alliance and other mills decided on July 22nd to satisfy the weavers' demands. Was any offer made before that date?—They were considering the matter in consultation with other managing agents. They thought it was better to decide the question as a body.

E-1905. Was the offer made on the 22nd in addition to the one made prior to the 1st of July?—The first offer was made on the 22nd July.

E-1906. Is it within your knowledge that certain firms had actually paid right from the 1st of July?—They have all paid with retrospective effect.

E-1907. I am told by the employers that an employee has a right of appeal to the managing agents. With regard to the men working in the jute mills how is this right exercised?—When a man is dismissed by the staff manager he first appeals to the manager. If that is of no use he then gets somebody to write out a petition in English and sends it on to the managing agents, who as a rule send that back to the manager for report. But except in extraordinary cases the managing agents always side with the manager.

E-1908. Does it happen very frequently that the workers send a petition written in English to the managing agents?—Yes, they do.

E-1909. Does it happen very frequently that the workers get a reply from the managing agents in English?—I do not know of anybody receiving a reply from the managing agents, excepting Messrs. Duncan Brothers, Managing Agents of Anglo-India Jute Mills in Bhatpara.

E-1910. In your experience do you know of one decision which has been reversed by the managing agents?—None of us here know of any such case. I will make enquiries and send you the information.

E-1911. Do you agree with the employers that unemployment is very prevalent in certain jute mill areas?—Yes, there is very great unemployment in Bowrea across Budge Budge. Four thousand people are idle on account of this change in shifts.

E-1912. How long have they been idle?—Since January 1929.

E-1913. How many mills have changed shifts?—Three mills, namely, Old, New and North in Bowrea. They had something like 10,000 employees and they were obliged to reduce the number to 8,000. The mill-hands begged the authorities not to go on to the single-shift, but the authorities would not take any notice of it. As a result of this there was a big strike which lasted from July to December 1928.

E-1914. Did they reduce the number of employees from 10,000 to 6,000?—No, they reduced it to 8,000. As there was strike they were obliged to take 2,000 men from upcountry.

E-1915. 2,000 strikers were replaced and 2,000 were reduced owing to the change from the multiple-shift to the single-shift?—Yes.

E-1916. *Mr. Cliff*: Can you tell the Commission where these unemployed in the area which you have just mentioned are getting the money wherewith to live?—If an unemployed man happens to be a Bengali and belongs to a local village, his troubles are not as great as those of an unemployed upcountry man. He becomes a casual agricultural labourer. The unemployed upcountry men when thrown out of employ live in the *bustis* on credit. The *sardar* or somebody provides them with accommodation and does not take any rent until they get a job. Some of them put up with their relatives who may be working in the mills, and some of them return home with great disappointment.

E-1917. *Mr. Ahmed*: If the workers are properly educated and trained, it would increase their efficiency, is it not?—Yes.

E-1918. If the wages of the workers are increased and arrangements for free education of their children are made, it would help them a great deal, is it not?—Yes.

E-1919. With regard to housing, Mr. Bhattar was telling us that the houses provided for the workers are in a good condition, but as a matter of fact we found them very bad, is it not?—In most mills, the housing condition outside is very bad.

E-1920. I take it you would agree that the employers, without depending upon the Municipality to improve the condition of housing, should spend a little of their money in this behalf?—Yes, if they can acquire the land.

E-1921. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But can they acquire the land?—It is possible that some landlords might place difficulties in the way.

E-1922. *Mr. Ahmed*: In the majority of cases land is available?—It is available at a fancy price..

E-1923. When the employers are making good profits they can easily afford to pay such fancy prices?—If they think that it is absolutely necessary for the extension of the mill they will acquire it at any price, but if it is required for housing they may not like to pay very high prices.

E-1924. *The Chairman*: Is it true that at some places the land has been sold at £1,000 an acre?—Yes.

E-1925. *Mr. Ahmed*: I think you said that no leave with pay is given to these workers?—That is so.

E-1926. I think you also said that there should be a recognized system by which they should be given leave for a month or 15 days in a year?—What I said was that when they return from leave they should be sure of getting their job.

E-1927. You know that Government servants get a month's leave for a year's service, and it is reasonable to claim the same privileges for industrial workers as well?—Yes.

E-1928. I take it that the millhands do not get any pension or gratuity at the end of their long service?—As far as I know, only three mills of which Messrs. Begg Dunlop & Co. are the managing agents pay a little pension to some of their millhands.

E-1929. I take it that if pension or gratuity is given, they will be very efficient workers?—That will increase their attachment for work.

E-1930. To put it in a nutshell, if the standard of living of the workers is increased, if housing conditions are improved, if free education is given to their children and if they are allowed leave with pay, they will be far more efficient workers than they are to-day, which will be an advantage both from the point of view of the workers as well as the employers?—Yes.

E-1931. We always hear the employers telling us that if an increase is given in the wages, they will have to close down their mills. I take it that you do not agree with this view and that you are in favour of fixing a minimum living wage?—I am for fixing a minimum living wage.

E-1932. What was the reason for the jute mill strike of last year?—It was partly economic, partly socio-economic and partly political; it was a mixture of three.

E-1933. Is there any strike now going on?—Not in our side. There is a strike in Champdani Jute Mill, near Angus Jute Works.

E-1934. What is the reason for the strike?—The reason is that some of the workmen of that mill are under the impression that they are not getting the same wages as the workmen of their sister mill in another district are getting.

E-1935. I think there was a strike last year in your jurisdiction and it was amicably settled as a result of reconciliation between the employers and the employed. I suppose that if similar methods are adopted with regard to the present strike, it is possible to put a stop to it, is it not?—The present strike is still under our investigation.

E-1936. Is it not a fact that Dr. Miss Prabhavathi Das Gupta took a leading part in the settlement of the scavengers' strike in Calcutta last year and the year before last and that she was successful?—To some extent she was successful.

E-1937. As a result of the strike the Municipality had to pay a small increment to the scavengers, and the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both the parties?—No doubt a small increment was given, but the scavengers are not satisfied.

E-1938. In respect of the last year's strike in your area an increment was sanctioned and the strike amicably settled. I take it that in the case of Champdani Jute Mills strike if higher wages are paid, there is every likelihood of the strike being settled?—We do not really know the exact nature of their grievances.

E-1939. But you have already said that the reason of the strike is due to discontentment about wages—That is what we are told by some, but, as I said, we are investigating the matter. For example, when the men in Bally Jute Co., went on strike, the reason given by them was that they were not getting the same wages as were being paid in another mill. But when we began to make inquiries we found that there was a difference in one department in their favour while in another the difference was against them. When we struck an average we found that the difference was not much. Unless we make detailed enquiries we cannot express any definite opinion about the present strike.

E-1940. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In answer to one of the questions you said that you thought the mills ought to use their vacant sites for building workmen's houses?—Some of the vacant lands that I have seen appear to me to be more than their requirements for extension of the mills; for example, the land in front of Anglo-Jute Mills Co.

E-1941. For instance, there is vacant site near the Titaghur Jute Mill; there is also some vacant space in Kankinarah Mills and the same is the case with the Reliance Jute Mills. You suggest that these sites, instead of being utilized for extension of the mills, which would give more employment to the workers, should be used for housing the present workers?—As far as practicable, because housing is as much important as the extension of the mill.

E-1942. You are, therefore, prepared to see the mill industry close down as regards future extension?—I would be the last person to advocate that. But what I say is it is better to utilize a portion of the acquired land lying vacant for years for housing.

E-1943. The other day we saw at Bhatpala a number of insanitary *bustis* situated opposite the mills. You have three nominees of your union on the Municipality. Will you tell us what they have done to cause improved conditions?—Two Commissioners are here and they say that the funds at the disposal of the Municipality are not sufficient to enable them to do much improvement in respect of those *bustis*.

E-1944. Have they served a notice on the owner for compulsory improvement of the *busti*?—The Vice-Chairman of the Municipality has already answered that question when you asked him at the inspection of the Anglo-India Jute Mill.

E-1945. But I want you to answer because you have your representatives on the Municipality. I understand that the roads in that *busti* and the drains actually belong to the *zamindar*—The *pucca* roads belong to the Municipality while the *kacha* roads belong to the zamindar. The Municipality wrote a letter to the representatives of the zamindar whether they will be prepared to allow them to acquire those *kacha* roads included in the sewage scheme, but they have received a reply that the *zamindar* will allow only certain portions to be acquired but not all.

E-1946. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it true that certain improvements were made in that area and the *zamindar* requested that those improvements should be taken away?—Yes; on one particular road the Municipality had placed certain building materials, and the representatives of the *zamindar* said "We do not want these; you better take them away".

E-1947. Which *zamindar* was that?—Mr. Goswami. But this was said by his representatives.

E-1948. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You refer to a better class of *sardars*. Do they also take bribes?—By 'better class' we mean head *sardars*. They also take bribes.

E-1949. Why do the *sardars* take bribes?—The *sardars* take bribes because as you know, *dasturi* is quite common in this country.

E-1950. Why do workmen give bribes?—Out of sheer helplessness to get a job.

E-1951. We have been told that bribery is more common in the double-shift than in the single-shift mills. If as a result of a change from the double-shift to the single-shift, a lot of workmen are thrown out of employment, is the bribery likely to increase or to decrease?—Of course, it will increase when the number of unemployed is more.

E-1952. In reply to one of the questions you said that you were in favour of nine hours a day, while in answer to another question you said that you would advocate 48 hours a week?—While I was asked to make my suggestion with regard to the maximum number of working hours a day, I said that it should be nine. When I was asked to suggest the maximum weekly number of working hours, I said that it should be 48.

E-1953. As a practical man representing the workers, what is your suggestion now that the jute mill industry should do in the way of working hours?—I would advocate 48 hours a week.

E-1954. Have you any idea why the mills increased the working hours from 54 to 60 lately?—They did it to cope with the demand of the trade and to discourage building of new mills.

E-1955. If you reduce the working hours to 48 what would be the effect? —The effect would be that some new mills might be started, but that will not affect the general prosperity of the industry. More workers will be employed. There will be less unemployment.

E-1956. The women, you think, should only work six hours a day?—I am specially referring to those women who have a certain amount of domestic work to perform.

E-1957. What hours do the women at Dundee or in any other part of the jute world work?—I am not quite sure, but I think they work for eight hours.

E-1958. Why do you then want women to work only six hours here?—I believe that in Dundee you have a less number of married women working than here in Bengal.

E-1959. Do you know what the proportion is?—No. But I have seen in the mills at Manchester that the women workers when they get themselves married try to settle themselves and stop going to work. I have not seen the conditions in Scotland.

E-1960. Have you ever communicated with the factory inspector when you found anything done which was contrary to the Act?—As a matter of fact, we have no complaints against any mill regarding breaches of the Factory Act.

E-1961. You have never found it necessary to write to the factory inspector?—We have occasionally written to him on different matters.

E-1962. Have you had any occasion to write to the Jute Mills Association? —Yes. We had occasion also to write to them during the last strike, and before the strike.

E-1963. Do they reply to your letters?—Yes.

E-1964. You spoke about the possibility of children working in different mills. That would apply both to single-shift and to double-shift?—It would apply more to the single-shift.

E-1965. If you get an order for 1,000 houses to be built at Kankinarah at Rs. 100 each, would you undertake to do that?—I did not specify the materials, nor the roofing, but I think if rooms are built in blocks Rs. 100 will be sufficient for each room.

E-1966. And what would be the cost of the land?—Rs. 50.

E-1967. You could acquire land for Rs. 50?—Rupees 50 for 150 square feet.

E-1968. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What will be the size of each room? —10 feet × 8 feet, with a veranda of 9 feet × 6 feet; we can build, say, 20 rooms in each block.

Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar: I do not think you can build such a room even for Rs. 340.

E-1969. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If you were able to get your way and have a 9-hour day for men and a 6-hour day for women, how would you propose to arrange the work in the mill so that the women should only work a 6-hour day and the men only a 9-hour day?—The half-timers in the mills work six hours whereas the workmen work 11 hours.

E-1970. Is it not true to say that there are two shifts of half-timers of six hours?—There will have to be two shifts of women.

E-1971. So that the mill machinery would be going for 12 hours for the women and only nine hours for the men?—No, that would be absurd; it is a matter which could be settled by arranging suitable shifts—taking the number of hours per week and not per day.

E-1972. Then you would have to have multiple shifts. How are you going to have a single shift in a day with part of your labour force working for nine hours and part of your labour force working for six hours?—The second shift of women would relieve the first shift of women after six hours for three hours.

E-1973. Therefore you would have one shift of women working six hours and another shift of women working three hours. Would the women who were working three hours get half the pay of the women working six hours? —Yes.

E-1974. Would they be satisfied?—That is a different matter.

E-1975. With regard to the question of bribery, do you think that the senior officials of the managing staff of the mills, even though doing their best, would be able to succeed in stopping bribery as between the *sardar* and the employees?—No.

E-1976. Even if they carried out the same method as is carried out by Messrs. Burn & Company? You will remember that the witness from Burn & Company said that not one pie in the shape of bribes was paid in his firm?— I very much doubt that that is so. However strong the supervision may be, unless there is a willingness on the part of the workers to stop it, it will be impossible to stop it.

E-1977. Where there are cases of unemployment there is a natural tendency for the worker to try to get employment by giving bribes?—Yes, it is a question of self-preservation.

E-1978. You say that there was a difference of opinion among the trade union leaders in Calcutta and you differentiate in that respect between Calcutta and Bombay. Do you maintain that there is no difference of opinion among labour leaders in Bombay?—There is much more acute difference than here.

E-1979. So that in that respect Calcutta is under no disadvantage as compared to Bombay?—The difference has developed only recently. In Bombay that difference did not exist four years ago.

E-1980. There is no difference between the two cities now in that respect? —No.

E-1981. *The Chairman*: Returning once more to the question of bribery do you think that if each of the large mills had a labour employment officer whose duty it was to engage the labour and generally to watch the interests of the labour, and who was paid a really adequate salary and whose sole responsibility was to the manager or even to the managing agents, that would be one way in which bribery might be abolished in the mills?—Yes. They have abolished bribery in the Ludlow Mill, one of the American mills. They have such an officer as you suggest, and since his appointment bribery has decreased a great deal.

Mr. Cliff: I was told that, even if such a system were instituted, there would be a very great likelihood of men being unfairly dismissed.

E-1982. *The Chairman*: I take it the point is that the *sardars* might get their own back by way of unfair dismissals, but I am assuming that the labour employment officer, besides engaging the labour as it was required, would also have something to say about the question of dismissals, and would, therefore, be in a position to prevent *sardars* making a fresh exaction by means of threatening dismissal?—This particular officer I refer to not only

has the power, in consultation with the manager, to engage men; but he also has the power in consultation with the officer and manager to dismiss men; the *sardar* has no power at all in that connection.

E-1983. In that case the *sardar* becomes what he ought to be, viz., a technical supervisor, seeing that the looms and spindles are in running order, and attending to the discipline of the workers under his immediate control? Yes.

E-1984. Has that system been accompanied at the same time by any improvement in the pay of the *sardars* in order to compensate them for this irregular remuneration?—I will let you know.

(The witness withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

CALCUTTA.

Tuesday, 11th February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSEN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. R. B. LAIRD, M.L.C., Chairman, Mr. A. N. MACKENZIE, Mr. W. D. BRUCE-WATT, Mr. J. A. MURRAY, Mr. J. D. PATERSON and Mr. WILLIAMSON, Representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

E-1985. *The Chairman*: I understand Mr. Mackenzie is a member of the Executive Committee?—(*Mr. Laird*) He was last year, but he is not now.

E-1986. Mr. Bruce-Watt, Mr. Murray, Mr. Paterson and Mr. Williamson, I understand, are mill managers. Which of these gentlemen are managers of mills where the multiple shift system is in operation?—Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Paterson are on the single shift; Mr. Murray and Mr. Williamson have both systems.

E-1987. Of what does the 5 per cent of the industry which is not represented by your Association consist?—One American mill and four or five Indian-managed mills built quite recently.

E-1988. When you say that one of the objects of your Association is "generally to promote and direct the interests of those engaged in the industry in all matters relating to it", does that include the interests of the work-people whom you employ?—No, I do not think that was meant; I think it is only in connexion with trade.

E-1989. Then does it follow that up to now your Association has had no constructive and combined policy with regard to the welfare of the workers engaged in your industry?—That is the case.

E-1990. Up to now that has been left entirely to individual mills or groups of mills under particular managing agents?—Yes.

E-1991. Your industry, as I see it, is perhaps more favourably situated than any other industry in India for combined action on all matters relating to the industry?—Yes.

E-1992. I think you are all working within 20 miles of Calcutta?—About 30 miles.

E-1993. You all have your connexion with Calcutta; you are favourably situated for frequent meetings to discuss policy?—Yes; all the head officers are in Calcutta and mill salesmen travel up and down from all the mills every day to Calcutta.

E-1994. And do you achieve unanimity when it is a question of trade defence?—As a general rule, but not always.

E-1995. Particularly when it is a question of restricting production, or would you rather put it, apportioning production to the needs of the market?—Exactly: regulating supply and demand.

E-1996. In the settlement of the recent strike you did agree to recommend to the members of your Association one single matter included in what we might call welfare, namely, maternity benefit?—Yes.

E-1997. So that to that extent you have broken away from your previous policy of being a purely defensive and commercial association?—Yes.

E-1998. Now do you think it is possible for your association to take a step forward and consider the industry as an industry with the purpose of making it the pride of India and an example to the world?—Yes, I think so.

E-1999. And would you be prepared to recommend to your Association that they should not in future confine themselves to purely defensive and restrictive matters but that they might consider combining in an effort to deal with the interests of the workers in the industry; I do not mean any restriction of liberty of initiative and so on, but at any rate arrive at a minimum standard in matters of that kind for the credit of the industry as a whole?—Yes, in matters of welfare I think the association would be quite prepared to make recommendations.

E-2000. In the settlement of the recent strike when you agreed to recommend to your constituent members the putting into operation of schemes of maternity benefit, did you go any further than that; did you draw up a minimum scheme and recommend it to your individual agencies or firms?—We drew up no scheme at all but I understand all the mills have put it into operation; we did not suggest any particular rate which should be paid.

E-2001. With the result that they may vary very greatly?—I would not say very greatly; they may vary to a small extent.

E-2002. Have the whole of your constituent members put maternity benefit into operation?—I understand so.

E-2002-a. But is that a matter of report to your Association?—No.

E-2003. Has your Association ever considered a combined effort as an industry to get rid of this bribery which seems to be a blot on the industry?—No.

E-2004. Do you think that is something which your Association might study and in regard to which you might help one another in a real effort to get rid of that blot, or do you yourself accept it as a thing that never

will be altered?—It will be very difficult to eliminate it altogether. We do try to limit it as far as possible, but we require co-operation. Our employees will pay the bribes. We try to get them to come to the offices and report cases. We do investigate cases but as long as the employees accept it and pay the money to the *sardars* it is very difficult for us to cope with it.

E-2005. But you have never made an effort as an Association to consider plans to diminish if not abolish it?—No; I am sure the Association has taken no action in that respect.

E-2006. Has your Association ever produced a constructive policy with regard to housing?—That is left wholly to the individual groups of mills.

E-2007. I imagine you would admit that there are a great many blots on the housing system in your industry?—Yes, they are gradually being improved as new houses are being built.

E-2008. Up to the present your Association has not taken that as one of the matters involved in the general interests of those engaged in the industry?—No, it has taken no action whatever.

E-2009. With regard to the question of the single shift and the multiple shift, as an Association you are obliged to adopt an attitude of impartiality, I imagine?—50 per cent are single and 50 per cent are double; it seems to be a matter of opinion as to which is the best method of working in particular districts.

E-2010. Therefore we cannot ask you as an Association to express an opinion one way or the other?—I think not.

E-2011. I understand Mr. Murray has experience of both systems?—(*Mr. Murray*) Yes.

E-2012. Have you a mill which in the last five years has changed from multiple to single shift?—Yes.

E-2013. Was that one mill or more?—*One mill only.*

E-2014. From your actual experience in that mill, do you agree with the suggestion that the change involves throwing out of work 25 per cent of the workers employed?—In that particular case it did not; the reduction in the total labour force was certainly under 10 per cent.

E-2015. Was your production reduced by the change?—It was very much increased. There were other factors operating at the same time, so that it is very difficult to allot the proportion.

E-2016. Was the quality better or worse after the change?—There was no appreciable change.

E-2017. In your view does the single shift offer any advantages in control of the *sardars* and diminution of their power to make exactions?—Yes; on this particular occasion it practically cut out the very vicious *sardari* system and rendered it impotent; it put the *sardars* in the position of being technical overseers.

E-2018. Before the change in what way was what you describe as the vicious *sardari* system so powerful?—They dismissed labour and engaged fresh hands just at their pleasure and each new man who was signed on had to pay for the job he got.

E-2019. Then has the effect been that you as a manager have much more supervision and control over the engagement of labour?—Yes; we know our labour better.

E-2020. And your control also over unfair dismissals is greater?—Yes.

E-2021. What was the position with regard to the content or discontent of the workers with the change after it had been made?—On making the change there was a little trouble but after they had all settled down they seemed to be very content. There was an appreciable improvement from the health point of view.

E-2022. I understand Mr. Williamson also has had recent experience of the change; you are managing mills on both systems?—(*Mr. Williamson*) Yes.

E-2023. Will you give me your answer to the same question, first of all as to the number of persons thrown out of work?—That depends altogether

on the kind of shift system. In many cases we have put in a 50 per cent system; that means that we carry 50 per cent of our weaving hands on a 33⅓ per cent system, in which case we work on a A B C system of permanent hands with a 33⅓ per cent system of relieving hands. If we want to change a 50 per cent system mill to a single shift mill we put more hands on the streets than would be the case where we work 33⅓ per cent. I should say that where we have made the change the people thrown out were in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent.

E-2024. Are you sure that you are not dealing with a number of fictitious names which were on the books under the multiple shift system?—I have no reason to think so.

E-2025. You do not say it is impossible?—I certainly will not say it is impossible.

E-2026. In your case how was the production affected by the change?—The production was stagnant for, I should say, 2½ months, but once they settled down, production did show a slight improvement.

E-2027. What was the effect as to quality?—I should say there was no difference with regard to quality. There are so many factors which come into the calculation in that respect.

E-2028. To what extent do you think it is possible that you are dealing with a number of fictitious names on the books which were there under the multiple shift system?—I should say in the neighbourhood of 7½ per cent.

E-2029. Would you agree that the change has given the management more power and the *sardars* less power over the workers?—It undoubtedly has given the management better control over their labour in so far as they can keep individual employees on individual machines and it gives not only the manager but the European staff as a whole a better chance of knowing the labour.

E-2030. What is your opinion as to the contentment of the workers after they had settled down to the new system?—On the single shift system in one particular mill to which I refer which has been changed over in the last five years, they appear to be quite contented.

E-2031. In your memorandum you refer to a case where there has been a change back to multiple shift from single shift; do you know of any other case in which that has been done?—(*Mr. Laird*) No. That was one of Mr. Williamson's mills.

E-2032. Were there any special reasons in that case for the change back?—(*Mr. Williamson*) One particular reason is this, that under the multiple shift system, and particular in the place where that mill was, we draw labour from Akla and Diamond Harbour. Under the single shift system the workers have very little time to spend with their people at home at week-ends; whereas under the multiple shift system when work is finished they go to their homes and have more time to spend with their people at home.

E-2033. They like the longer week-end?—It suits the particular concern.

E-2034. What is the district?—The district in this case is Budhatolley; it is a *cul de sac* place.

E-2035. You tell us Mr. Laird, that the houses in these private *bustis*, many of which we have seen, are owned mostly by *sardars* employed in the mills?—(*Mr. Laird*) Yes.

E-2036. Do you agree that that is a very bad system?—I think it is a very bad system.

E-2037. It gives the *sardar* an additional power to make exactions or show favouritism to labour?—Yes; I think it is bad in both respects.

E-2038. Has your Association ever addressed itself to that point which you say is very undesirable?—No.

E-2039. *Miss Power*: Is it a fact that the capacity of the *sardars* to buy houses must have arisen from the extensive bribery system? It is a very unusual thing for foremen to be in a position to become house owners for large bodies of workers or do you think they could do it out of their wages

alone?—Yes, I think so. These particular *busti* lines have been in the districts from generation to generation; they are very badly and cheaply built.

E-2040. *The Chairman*: But still you stand by your statement that they are mostly owned by the *sardars* employed in the mills?—Yes.

E-2041. And no effort has been made to get rid of that system?—Not by the Association.

E-2042. You tell us that in a certain case there are health centres and baby clinics and there is a tendency to expand in that direction?—Yes.

E-2043. Am I to take it that there again there is no concerted policy on the part of the Association?—No.

E-2044. Even in the form of recommendation or in the form of letting the whole know what certain pioneers have done and are doing?—The Association do not do that; they do not let them know.

E-2045. In your memorandum you make a serious assertion with regard to half-timers being twice employed, and you say that is in some cases actually encouraged by the *sardars*?—Yes, but that is being eliminated very quickly. To-day there are only 5 per cent of children employed in the total mills; they are gradually being driven out and full-timers are being employed. It is a very small matter and under the multiple shift system I do not think it can happen to any extent.

E-2046. You draw our attention to a serious abuse, but your Association has had no concerted policy for removing that abuse?—No.

E-2047. You have left it to the Factory Inspector and to the individual employer?—Yes.

E-2048. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is the only check as to attendance after the men are at their machines?—(*Mr. Murray*) That is right.

E-2049. Tokens are not taken at the gate and put on their machines?—No. The check is taken after the workman is at the machine.

E-2050. The *baboo* walks round the machines and puts down the number of people he happens to see working at the machines or probably the *sardar* tells him are present?—He is supposed to check up each worker individually.

E-2051. But I take it the *sardar* tells him who is there and he takes the word of the *sardar* to a great extent?—That may happen.

E-2052. Under the multiple shift system it must entail a number of visits round the mill because each shift has to be checked for attendance?—That is right.

E-2053. The token I have seen have stamped on them merely the letter indicating the shift but no number indicating the individual?—They always have a number as well as the shift letter. (*Mr. Laird and Mr. Williamson*) That is so with regard to our mills. (*Mr. Murray*) The number on the token should agree with the number in the muster book.

E-2054. Is it usual to have numbers on the tokens?—Yes, always.

E-2055. It is not always so, because yesterday I visited a mill where there was merely the letter on the token and no number?—I have not come across any like that.

E-2056. You will admit that it must be very difficult for the management to be sure that the attendance books that come before them are accurate?—It is difficult.

E-2057. Have you got labour waiting at your gate hoping to be taken on to replace men who are sick?—There is generally a certain number.

E-2058. Who picks the men?—The *sardar* picks them.

E-2059. Does the management know who is being picked until the man is found at the machine?—No; the man is put on by a *sardar*, except in weaving where the European assistant probably chooses his own hands. Spare weavers come inside the mill and go round every morning.

E-2060. The spare weavers are engaged in the shed?—Yes.

E-2061. Are all the employees engaged inside the shed?—Generally.

E-2062. So that inside your shed every morning you have men who are on your muster roll and men who are hoping to get on it?—That is so.

E-2063. You said in changing from the multiple to the single shift system your displacement of labour was under 10 per cent; that would probably be due to the fact that there were previously a lot of names on your register which were only existent on pay days?—Yes, that is probable.

E-2064. Then surely your cost of production must have gone down quite a lot when you went on to the single shift system?—It did; I should put the reduction at about 10 per cent.

E-2065. Your European staff, except perhaps in regard to weaving, has really no check on the attendance book?—The European assistants also check up the names.

E-2066. When I attempted to check up the names in a mill yesterday I could not see any reason why a couple of *sardars* could not go round and pass the tokens on to people who would pretend to be somebody else. Your European assistants cannot possibly know by name all the various individuals on the spinning frames?—They cannot.

E-2067. Whilst you were checking up, if they were dummy names, the *sardars* might have the tokens in his pocket and somebody could come up from a distant loom and produce the token?—That is possible.

E-2068. Periodic raids by the European assistants would not check that much?—If you check the whole department at times then it is possible to check it. One system which has been tried is on pay day making each worker put his hand into a bucket of dye so that the same man cannot come twice.

E-2069. But that would not prevent a *sardar* bringing in a couple of friends on pay day to take the pay of somebody who has never been there during the day but who has been marked as attending?—We cannot stop that.

E-2070. As far as I can see, your only hope of reducing bribery and corruption is the single shift system?—It helps considerably.

E-2071. The *sardars* would naturally prefer the multiple shift system, I suppose?—I think they would.

E-2072. Have any *sardars* expressed any preference for the single shift system?—(*Mr. Williamson*) Not to my knowledge.

E-2073. The figures as to which men are absent on leave and sickness cannot be accurate if your attendance figures are not accurate?—No, they cannot be.

E-2074. We cannot take any absentee figures from jute mills as being accurate because you do not know whether a particular man is there or not?—(*Mr. Paterson*) I challenge that. Every one who goes on leave for any reason whatever in our mill is given a pass signed by a European and the man brings it himself to the European to sign.

E-2075. Is that only when he goes away for a long period?—No, for one day or half a day.

E-2076. Then if any man happens to be absent in the morning because he is ill, does he send a friend to get that pass for him because he is ill and cannot turn up for work?—He may send word. In nine cases out of ten they come and ask for leave even when they are ill.

E-2077. How do you know that all the men who are marked in your register as present are in fact present?—One has to trust one's European staff.

E-2078. And the European staff have to trust the *baboos* and *sardars*?—To a certain extent. But it is their duty to supervise the *baboos* and *sardars* and when a man has been in one department of a mill for a few years he knows the majority of his labour by sight if not by name.

E-2079. Then you do not think the *baboos* and *sardars* between themselves mark men as present who are not present?—Certainly they do to some extent; it may certainly happen. One cannot guarantee that it will be 100 per cent correct.

E-2080. How many spare men do you keep in your mill?—Approximately 10 per cent, but the mill has a single shift system.

E-2081. I did not know that. I was complaining about the figures under the multiple shift system; it is admitted that there is more control under the single shift system?—I was on the multiple shift system for many years, and even then every individual who went on leave had a pass, whether it was long leave or short leave.

E-2082. Your control was so good then that it is no better now under a single shift?—No; I do not claim that at all.

E-2083. Have you more control now that you have single shifts?—Yes.

E-2084. And probably less bribery?—Yes.

E-2085. Therefore there is less reason why a *sardar* should want to put down a man as present if he is absent?—They have not got the same opportunity under the single shift system.

E-2086. In your memorandum you say that "the committee are not aware of the existence of any works committees in connexion with the mills in the membership of the Association, all disputes being settled amicably." Further on you describe some trouble you had, and I notice that the only way you appeared to be able to deal with the local trade union was by the Government acting as an intermediary?—(*Mr. Laird*) Yes.

E-2087. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Your objection to dealing with this union was because it was unregistered?—Yes.

Mr. Cliff: Does that mean that as an association they recognized registered unions?

Sir Alexander Murray: Yes, it does.

E-2088. You had no reason to believe that the woman who was the leader had any control over the workers?—No reason whatever.

E-2089. I take it, Mr. Murray, that you are speaking of your experience of the reliance?—(*Mr. Murray*) Yes.

E-2090. When you went to the reliance it was working very badly?—Yes.

E-2091. Did production rise as a result of your going there?—It did.

E-2092. How much do you attribute to a change of the shift system and how much to better management?—I attribute a part to better management and a part also to being under a single shift.

E-2092-*a*. When you came to Howrah, you did not adopt the single shift system but your production rose?—Yes; but I still think the single shift system is better.

E-2093. You went to the reliance as a new manager?—Yes.

E-2094. Therefore you cannot say whether the figures were right or wrong when you went there?—I cannot say.

E-2095. If you dismissed a lot of hands from a mill and worked on the single shift system, would not the result of that be that more hands would be seeking employment?—For the time being.

E-2096. Therefore the *sardars* would have a bigger chance of bribery if there are more men waiting for employment?—That might be so for a time.

E-2097. Mr. Bruce-Watt, do you agree with what Mr. Murray has said as to the relative merits of single and double shifts?—(*Mr. Bruce-Watt*) No.

E-2098. How long have you been manager of a double shift mill?—About 25 years.

E-2099. Has it been your experience that your registers can be properly kept?—They can and they are.

E-2100. How many times has the Factory Inspector come and found that your registers were not properly kept?—I should think about four or five times in the early days but not now-a-days.

E-2101. How many visits do you get from Factory Inspectors in the course of a year?—I should think two to three.

E-2102. I notice you say in your memorandum that the Jute Mills Association object to legislation that would compel multiple shift mills to go on to a single shift?—(*Mr. Laird*) Yes.

E-2103. You are writing that as an association?—Yes. We are equally divided on the point.

E-2104. You contradict the Factory Inspector when he says his staff found it impossible to check registers?—Emphatically.

E-2105. On what do you base that statement?—On our own mills, which comprise 10 per cent of the trade, we have no prosecutions. When the Factory Inspector finds that it is possible in our mills to check the registers I think he will admit that his statement is incorrect.

E-2106. *Mr. Cliff*: Does the whole of the membership of the Jute Association say what you say?—They scrutinized this memorandum before it was sent in and agreed with it.

E-2107. *Sir Alexander Murray*: One of the objections to the system of working is the long spread-over from 5-30 a.m. to 7 p.m. What hours do the jute mills at Home work?—At Forfar, which is about 15 miles from Dundee, the spread-over is 66 hours including meals and 55½ hours excluding meals. That means that in Forfar the spread-over is longer and the actual working week is longer. It is a 6 days week.

E-2108. It means that the spread-over is 11 hours per day?—Yes; it is in some cases longer than is the case here, on the multiple shift system. In Dundee the spread-over is the same but they do not work the same hours per day; it depends upon the volume of trade.

E-2109. Under the Act at Home they can work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.?—Yes; that is for men, women and children.

E-2110. In Forfar what are the hours of work?—They are now actually working 9 hours per day excluding meals. From Monday to Friday they work from 6 to 9; 10 to 1 and 2 to 5.

E-2111. If you were a worker in a mill would you prefer to start at 5-30 a.m. in Calcutta, or 6 a.m. in Forfar?—5-30 in Calcutta.

E-2112. At Forfar how many breaks do they have?—Two breaks of an hour each; in Dundee they have only one break.

E-2113. So that really the jute industry in the vicinity of Dundee is pretty much the same as the jute industry is here?—Yes.

E-2114. How do the working conditions in the jute mills here compare with the conditions in the Forfar and Dundee mills?—I should say it is much easier here; people at Home come into a mill are locked in and remain there for that period. In Calcutta they come and go as they like.

E-2115. What is the comparison, speaking of the conditions generally of the mills?—There is no comparison with Home mills; it is all in favour of Calcutta.

E-2116. How much of the industry do you six gentlemen represent?—50·54 per cent of the total looms.

E-2117. Do all the workers in your mills wear tokens?—Every one of them in the double shift mills; it is not necessary in the single shift mills.

E-2118. Why did you lengthen your hours from 54 to 60?—It was due to the instinct of self-preservation because our trade was departing to the Continent of Europe.

E-2119. What justification have you for saying that trade was departing?—I cut this statement out from the *Times* Trade Supplement, written by the Ghent correspondent: "Jute manufacturers here are beginning to feel anxious as the number of jute weaving mills has increased from 13 to 14 since the War, while that of the spinning mills has been doubled in Belgium."

E-2120. What are the wages paid for average spinners and weavers on the Continent of Europe?—In this statement, which I have, it says 15*s.* in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

E-2121. You say that the efficiency of one worker at Home is equal to that of two workers here?—Yes.

E-2122. How would you compare the labour cost here with that at Home?—I should say it is much about the same taking into account the efficiency.

E-2123. *Mr. Cliff*: The Government of Bengal tell us that half the jute mills in Bengal have changed from the multiple shift to the single shift

system of working within the last few years?—It is not within the last few years; it is a considerable number of years. I should say that the great majority of mills have changed over since 1921.

E-2124. You give us a record of the voting of your Association on this question. Was this the form of question which was voted on: "The multiple shift system should be made illegal"?—Yes; that was put up by Government.

E-2125. Did you actually have 45·17 of your Association in favour of making it illegal?—Those are the actual returns from all individual mills.

E-2126. So that 45 per cent of your Association voted in favour of this being declared illegal?—Yes, and 52 voted against.

E-2127. The Government in their memorandum say: "Regulation of hours unaccompanied by control of the shifts has proved a failure except in single shift mills." In view of that statement from the Government, does your Association propose to leave the matter just where you have left it in this memorandum?—Yes.

E-2128. What opinion has your Association formed as to the proper time for a jute mill worker to take his meal?—We have formed no opinion. They have worked in this way for many years and they arrange meal times according to their hours off.

E-2129. Does that mean that the jute mill worker with regard to his meal relief must accommodate himself to the machinery of the Jute Mills Association?—No; I think we arrange our shifts more to accommodate the worker.

E-2130. Then at what time of the day do you suggest the jute mill worker should take his meal?—I am afraid I cannot enter into that question; I do not know enough about the workers. Many of the workers take their meals before they come to the works.

E-2131. *The Chairman*: Before 5-30 in the morning?—Yes.

E-2132. *Mr. Cliff*: They finish at 7 in the evening?—No; some of them break off at 9 o'clock.

E-2133. If you take your long shifts they finish at 7 in the evening?—No. The shift differs in various mills. There is the shift which finishes at 3 o'clock, for instance.

E-2134. What was in the mind of the jute mill employer when he was fixing the meal time of the worker?—So far as I recollect we tried to fix the shifts to suit the meal times of the workers.

E-2135. I see that a man coming in at 5-30 a.m. is booked off for a meal at 6-30 to 7-30; in another case the worker is booked off between 9 and 10 and another worker is booked off at 10 o'clock. There is such a variation in the time that people are booked off that I have had great difficulty in discovering from this graph what is the proper meal time for the worker?—I cannot say any more about it. If you are talking of the weavers they do not leave the compound.

E-2136. I have winders, beamers and sewers coming in at 5-30 and being relieved. A man who is described as an "A" shift worker comes in at 5-30 and is relieved at 6-30. A man who is described as a "B" shift worker is coming in at the same time and being relieved at 8. A man who is described as a "C" shift worker is coming in at the same hour and being relieved at 9-30. I find that a person described as a "D" shift worker does not get a meal until 11 o'clock. There are four cases of people coming in at the same time. Between 6-30 and 11 what are you suggesting is their suitable meal time? Is it a fact that these multiple shifts were framed in the interests of the industry?—That is my opinion.

E-2137. The Government say: "The Local Government also considers that the time has arrived when the possibility of reducing maximum hours both weekly and daily should be taken up." I gather from your memorandum that you prefer that no action should be taken at all?—Yes; the hours should remain as they are at present.

E-2138. *The Chairman*: Did your Association take the same line when they were last reduced by the Factory Act; did you oppose the reduction?—I do not remember.

E-2139. *Mr. Cliff*: I see that the Chairman at the annual meeting in 1927 declares: "We are the only textile industry in the world, outside

Japan and China, and possibly Russia, in which the operatives start work at 5-30 a.m. and with intervals of rest stop work at 7 p.m." Is that a fact?—Very strong exception was taken to the speech. I think that was the view of one particular man.

E-2140. Is it true?—I have no idea whether it is true or not.

E-2141. Is yours the only industry in India that starts and stops its machinery at the extreme hours permitted by the law?—I do not know that either. I think there are certain concerns which work 24 hours a day.

E-2142. Are you the only industry that operates to the extreme limits prescribed by law?—I could not tell you.

E-2143. You know what the Government say with regard to the reduction of the maximum hours. Can you give any indication as to what period your Association believe should elapse before a review is taken under the Washington Conventions?—I can only refer to what the Association say here that they consider the hours under the present system are the most suitable, and I have nothing more to say.

E-2144. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In the wages figures you have given of a multiple shift system mill I notice there are roughly 4,000 workers who get a wage of less than Rs. 4 a week?—Yes.

E-2145. There are 1,090 workers who get for four days Rs. 5-15-0 and for five days Rs. 7-4-9?—Yes.

E-2146. What is the average absenteeism per head during the course of a year?—Of course it varies very much in the different departments. I have no actual figures with regard to that.

E-2147. Would it be correct to say for sickness four weeks and for absence in the village four weeks?—I have no exact figures but these have been submitted to Government by the Association.

E-2148. If the worker on an average works for 44 weeks a year at Rs. 3-8-0 a week, it works out at Rs. 154 per year. Do you think that is an adequate wage for a worker to bring up a family?—It appears to be; I mean they do it and they save money besides.

E-2149. The Angus Company have sent in a memorandum in which they quote Mr. Jacks' statement that to keep a family in comfort a minimum income of Rs. 365 a year is necessary; below comfort Rs. 233, above want Rs. 166, in want Rs. 115. So that according to those figures there are 4,000 people who are in the category of "in want"?—You are speaking about families whereas the figures given in our memorandum deal with individual workers.

E-2150. I am taking the earnings of a worker who has a family and who is the sole bread-winner. Are you pleading that your industry cannot afford to pay a decent living wage?—I maintain we do pay decent living wages.

E-2151. Do you consider this to be a decent living wage?—It all depends how they live. It has proved itself to be a living wage because the people stay there and work.

E-2152. Is that your definition of a living wage?—It is a very complicated question altogether. It is a question of the family life; very often you get four in a family working in the mill.

E-2153. Supposing the figure of Rs. 365 given by Mr. Jacks is approximately correct, would you consider Rs. 154 a year adequate for a person who has a family to keep with no other member of the family working?—I should say no.

E-2154. You would not consider it an adequate living wage?—No.

E-2155. Why do you say that unemployment insurance is scarcely a practical proposition at the present stage?—That is chiefly because the labour is migratory.

E-2156. In your memorandum you say that "About 90 per cent of the workers are entirely dependent on the jute mills for employment and have no other occupation to which they can readily turn apart from cultivation in their own villages". Is 90 per cent of your labour force more or less permanently employed in the mills?—They go and come back. I think the statement made here is correct.

E-2157. They do come back?—Of course they may not come back to the same mill.

E-2158. But they come back to the jute mill area?—Undoubtedly.

E-2159. That being so, what is the difficulty?—Because there is always plenty of labour.

E-2160. Unemployment insurance is a necessity where there is plenty of labour and not enough jobs; otherwise there would be no necessity for unemployment insurance?—I do not think unemployment insurance is a practical proposition in this country.

E-2161. Have you ever tried to work out a scheme?—Never. I cannot see how it could be worked.

E-2162. Has this matter ever been discussed by the Jute Mills Association?—Never.

E-2163. How did they come to the conclusion that it is not a practical proposition without discussing it?—They have simply gone into it with the knowledge they have of their own labour. The labour is constantly migrating.

E-2164. *The Chairman*: I presume you understand that where such insurance takes place it is spread over a large number of industries in order to get a basis of insurance; it is not peculiar to a single industry?—I see. I understand that it must apply generally. We should as a rule be in favour of discussing the matter and if any reasonable proposition is put forward we should try to introduce it, but we do not think it is practicable.

E-2165. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you agree that there is a considerable amount of unemployment?—There is a great deal of unemployment in the jute mill industry at the present time.

E-2166. If there were a system of public employment agencies, do you think it would help to take the worker out of the clutches of the *sardars*?—It might help to some extent, but we should still have *sardars*; you cannot do without *sardars*.

E-2167. It is suggested that where a worker goes to his village for a month when he comes back it is difficult for him to get a job unless he bribes the *sardars*?—Yes, I agree.

E-2168. Would not public employment agencies get the worker out of the clutches of the *sardars* as far as the question of employment is concerned?—I do not think so. The *sardars* would still be there and the employee would still have to deal with the *sardars* over and above an employment bureau.

E-2169. And if the *sardars* had nothing to do with the employment?—Then it is for the employees to refuse to pay money to the *sardars*.

E-2170. If the employment is through a public employment agency and the public employment agency deals direct with your employment officer, as far as employment is concerned the *sardar* would not come in?—If you can persuade the worker not to bribe the *sardar*.

E-2171. *Colonel Russell*: I think Mr. Murray said that an improvement in health was noticeable among the workers after the change to the single shift system. How long was the period before you noticed a change in health?—(*Mr. Murray*) Two years after we changed over.

E-2172. In your memorandum you say: "In many districts the worker elects to remain in a congested unhealthy *busti* instead of taking advantage of the sanitary quarters provided by the mill-owners." What is the reason for that?—(*Mr. Laird*) That is our experience. I do not know what the reason is. We very often have a number of our rooms in our lines vacant and empty when the *sardari bustis* are full.

E-2173. Is it a question of rent, because you also say: "It is very seldom that the lines are unoccupied to any extent"?—Yes, they are occasionally and the sardars' lines are always full.

E-2174. *The Chairman*: Is it because the *sardar* says "I will not employ you unless you say you will occupy my house"?—There may be something in that.

E-2175. *Colonel Russell*: Again you say: "The general health condition of workers is on the whole very good"; then later you say "Generally speaking, the physique of the workers is fairly good"; but when you are dealing

with the industrial efficiency of the workers you say "The physique of the workers, on the whole, can hardly be described as satisfactory." There seems to be considerable discrepancy there?—Yes, there is.

E-2176. Which of those statements is correct: "Very good," "Fairly good" or "Not satisfactory"?—Fairly good, I would say.

E-2177. You say that the dispensaries are under the charge of a qualified doctor with one or two assistants. Is it not often the case that the dispensary is left in charge of an untrained compounder?—I have no experience of that.

E-2178. How often does the company's doctor pay periodic visits?—I can only speak for my own firm; once a week.

E-2179. Who is in charge for the other six days?—A qualified Indian doctor.

E-2180. Is he there all the time?—Yes. He stays on the premises.

E-2181. When we visited the Angus Mills the other day we found there were seven doctors, including one woman doctor, employed for 6,180 jute workers. Can you suggest why in one case such a large staff is necessary and in other cases it is not considered to be necessary?—Because the Angus Mill has gone in for very intensive welfare work.

E-2182. Does the Association approve of intensive welfare work or not?—Yes, decidedly so.

E-2183. When a worker is too ill to attend the mill dispensary does the mill doctor go to the man's house?—Yes. I am speaking only of my own firm.

E-2184. May I ask some of your colleagues? Is it the general custom for the doctor to visit sick individuals at their homes who are unable to attend the mill dispensaries?—(*Mr. Williamson*) So far as my firm is concerned, whenever application is made a doctor does attend at the worker's home.

E-2185. Is it the policy of the Association to encourage the employment of lady medical officers?—(*Mr. Laird*) Undoubtedly.

E-2186. And also the provision of health visitors and *dais* for midwifery cases?—Yes. We do that in Titaghur and Bhatpara.

E-2187. Is it the idea to extend that scheme to other mills?—It is being extended now.

E-2188. Is there any difficulty in getting women doctors and trained health visitors?—Yes, great difficulty.

E-2189. Is there any place in Calcutta where individuals are being trained as health visitors?—I do not think so; we get ours from the Chelmsford League at Delhi.

E-2190. Are they satisfactory?—Quite satisfactory. One has been with us for five years.

E-2191. You do not think it is impossible to obtain trained health visitors?—It is quite possible, but it will take a little time.

E-2192. You refer to an arrangement come to between the Jute Mill Association and the Director of Public Health. Has the Association consulted the Public Health Department with regard to proposals of water-supplies, sewage schemes and so on?—Government have taken full control in the case of Titaghur and Bhatpara; we provide the money and they spend it.

E-2193. You say "In practically all mills there are bathing ghats on the river front." I understood that the river front was used for the building of bungalows?—Not in front of the mill. The ghats are in front of the mill proper.

E-2194. With regard to the work of Boards of Health, in certain instances I understand that the Municipal Councils, which have control over the health of certain mill areas, have a considerable number of mill managers and assistant mill managers. They act as Municipal Councillors. Have they used all the powers which they possess under the Municipal Act to get private *bustis* demolished and rebuilt?—Speaking for my own firm we have used all the powers we could to purchase land, but we have got no satisfaction.

E-2195. Apart from the question of the purchase of land, is it not possible, under the Municipal Act, to take legal measures against individuals who offend in these respects?—It is very difficult indeed. (*Mr. Watt*) Because you cannot get the landowners to move at all.

E-2196. *The Chairman*: Has your Association ever drafted an amendment of the law to meet your difficulties in the acquisition of land?—(*Mr. Laird*) Not to my knowledge.

E-2197. You have not put into practical form what you need. Could you do that and let the Commission have it? Have you a legal adviser attached to your Association?—Yes.

E-2198. Could you not get him to put in legal form an amendment of the law which, in the opinion of your Association, is necessary to enable you to deal with these black spots in the neighbourhood of your mills?—I will see what can be done.

E-2199. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Even where the landowner objects, are there no powers in the municipality to force the provision of sanitary conditions in a certain *busti*?—(*Mr. Watt*) Yes, there are, but certain pieces of land are owned by several co-sharers, and you simply cannot bind them all down to pay the cost of the improvement.

E-2200. *Colonel Russell*: In England and in certain parts of India there are Town Planning Acts which can very effectively control conditions such as you describe. Has the question of a Town Planning Act ever been considered by your Association?—Not in my time.

E-2201. There would be no objection to considering it?—None whatever.

E-2202. *Mr. Tassie*: With regard to bribery, do you think that bribery complaints are sometimes made against a particular person in order to discredit him, so that someone else will get his job?—That does happen.

E-2203. With regard to *sardars* owning houses, is it not a fact that the first thing that that class of Indian does, when he saves money, is to buy land and houses?—Yes. That is his ideal—to become a *zamindar* in a small way.

E-2204. *Mr. Cliff*: In town?—In the mill areas.

E-2205. *Mr. Tassie*: As regards meal times, is it not a fact that the Indian takes his chief meal in the evening? He takes one in the morning and his midday meal is usually parched gram which he carries in his loin cloth and eats at any odd moment?—Yes.

E-2206. Is it not a fact that in a mill when a worker feels hungry he leaves his work to the *badli* and goes off and has a meal?—There are instances of that.

E-2207. Therefore, if there were fixed meal times, it is possible that the workmen would not keep to them, but would take their meals when it suited them?—Yes.

E-2208. With reference to the question of workers avoiding mill lines, do you not think that arises from the fact that the workers object to the sanitary regulations imposed in the mill lines—about keeping their houses clean and so forth?—In some cases they have probably more freedom outside.

E-2209. Is it not a fact also that in the mill lines restrictions are sometimes placed on the number of people allowed to live in a room?—Yes.

E-2210. Mr. Chaman Lall referred to the lowest paid grade of workman and worked it out that a man in such a grade earns Rs. 3-8-0 a week or Rs. 154 a year. Is it not probable that the men in that grade are young men with no families?—A good many of them must be young men, but some must be over 20 years old.

E-2211. Referring to the book written by Mr. J. C. Jack entitled "Economic life of Bengal district", I see that for the population as a whole the cost of living in comfort per head is Rs. 65 per year. Therefore if a man is getting Rs. 154 per year he is fairly well off if he has only got himself to look after?—Yes.

E-2212. Taking the best paid man, a *sardar*, on Rs. 20 a week, or Rs. 880 a year, he also is fairly well off if, according to Mr. Jack's figures, the cost of a family living in comfort is Rs. 365 a year?—Yes.

E-2213. So that on these figures the mill hands are very well paid as compared with the people in agricultural districts to which Mr. Jack referred?—That is my contention.

E-2214. You have given some evidence about the position of the Dundee Mills. To what extent do the Dundee millowners provide housing for their operatives?—They do not provide it at all.

E-2215. Do they provide education?—No.

E-2216. Do they provide doctors and dispensaries?—No. They may provide a few dispensaries.

E-2217. Is it possible that more than two people live in one room in Dundee?—Yes.

E-2218. With regard to leave, how many months in a year can a Dundee operative afford to leave his work and go to the country to cultivate his land or to enjoy himself?—He probably gets away for a fortnight a year.

E-2219. Therefore if you compare the conditions in Dundee with the conditions here it looks as if the Indian employee is a good deal better off than the Dundee operative?—It certainly looks like it.

E-2220. *Colonel Russell*: Do you think the housing conditions in Dundee are satisfactory?—No.

E-2221. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With reference to recruitment do I understand that when there is a vacancy the *sardar* brings a man along and he is generally accepted?—Yes.

E-2222. Can a man be dismissed on the *sardar's* complaint?—Only after investigation by the manager.

E-2223. Considering that there is much odium attached to the present recruiting system, would not you prefer to have a *bona fide* outside recruiting agency and to employ your men through that body?—No.

E-2224. In order to remove the suspicion of corruption and bribery would not you prefer to have an independent employment officer?—I am afraid that there will be bribery there too.

E-2225. Was not one of the biggest strikes which occurred in Bengal in a jute mill, the strike at Fort Gloster Jute Mill?—Yes.

E-2226. Was not one of the main reasons of the prolongation of that strike the fact that people were unwilling to work a single shift?—Yes.

E-2227. Is it not a fact that on account of the change of shift 2,000 workmen lost their jobs and another 2,000 were replaced by upcountry men as it was very difficult for the local people to work a single shift?—I do not know the exact conditions at Fort Gloster.

E-2228. You said that the relations between the European and Indian staff and the rank and file are very harmonious. Are you aware that within the last 12 months there have been frequent assaults on the European staff by the workmen in many mills which I could name?—I have heard of those.

E-2229. Does that imply harmonious relationship between the staff and the workmen?—That was a very exceptional state of affairs; it was immediately after the strike, and it was caused by political agitators more than anything else.

E-2230. With reference to your Association's opinion about works committees, are you aware of the fact that Mr. Winterbotham, the President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in his evidence before the Commission, has emphatically said that his Chamber would welcome the introduction of the works committees. He said: "In 1921 the Chamber associated themselves with the Bengal Chamber urging *inter alia* that early steps should be taken to test the possibility of developing in India a system of works joint-committees. The Chamber is strongly of the opinion that these attempts should be renewed, and persisted in. We unreservedly support the principle underlying works committees". He points out that his Chamber were invited to discuss the matter by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1921. It was the Bengal Chamber of Commerce which initiated it?—We are quite willing to try it.

E-2231. You say that there are no facilities for the acquisition of land for workers' houses. The Commission has received a memorandum from the Anglo-India Jute Mill in which it is said that up to the present that firm has found no difficulty in acquiring land. Facilities do not exist everywhere for acquiring land, but facilities do exist in certain districts?—In Titaghur district where we have 8,000 looms going, we have been trying to buy land between two certain streets in order to complete a housing scheme. We have offered up to £2,700 an acre for the land, but we cannot buy it. One man has a house in the middle, and he says he will not sell it unless he gets a lakh of rupees for it.

E-2232. But in other districts land is available? In the memorandum submitted by the Angus Mill they say it costs them Rs. 6,20,000 for housing 4,000 workers, clerks, *baboos*, doctors and every body concerned. They point out that they can buy land at Rs. 10,000 per acre including what the landlord wants for his right, what the tenant wants on eviction and every thing. That is Rs. 10,000 for three bighas or 60 cottahs. It comes to Rs. 150 a cottah, which is 720 square feet. The requirement for an individual worker is about 150 square feet. Allowing another 50 square feet for open spaces, it means that 200 square feet of land will be quite sufficient for one person, including open spaces, verandahs, and rooms. Do you think these calculations are correct?—They are absolutely correct. The Angus Mills are buying land at Rs. 3,000 a bigha. We are quite prepared to do the same.

E-2233. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say in your memorandum: "The Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which might force those mills on the multiple shift system to adopt the system of single shift. It is undoubtedly a fact that single shift working is suitable to certain districts, but it is likewise a well-established fact that certain districts, for many reasons, prefer to adhere to the system of multiple shift working." Will you explain what are the reasons which make you prefer the multiple shift system?—For example, in Titaghur you have 80,000 men employed in the mills which are on the multiple shift. If these mills were to go on to the single shift you would immediately throw 20,000 out of employment. Our chief concern is to conserve our labour force and to prevent unemployment. In Titaghur, since 1913 there have been no extensions of any description, while in the mills at Bhatpara there are many extensions. If there are extensions, the labour which will be let free by the mills going on to the single shift can be absorbed by the new mills, but where there are no extensions there is bound to be unemployment. The other day in Titaghur when there was a likelihood of the mills changing over to the single shift the workers came to the authorities and protested against the change.

E-2234. Is it not a fact that the double shift is against the interests of the shareholders of the company?—I do not agree that it is.

E-2235. Do you not agree that you get a better production in working single shift and also that the physique of the workers is better?—I do not agree that you get a better production; I also do not agree that the physique of the workers on single shift is better, because they work longer hours.

E-2236. May I know what Mr. Paterson thinks about it? Will he tell us whether after he changed from double shift to single shift he got better production or not?—(*Mr. Paterson*) Better production.

E-2237. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is that better production per loom per hour?—Yes.

E-2238. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What is the average wage of a jute mill worker in the districts in which you have experience, say, in Titaghur and Samnuggur?—(*Mr. Laird*) The average is about Rs. 15 a month. It is for time workers only and does not include piece-workers.

E-2239. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that the average for men, women and children?—Yes.

E-2240. Have you figures separately for men, women and children?—Yes. The lowest for men is Rs. 12-10-6; the lowest for women is about Rs. 10 and for half-time shifters it is Rs. 8-7-0..

E-2241. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Do you know that the jute mill industry pays more wages to its workers than other industries which are near about the jute mills?—I do not know what wages are paid by other industries.

E-2242. Turning to the question of bribery, do you not consider that it could be checked effectively by the establishment of proper trade unions?—We are sympathetic towards the formation of properly constituted trade unions.

E-2243. Are you in favour of stopping the *sardari* system altogether and appointing a labour intelligence officer in the mill whose duty it will be to recruit labour? The labour may be under the supervision and check of the *sardars* but the *sardars* should have no power as far as recruitment and dismissal are concerned?—I do not think you can ever stop the *sardari* system. For example, in Titaghur No. II mill which you visited, where they have 7,036 workers there are 276 *sardars*. These *sardars* are recruited from the rank and file, and they are very efficient men. I am now talking of efficiency and not about bribery, which is a different question altogether to tackle. I do not think we can do without *sardars*.

E-2244. *The Chairman*: The *sardar* is an overseer?—Yes.

E-2245. You do not expect it as an unalterable thing that the *sardar* should also make exactions for offering employment?—No. We may get over that.

E-2246. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You can restrict your *sardars* to the technical side of the work only as distinct from the recruitment side?—Yes.

E-2247. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: It was complained by the labour union that the workers are obliged to borrow money at a high rate of interest. Can you suggest any remedy whereby the labourers could get loans at a reasonable rate of interest?—I think it is a question which is now before the Banking Enquiry Committee.

E-2248. *The Chairman*: Has any mill or a group of mills experimented with a co-operative credit society?—Not to my knowledge.

E-2249. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Is it not a fact that when leave is granted to the workers, whether for any festival or for any other purpose, they are not given any pay?—That is so.

E-2250. Does the mill pay half or full wages during the sickness of a worker?—It is a matter for the manager's discretion; sometimes he gives them half pay and sometimes full pay.

E-2251. Do you not think that some form of sickness insurance is better?—It is still to be tried.

E-2252. Is it not a fact that the mills are unwilling to settle the demands of their workers until the workers go on a strike?—It is not at all a fact. We do consider all their grievances.

E-2253. Then why the workers are going into the hands of the so-called strike leaders?—That I do not know.

E-2254. Do you know the reason why the workers at Champdani have recently gone on strike?—I have no idea.

E-2255. You do not take any notice of that?—That is a matter that concerns the Agents of the Champdani Jute Company.

E-2256. In view of the fact that the poor workers are starving, will you not be prepared to settle the matter through a joint committee representative of the workers and the employers?—As I said, that is the concern of the managing agents of that particular mill.

E-2257. Will you tell us why the mill manager or the departmental officers are not keeping an unemployment register, especially in the weaving department, which will be one of the methods to stop bribery?—I cannot answer that.

E-2258. Is it not a fact that at present in the jute mill areas you have money-lenders doing business and there are stores of several kinds run by private persons?—Yes; this has been going on for many many years.

E-2259. In your memorandum you give a statement showing the total amount of money orders issued by the post offices serving the Calcutta Jute Mills. Do you mean to say that all the amount given here is sent only by workers and that it does not include the amount sent by businessmen and others living in the jute mill area?—We do not say that all the amount is sent by the workers, but we think it represents chiefly the money sent by the workers.

E-2260. *Diwan Chamal Lall*: It is not an index of what the workers actually send?—No.

E-2261. *Mr. Birla*: You discussed the question of the multiple shift in your Association when the proposal was put forward by the Government of Bengal, and I find that so far as this question was concerned, opinion was divided—half were in favour and half were against?—Approximately, yes.

E-2262. May I enquire if your Association also took the trouble of consulting the workers whom the matter concerns as vitally as it concerns the employer?—No, not as an Association. We have consulted our workers at different places and find that they wish to remain on the double shift system.

E-2263. You mean the workers favour the double shift?—Yes, in certain districts.

E-2264. Did you consult the *sardars* or the actual workers?—We did not consult anybody. As a matter of fact when the workers heard that there was a likelihood of the single shift system being introduced in Titaghur they approached us to protest against the change.

E-2265. *The Chairman*: Who approched you, the *sardars* or the workers? Who was the spokesman?—Both the workers and the *sardars* approached us. The *sardar* was probably the spokesman.

E-2266. *Mr. Birla*: You will agree with me that the workers generally being under the thumb of the *sardars* cannot express a free opinion unless you take special care to consult only the workers, excluding the *sardars*?—That is true.

E-2267. And therefore you cannot say what the real opinion of the workers was?—As regards single and multiple shifts, we did not take the opinion of the workers; we took the opinion of each member of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

E-2268. Do you not think this tendency on your part of deliberately shunning consultation with the workers is leading to serious harm so far as the industry is concerned?—I do not think so.

E-2269. Do you not think it was manifested in the last strike that unknown men who had nothing to do with the workers were able to influence the workers while the employers could not influence the workers even on reasonable points?—I grant that we should move closely with our workers. We are trying our best to do that, but it must be a slow process.

E-2270. You have admitted in your memorandum that while the relations are harmonious they are not intimate. Do you not think it is very essential in the interest of the industry that we should have more intimacy with our workers?—Yes.

E-2271. If you want to cultivate more intimacy, do you not think you should have works committees and well-organized unions?—We are in favour of unions which are well organized, properly constituted and representative of the employees, but we do not want political organizations such as we had in front of us recently.

E-2272. Do you not think that the establishment of works committees on which you practically express no opinion would be helpful in getting well-organized unions?—Yes.

E-2273. On the question of works committees I find that you do not express any opinion. Do you not think that this is a question which might be seriously considered by the Association?—(*Mr. Laird*) We have no experience, but we would be quite prepared to consider the matter.

E-2274. You would like to consider it favourably?—Yes.

E-2275. It is an established fact, so far as the question of the multiple shift is concerned, that under this system the workers get lower wages, that from the point of view of the mills it is not economical, that there is less check on the workers, that it is inefficient and that corruption prevails. The only argument which I have heard in favour of this system is that if you change from the double shift to the single shift you will have to dismiss a large number of workers. Is there any other argument in favour of this system?—The workers like it. They have two days off and three days off in alternate weeks as against 1½ days in the case of single shift workers.

E-2276. So far as the liking or the disliking of the workers is concerned I am afraid you cannot speak because you have not consulted the workers?—I have consulted 10 per cent of the trade and they strongly protested against going on to the single shift.

E-2277. May I put it that you consulted the workers only through the *sardars;* you did not take the real opinion of the workers?—I think we know the real opinion of the workers. (*Mr. Bruce-Watt*) There are some mills which have gone on to the single shift in our area. If our workers also wanted to go on to the single shift, surely they would have asked for it.

E-2278. I think that cannot be taken as the criterion of the opinion of the workers because, as you know, they are under the thumb of the *sardar*?—To a certain extent only they are, not in all cases.

E-2279. Do you mean that in the mills which have changed from the double shift to the single shift the workers are discontented?—No, because those mills are in certain localities. A certain locality may like the single shift while another locality may like the multiple shift.

E-2280. Which is the locality which you think would like the multiple shift?—The locality where I am in charge.

E-2281. You mean the Barrackpore side?—No; the other side of the river.

E-2282. On the Titaghur side there are mills working on the single shift?—None in Titaghur.

E-2283. Not in Titaghur, but near Titaghur?—No; they are far from Titaghur.

E-2284. Is there any special reason why particular residents of a district like the single shift while others do not?—(*Mr. Laird*) As I have already said, the labour in Titaghur is against the single-shift.

E-2285. That is due to the fear of unemployment?—Because the workers themselves prefer to work on the multiple shift.

E-2286. So far as the question of unemployment is concerned, you will agree that the trade has been expanding every year?—Not for some years.

E-2287. If you take the figures of exports you will find that the trade has been practically expanding every year. A number of new mills have come into the field, and it is quite possible that the looms might have increased since the last census. But looking from the figures of production it appears that the trade has been expanding, and if the trade goes on expanding like that, it is quite reasonable to expect that in the course of time the excess labour which might be thrown out would be absorbed. On the question of further reduction in working hours you say that you are strongly against it?—The Association simply say that they consider the present working hours to be satisfactory. I cannot say anything beyond that.

E-2288. You are neither in favour nor against a further reduction?—The Association think that the present working hours are quite suitable.

E-2289. You make a statement in your memorandum that on account of a reduction in working hours in the past, efficiency has increased. Have you any reason to expect that if the working hours are further reduced there will be a further increase in the efficiency?—Might.

E-2290. Have you made any special effort towards the increase of the efficiency of the workers?—As regards living they get houses; they get water; we have sewage schemes.

E-2291. But you will agree that that is not enough. Suppose you start some sort of a technical institute and train your weavers and spinners, do you think that might increase the efficiency of your workers?—I do not think so.

E-2292. You make a statement in your memorandum that the efficiency of the Indian worker in the jute trade is decidedly inferior to the European worker?—Yes.

E-2293. Have you ever tried to give him more number of looms or to persuade him to do that?—No.

E-2294. In cotton mills a weaver in some cases minds three to four looms, but in the jute mills I do not know of any case where a weaver has worked on more than one loom. I think he can work two looms if he wanted; it is not physically impossible?—I think it is physically impossible.

E-2295. Is it not a fact that in Dundee they work more than one loom?—It is entirely a different climate and much better working.

E-2296. Why is it that while men in Dundee can work more than one loom, in Calcutta they cannot work more than one loom? What is this inefficiency due to? Is it due to lack of education or vitality or climate?—Generally the weaver in this country does not want to work more than one loom. Climate is another chief point.

E-2297. But you have never tried to persuade the worker to work more than one loom?—Never.

E-2298. Do you think he would welcome the establishment of a training institute in Calcutta like the Victoria Technical Institute they have in Bombay?—I imagine so; yes.

E-2299. You make a statement at one place in your memorandum that the workers have a preference for the *bustis* over which you have got no control?—Only certain classes of workers.

E-2300. Is it because the workers are under the thumb of the *sardar* and do not want to displease him by not living in the *bustis*?—That may be, but certain classes prefer the *bustis* because they can have more freedom there.

E-2301. Do you mean to say that they specially prefer *bustis* to the *pucca* built houses provided by the mills?—In some cases they certainly do.

E-2302. And the reason may be due to their being under the influence of the *sardar*?—Partly.

E-2303. You say in your memorandum that crèches would not be welcomed. Do you not think it is rather an unkind remark to make because you have never tried crèches at all?—We have tried in one or two places. We are willing to try them again.

E-2304. *Mr. Clow*: But you say in your memorandum: " . . . no experiments with crèches have in the past been undertaken "?—After writing this memorandum we discovered that experiments have been undertaken in two different mills.

E-2305. *Mr. Birla*: You say that the experiment failed?—The women do not like to be separated from their children. We might be able to enforce that, but I think it should be gradual.

E-2306. In the cotton industry they have established crèches in many places and they have been successful?—If you go too hurriedly it is possible that you might force the women out of the mill altogether; they are only 17 per cent employed now.

E-2307. *The Chairman*: Do you not think that you might get more women if they knew that they could leave their children in a safe place instead of taking them inside the mill where there is machinery and dust?—Yes, provided we could get the women to do that.

E-2308. Is it not possible for your Association, now that you have expressed your opinion, to have a sub-committee to investigate these various questions?—Yes. I think you should not experiment this thing at the mills straight away. My own opinion is that it should be tactfully done, otherwise you will drive out the women force.

E-2309. We have heard that over and over again; it does require the initiative, patience and persistent good-will of the employer?—Yes. Our experience in Titaghur is that we started a clinic in 1923 and it was about three years, I think, before we got anything like an appreciable number of women to agree to make use of it; now they come more freely.

E-2310. Are not millowners willing to help one another with their experience?—Yes, they are.

E-2311. *Miss Sorabji*: On the question of the effects of disturbance of sex ratio you say: "The Association has no definite information on this point." Do you recognize the importance of the reference to sex ratio as

affecting the question of recruitment, that is, as affecting family life and as affecting the health of your workers?—It must be very important. Any information I could get on that point I would welcome.

E-2312. Have you made any investigation on the subject of the unattached, that is the non-wife, woman worker?—No.

E-2313. And no units of your Association have made such an investigation to your knowledge?—No.

E-2314. Has your Association any figures to give us as to the number of such women in the mills under your control?—No, I do not think so.

E-2315. Would you say that these women attach themselves to individual men in order to get protection? Where women are greatly in a minority among thousands of men, this is bound to take place?—Yes; I suppose that must happen to some extent.

E-2316. Would the provision of lines for single women solve the question and help to cure the evil to some extent?—It is a very difficult question. I have no experience in this connexion.

E-2317. If the reason why these women attach themselves to men is that they must have some protection as they live among a large number of men, I want to know whether it would not help to cure the situation if single women could live in quarters apart from the men?—I find it very difficult to answer.

E-2318. Let me give you an analogy. We have hostels for girls in Colleges. You have not considered the question?—No.

E-2319. Are you prepared to investigate the question from that angle and to take steps to give this suggestion a chance?—I am taking a note of it and shall put before the Association for consideration.

E-2320. This question, I take it, might profitably be referred to the sub-committee that was suggested by the Chairman?—Yes.

E-2321. *Miss Power*: Dealing with industrial disputes, you give us the terms of the settlement arranged with the assistance of Government between your Association and the Jute Workers' Union. Could we know what steps the Association took to see that its constituent members implemented that undertaking?—I can say that all our members implemented that undertaking.

E-2322. Has the union been informed by the Association of the action taken?—We have never recognized this union and will not do so until they register themselves.

E-2323. But I take it that if you made a settlement with the Government as an intermediary you recognized this union to that extent?—We only dealt with the Government.

E-2324. Have you informed the Government as to the extent to which these terms of settlement have been implemented?—Yes.

E-2325. But you did not feel that you were called upon to inform the union?—Until they get themselves registered we cannot deal with them.

E-2326. Dealing with industrial efficiency from rather a different angle from that of technical education you say: "Dietary, so far as the jute mill workers are concerned, has no direct effect on production." A little further on you say: "Industrial fatigue has not been experienced in any way so far as the jute industry in Bengal is concerned"; and that despite the long hours and your own admission that "during the hot weather months the work is extremely trying in the jute mills." Both of these statements are a negation of the experience gained as a result of extensive research in the field of industrial fatigue in Europe. Probably you realize that because you say at the end: "It is difficult to say what methods should be adopted for securing increased efficiency", that is to say, the efficiency of the workers. Has it ever occurred to your Association, which is a very wealthy one, that it might be worth your while to employ to assist you in that matter some of these highly qualified people who have specialized in research in the field of industrial fatigue?—We find that the efficiency is improving year by year.

E-2327. You are satisfied with the rate of increase of improvement?—Yes, we are satisfied.

E-2328. You do not want to increase the rapidity of that efficiency?—I think it is increasing rapidly.

E-2329. *Mr. Clow*: But you say that in recent years there has been little or no improvement either in quantity or quality of work produced?—If you go back to 15 or 20 years ago you will find that there was an improvement in the quality and the quantity of work produced, but in recent years we find that it has not improved.

E-2330. *Miss Power*: You adhere to the statement that "dietary has no effect upon production" and that "there is no industrial fatigue in the jute industry"?—I think that is substantially correct.

E-2331. On the question of education you make no recommendations of any sort. You merely say that an investigation was undertaken by a certain official whose report would be found incorporated with that of Government?—I understand that that report has been placed before the Royal Commission.

E-2332. Now the question has been put before the public by Government more than once since 1921 in connexion with both primary and technical education of children. Yet there is nothing in the report to indicate that your Association has any policy whatsoever as regards the education of the workers?—I might perhaps explain what our Association thinks. We think that education in Bengal is being run on wrong lines. In Madras 38 per cent of the total is spent on primary education, Bombay spends 52 per cent while Bengal spends only 17 per cent. We do not think it is the duty of the employers to educate the workers, but we are very sympathetic towards this question and are prepared to co-operate with Government in any scheme that is put forward.

E-2333. The Governor of this province, I believe, two days ago in a public speech said that the need of primary education for money presents an incontestable claim?—The figures that I just quoted were taken from that speech only. I have read the speech very carefully and I agree with it entirely.

E-2334. I take it that you are the richest Association in Bengal?—The Association itself is not rich, but many of the mills are.

E-2335. Has the industry as an industry indicated to Government that it would be prepared to give substantial financial assistance in the way of primary education?—It is up to the Government to approach us. We still maintain that it is not our duty to educate our labour. It is for Government to put a proposition in front of us for our sympathetic consideration.

E-2336. You are waiting for Government to give you a direct invitation to assist them in the cost of primary education?—Yes. As I said, we are prepared to sympathetically consider any scheme; but beyond that I cannot commit myself.

E-2337. The Governor has indicated only two days ago that the crux as regards primary education is the question of money?—I repeat that it is not up to the jute mills to educate their labour. They would co-operate with Government in helping them as much as possible.

E-2338. Passing on to another question which has been raised more than once, namely, the question of the reduction of hours. Government is in favour of it and the workers through their union are also in favour of it. Is the statement in which you say: "the Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which would curtail present working hours, and it is to be hoped that no action in this connexion will be taken at the present time", a statement representative of the unanimous views of the managers and the managing agents, or are members of the Association divided on that issue as they are on double and single shifts?—I think it is the unanimous opinion of the Association that the present working hours are most suitable.

E-2339. I suppose in view of that answer it would not be fair for me to ask whether we could hear the views of the other members present. You feel that you are speaking on behalf of all the jute mills who are members of the Association?—Yes. I can commit myself no further than that.

E-2340. Dealing with the question of maternity benefits you say that a definite recommendation was put forward and the mills generally have adopted some form of payment. In view of that acknowledgment, would

your association object to legislation which would make the conditions uniform as between your mills and those mills which are outside your Association?—I do not think there would be any objection, but we ourselves are doing it and we therefore think that legislation is not necessary.

E-2341. Can you say if there is any uniformity?—Very much. Here is a copy of our rules.

(A copy of the rules was handed in.)

E-2342. That, I take it, has been communicated to the Government intermediary in the strike?—Yes.

E-2343. On the question of crèches which Mr. Birla raised just now, you appear to indicate that you have not felt that you could press that matter because the view generally taken by the members of the Jute Mills Association is that a system of crèches would not be welcomed by the workers. But you give us two very interesting instances of experiments in the way of welfare. You say: "The qualified lady in charge has gradually overcome the reticence and mistrust with which this venture was once held in the eyes of the workers." Further you say: "Recent reports indicate that the popularity of such welfare centres is very considerable, and that there are large numbers of women workers who display a genuine desire to learn more of child care." Is there any reason why you should distinguish between the response expected from women workers, if they are properly approached by qualified women, as regards crèches and as regards other forms of welfare, such as health centres and baby clinics?—It will take a long time for crèches to become popular.

E-2344. That is a question of patient education as it has been in the case of Bombay?—Yes; as you know, the question of caste differences come in.

E-2345. Yes, but do you not know that Bombay has gradually overcome these difficulties and has triumphed in the end even though for the first two or three years the crèches were not wholly successful?—If we put a no-caste woman in charge, I think we might overcome that difficulty. We are quite willing to make a start.

E-2346. Might I ask whether your Association would be prepared to lay down a policy for its members are regards the inauguration of crèches in charge of skilled workers?—We are prepared to consider the question of the introduction of crèches.

E-2347. Would you be in favour of any form of legislation which would make the conditions uniform?—We ought to be allowed to experiment it ourselves.

E-2348. Would you not approve of legislation even in an industry which is dependent upon the employment of women during their child bearing years?—Our women labour is disappearing gradually.

E-2349. But our information is that it has increased?—We have 17 per cent of women labour; out of 331,000 workers we only have 53,000 women.

E-2350. *Mr. Clow*: Are you absolutely sure that the number has decreased?—I would not like to be definite about that, but I think it has decreased.

E-2351. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say: "The employees have a right of appeal to the managing agents." Has any worker ever been known to appeal to a managing agent?—Yes.

E-2352. How does he do that?—By a letter.

E-2353. He sends a letter direct to the managing agents and not through the manager?—No; very often direct to the managing agents.

E-2354. That is very interesting. Could you tell us what sort of complaints are usually made in this way?—The usual complaint is that he has been wrongfully dismissed.

E-2355. What is the procedure adopted by the managing agent; does he refer it back to the manager?—There is an assistant in the managing agent's office who travels up and down to the mills every day. When I get one of these letters I give it to the salesman, that is, to the assistant, who takes it with him and discusses with the manager and finds out all the facts of the case and tells me the result. I then pass final orders,

E-2356. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has any appeal succeeded?—We find that the manager as a rule is correct.

E-2357. Was there any occasion where the man was found to be correct?—I cannot tell you.

E-2358. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum dealing with methods of recruitment you say that "labour is in good supply all the year round." You will remember that in olden days there was almost a chronic complaint of shortage of labour particularly in certain seasons of the year?—Yes.

E-2359. When did the change occur?—I can almost tell you the exact date—since October 1914.

E-2360. To what do you attribute that?—You will remember that in the past conditions were so bad that many looms had to stand idle in hot weather months?—Wages have increased, of course.

E-2361. Has production gone down?—Production has not gone down. When labour first came to this Province they preferred to work on the railways and on the land. I think probably when they discovered that a little more money was available inside the jute mills they transferred their activities to the jute mills and also brought their friends and relations and settled down in the district more or less.

E-2362. Do you think that the limitation of hours introduced in 1912 had something to do with it?—I do not think so.

E-2363. It rendered the mills more attractive?—It might have had something to do with it, but not very much.

E-2364. Especially in view of the belief held in certain quarters that the jute worker prefers shorter hours even though he gets reduced wages?—This might have applied in the olden days when the hours were unduly long. But the fact remains that since 1914 labour has never been scarce.

E-2365. As regards working the double shift you told us that one reason for maintaining double shifts was your desire to avoid throwing people out of employment. From the commercial point of view what are the reasons which induce those mills which are retaining the double shift to do so?—They want to conserve labour. It is not a commercial proposition at all. It costs us more per ton on double shift than on single shift. Our working costs are higher on a double shift.

E-2366. You want to conserve labour with a view to possible future developments?—We might have to work more hours with the existing mills. We may start new mills at some future date. Therefore we want to have the labour at our disposal.

E-2367. How are the managing agents remunerated? Are they remunerated as a rule on profits or on output?—Some of the oldest concerns—there are very few of them—remunerate the managing agents on sales. But the majority of the concerns pay their managing agents on profits.

E-2368. Has that change taken place recently?—I do not think so. I think the question of remuneration on sales refers to the pioneers of the industry here.

E-2369. I notice from Mr. Foley's report in 1906 that the remuneration then depended on outturn?—That was on sales.

E-2370. In your memorandum dealing with the incidence of accidents in factories you say that "in the majority of cases the workers make the most of the slightest injuries in the hope of getting some compensation"—Yes.

E-2371. But actually your proportion of slight injuries is very far below the figures which one would expect from experience in all other countries of the world?—Nowadays the workmen know the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and even the slightest accidents are reported.

E-2372. But your percentage of slight accidents is phenomenally low?—It only refers to one particular mill. I could not get the figures for other mills.

E-2373. The number of slight accidents even in that one mill is about equal to the number of serious accidents. That is entirely contradictory to experience elsewhere. It suggests that a large number of slight accidents are not reported?—You will observe that in 1929 the percentage has increased very greatly as people began to understand the Workmen's Compensation Act.

E-2374. That is a development in the last year?—The workers have got a full knowledge of the provisions of the Act.

E-2375. Dealing with the question of contractors you say: "Members of this Association generally are of opinion that the Act should be amended so as to place liability in every case on the person directly employing the workmen, and they are opposed to the suggestion that contractors and sub-contractors should be legally entitled to indemnification by the principal;" and so on?—That is our opinion.

E-2376. That will mean that any employer by placing a contractor between him and the workmen will be able to escape liability altogether?—Yes, but we assume that the contractor will insure his workers.

E-2377. But surely that would be an obvious loophole for an employer who wanted to evade liability altogether unless in your contract with the contractor you stipulate that the contractor must insure?—(*Mr. Laird*) As far as the jute mills are concerned contract work is very little.

E-2378. I know, but I am merely saying that a provision like this is a dangerous thing—to ask the contractors to pay?—Certainly.

E-2379. Suppose the hours were limited by statute to ten hours a day without any further limitation, what would be the effect on the mills? Would they abolish the half holiday, for instance, and go on to 6 days of ten hours each?—I think they very likely would.

E-2380. You do not have the practice, I understand, in jute mills of handing over to the weaver any cuts that he has spoiled?—No.

E-2381. What do you do in a case like that?—It is used for outside wrapping of bales.

E-2382. Do you fine the weaver?—If the cut is badly spoiled then he is fined.

E-2383. Not as a general rule?—Not for small faults.

E-2384. We have been told by various cotton mill owners that it is quite impossible to maintain discipline on any other system than this. It would be interesting to know how you get over the same difficulty?—I do not think there are cases of cuts being badly spoiled; I think they are very few indeed.

E-2385. It is more difficult to spoil a cut in a jute mill?—Yes, it is much coarser than cotton.

E-2386. You never had such a system in jute mills?—No.

E-2387. Will you be opposed to a system of standardization of jute mill wages? Has that ever been considered?—We do not think it is feasible from many points of view. Conditions are different in different centres. One mill provides housing accommodation for all their workers whereas another mill provides none whatever. One mill provides good water, another mill provides no water.

E-2388. Take the piece workers. Will it be possible in their case?—For the same reasons, no. I do not say it is impossible, but I do not think it would be feasible on account of the varying conditions in different mills.

E-2389. *Mr. Murray*: You said that the single shift working eliminated to a large extent the power of the *sardar*?—(*Mr. Murray*) Yes.

E-2390. How does that come about?—Simply because the European assistant in charge gets to know his workers and it is impossible for the *sardar* to dismiss or take on workers as he pleases.

E-2391. In the case of double shift working you have only got a percentage more?—But they are changing over all the time throughout the day.

E-2392. To get to know the workers here also does not seem to be an insuperable thing?—The assistant goes out and comes back and finds new faces on the same machine. It is not possible to know the workers so easily.

E-2393. Is not the power of the *sardar* in the ordinary mill due to the fact that he is or that the worker believes he is in a position to engage a man or dismiss him as he pleases?—He cannot do that in a single shift mill.

E-2394. Why should he do that in a double shift mill?—It is more difficult to check the workers in a double shift mill.

E-2395. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: I should like to pursue the subject of single shift and double shift for a little while. It has been stated that there are many advantages to the industry in the single shift system in the way of greater production, smaller number of men, greater supervision and less chance of corruption. But still 50 per cent of the mills are working on double shift. Why is that? The only one reason that has been given is that you do not wish to displace the labour that you have employed for working a double shift system and you want a reserve?—(*Mr. Laird*) It is true up to a point. We also say that we are convinced that our labour like it in those particular districts.

E-2396. You will agree that the managing agents are the trustees for the shareholders?—Yes.

E-2397. If that is so, are the managing agents justified in working a system which is obviously to the disadvantage of the industry?—We have got to consider our labour as well as our shareholders.

E-2398. You want to be paying your labour for an indefinite period of time before you may expand. There is no definite time within which you would extend your factory and in the meantime you keep on paying labour which you do not require for efficient working. Do you think that is discharging your duties as trustees?—We do require that labour for efficient working.

E-2399. You have repeatedly told us that you can eliminate 10 to 20 per cent of your workmen if you work on a single shift system. Therefore you are paying 10 to 20 per cent more men in the off-chance that at some future date you will expand your mills and require the services of these men?—I am afraid that is not the only reason.

E-2400. What are the other reasons?—50 per cent of the mills do not agree that single shift working is the correct way to work a mill.

E-2401. It has been actually admitted by managers who have tried both the systems that the single shift system is more advantageous?—There are rumours of more mills going on to a multiple shift from a single shift.

E-2402. In your memorandum you say:—

> "Our trouble so far has been the total absence of *bona fide* grievances on the part of the workers, and . . . unless negotiations are possible as between employers and employees, the misunderstandings are bound to obtain."

Has your Association taken any measures to adopt any machinery for negotiations between employers and employees?—The managers are accessible to all labour. I refer there to exceptional circumstances when all the workers went out without formulating their grievances. They simply stopped work and left the mill.

E-2403. Have you got any means for collective negotiation between the employers and the employees?—We encourage the workers to come to us if they have *bona fide* grievances.

E-2404. Is there any organization among your workmen to speak collectively for all?—There is no union. Our trouble is the total absence of *bona fide* grievances on the part of workmen.

E-2405. I am asking whether there are opportunities for workmen for collective negotiation with the employers. There are none, I presume?—There are none.

E-2406. With regard to the last strike it is stated in your memorandum "the great majority are willing to work if intimidation is stopped and protection provided". Have you any constructive suggestions to put forward to meet this point?—The protection we wanted in this case was police protection. The workers wanted to resume work, but they were intimidated.

E-2407. Do you think that Government can maintain adequate police force to meet such contingencies?—At any rate they could have provided more than they gave us in this particular case. In addition to that Government should prohibit the meeting of members of unregistered unions in jute mill areas.

E-2408. Did not the Bengal Government prohibit meetings here?—That was only in certain districts. As far as I can see it depends on the Magistrate of the particular district.

E-2409. Is it your opinion that a minority of workers intimidated the majority of workers and prevented them from working?—Yes.

E-2410. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have they a right to persuade others not to work?—I do not think so.

E-2411. Have you a right to prevent a man from being employed in any mill or refusing him employment?—If he wants to work and if there is work we give him.

E-2412. You can refuse to employ him?—We can refuse to employ him.

E-2413. Similarly has not the worker got the right to persuade another worker not to work?—It is not a question of persuasion at all.

The Chairman: The whole question is whether it is peaceful persuasion.

The witness (Mr. Laird): It is an entirely different thing from preventing people from going to work and assaulting men and threatening women with molestation.

E-2414. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Has your Association any constructive suggestion to meet the situation when a minority of workers intimidate the majority and prevent them from going to work?—All that we have done is a little counter propaganda. Beyond that we have no constructive suggestion to offer as an Association.

E-2415. *The Chairman*: Mr. Laird, I will only pursue a single subject at the present stage. You have been good enough in reply to many of my colleagues to indicate your willingness as an Association to go into a number of suggestions for the welfare of your work-people?—Yes.

E-2416. In some cases you expressed doubts as to the attitude of the workers themselves and I gather from your memorandum that when the unhappy events of last year took place you were really unaware of the minds of your workers?—Absolutely.

E-2417. And it came to you as a surprise that the change to 60 hours raised so many difficulties?—Very great surprise.

E-2418. Is it possible for the manager of a mill where such a large number of workers of different races and creeds are employed to have a real intimate knowledge of the minds of the workers?—Undoubtedly it is possible.

E-2419. Along with all the technical work that he has to carry out?—*I think so, yes.*

E-2420. When you engage your managers do you require them to learn the language or languages of the people within a certain period?—I do not think we have done that all the time. They get a bonus of a lump sum if they pass certain Government examinations in the local languages. They generally come as under-managers and before they become managers they learn the language of the workers.

E-2421. In connection with a number of these things that go to make up the welfare of the workers and particularly in the question of the alleged exaction of the *sardars* you have told us that a great deal goes on without your knowledge?—Yes.

E-2422. Do you not think that it would pay you well to have a labour employment officer whose special duty should be moving about amongst the people both inside the works and perhaps more outside in the lines and the *bustis*, understand what they were thinking and feeling and to have direct daily access to the manager without any intermediary, so that the

manager may be perfectly apprised of the thoughts and feelings of the workers so that he may meet them before they develop into trouble?—A good deal would depend on who the employment officer was. He would certainly need to be a European.

E-2423. It would greatly depend on his personality. Such men do exist, not confined to any one race. A great deal would depend on the salary paid to him?—A very great deal.

E-2424. Would you be prepared to agree that attention to the personnel and securing of contentment of the personnel is pretty nearly as important as the quality of your raw material or the fitness of your machinery?—At once, undoubtedly.

E-2425. In that case a man who is able to achieve such results would, looking from a purely commercial joint of view, be well worth the salary which would presumably secure the man of the qualities we are considering?—There is no question about that.

E-2426. If the men were available in sufficient numbers?—Yes.

E-2427. Then again the supply of the men would in all probability depend on the openings that there were for them?—Yes.

E-2428. Do you not think that it would be possible in India, if there was a demand from all industrial undertakings employing say over 1,000 or 2,000 workers for such an officer, that steps would be taken to meet that demand and provide men of sufficient quality?—I think it would be well worth while. As I said a very great deal depends on the type of man and I still think that he should be a European.

E-2429. There is a feeling that so many of these things that are sometimes attempted as experiments by employers of good will do not succeed?—Because there has not been the means to let the workers feel that it was their own job and that it was not something thrown at them from above. The necessary consultation and discussion among the men themselves have not taken place beforehand. You have stated that the Indian is very conservative and liable to be suspicious of everything new however good the intentions may be?—Very suspicious.

E-2430. Do you think that it is at least an avenue worth exploring in order to achieve more contentment and well being for the workers not only in their little grievances inside the works but outside in their daily life?—Undoubtedly yes.

E-2431. Would not such things as a co-operative credit society within the mills to get them out of the hands of the money-lenders depend on the spade work of such an officer in gradually convincing the people that it was for their good and that it was not anything they need be suspicious about?—He will have a great deal to do in such matters.

E-2432. Are you aware that in your own neighbourhood we are told that there are at least two cases where such an attempt has been made and resulted in success?—I have heard of one, but I am very sceptical about it.

E-2433. There is one which we have not seen—the one in a jute mill to which you are referring. I would not say anything about it. There is the case of the Government Rifle Factory which is close up against the jute mills where we are told this experiment has resulted in success. All I want to put to you at the present stage is that possibly some of you might experiment in that direction?—I am very glad that this particular experiment has been successful. If it is correct we shall try that. But as I say I am very sceptical about it.

E-2434. At any rate you are not content to go along in a sort of jealous isolation mill by mill and not learn from one another whether by successes or failures?—This particular mill is not in our association.

E-2435. So I understand. That is not to say necessarily they are unwilling to allow their successes to be examined by others. Is it?—Any information which I have personally tried to get from this mill has been refused.

E-2436. Anyhow you are prepared yourself or your association to explore the possibilities of that idea?—We will give very serious consideration to that idea.

E-2437. You can quite see how it will help you in dealing with genuine trade unionism. It would help you on the other hand to deal with non-genuine trade unionism?—Yes.

E-2438. At least when a time came when you felt any change was necessary you would have the means of knowing the real feelings of the workers not simply after they have gone out on strike?—Yes.

E-2439. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I think it is admitted that men working on single shift earn more wages than men working on multiple shifts?—No.

E-2440. Does a weaver on the single shift make no more than a weaver on the multiple shift taking into consideration the extra hours apart from the question of extra efficiency?—Not a penny more.

E-2441. But he works more hours?—Yes, a weaver on the single shift works more hours.

E-2442. Yet he earns the same amount of money as one on the double shift?—Yes, that has been my experience.

E-2443. You pay the men working on multiple shifts for shorter time on piece-work?—Yes.

E-2444. Would you expect an individual weaver to make no more money if he worked longer hours?—I do not think he can make any more money.

E-2445. How do you explain that? Is he not on piece work?—Because in a multiple shift there are daily weavers at the rate of one weaver for four looms. He keeps the looms going for 1½ hours out of 6 hours. The relieving hand is a daily worker whereas the weaver gets paid for every yard of cloth that comes out of the loom.

E-2446. You think that he gets paid for the same amount of production on the multiple shift working as he would on the single shift working for longer hours?—That is my contention.

E-2447. Is that the information of those who are on single shifts?—(*Mr. Murray*) That only applies to daily weavers.

E-2448. Let us take a spinner. He is on time work. He works more hours on a single shift than on a multiple shift?—Yes.

E-2449. Is he paid more for working longer hours?—Yes.

E-2450. Therefore a time worker gets more money if he works longer hours. If as Diwan Chaman Lall maintained the wages were so low how would you account for the fact that they refuse to go on single shift when they could earn more money?—They are earning a little less but they like shorter hours.

E-2451. They cannot be so terribly hungry if they preferred to get less by working shorter hours. The wage that they get must be a subsistence wage?—I quite agree.

E-2452. Is it your point that they must be getting a subsistence wage or else they would be prepared to work harder?—Yes.

E-2453. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have you seen the report of the Government of Bengal on the indebtedness of your jute workers which shows that they are in a chronic state of indebtedness? It does not mean therefore that they are getting a subsistence wage?—It only affects a certain percentage of our workers.

E-2454. It refers to 80 per cent of your workers, I think?—I think only about 18 per cent of our workers are indebted to any great extent.

E-2455. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Your cost per ton is lower on a single shift than on a multiple shift?—Yes.

E-2456. *In spite of that you have a multiple shift because you think it is more beneficial to labour?*—Yes.

E-2457. *You can raise the wages of labour without increasing the cost of production by changing over from multiple shift to single shift?*—Yes.

E-2458. *If your only view is to benefit labour why should you not raise wages by changing over from multiple shifts to single shift as long as your cost per ton does not increase?*—It also depends on the district in which the mill is situated and the class of labour working there. We want also to conserve our labour for any future expansion of mills.

E-2459. Perhaps one of the reasons why you would like to continue multiple shifts is not because you are thinking so much of keeping your labour for any future expansion of mills but because you have foreseen the possibility of greater production out of your existing mills?—It was also at the back of my mind.

E-2460. That possibility has perhaps influenced you more than the expansion of new mills later on?—It may be so.

E-2461. With regard to crèches I understood you to say that one of the difficulties was that your women workers did not like leaving their children outside and they wanted to take them in with them?—Yes.

E-2462. We were told the other day by the representatives of Messrs. Bird & Co., that in the case of coal labour none of the women took their children with them there. How is it that women who are working on coal should be prepared to leave their children outside whereas a similar class of labour, namely, the women jute workers, are not prepared to leave their children outside the mills?—In the case of women carrying coal they cannot take their children with them, but in the case of women jute workers they can take their children with them.

E-2463. It is more convenient in one case and inconvenient in the other. If you made a rule that women should not bring them into the mill and should leave them in the crèches to be provided by you why should you be afraid of losing your women labour?—16 per cent of our labour force are women and they are working with their husbands and children in the mill. If you made a rule like that you would be disturbing their family life.

E-2464. Is not the position exactly the same at the coal berths?—It is impossible for them to take the children to the coal berths.

E-2465. What about their family life? They are also working there with their husbands. I am suggesting that it is not likely that you interfere with family life in one instance and do not interfere with it in another. If you made a rule and enforced it that no children should be brought into the mill and that they should be left in the crèches, how would you lose your women labour?—I do not think there can be a proper comparison between a jute mill and a coal berth.

E-2466. Are they different class of people? They are all working in Calcutta?—I do not know what the coal people are.

E-2467. With regard to payment of compensation to workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Act would you have any objection in the case of a workman who was sufficiently seriously injured that it would not be possible for him to go back to work for a month to pay compensation dating back to the first day of the accident?—We would have no objection to that whatever.

E-2468. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Before 1912 when the Factories Act of that year came into force the mills were working 15 hours a day or 90 hours a week. The machinery was running 90 hours. Under the 1912 Act the hours were reduced to 81 per week. At that time some of the mills went on single shift and have remained so ever since?—I think three mills, Lansdowne, Union North and Union South did that.

E-2469. Since then hardly one year elapsed when the mills did not change from four days to five days a week or five days to six days a week and so on at different intervals?—Yes.

E-2470. In some years there were three changes?—Yes.

E-2471. It was never suggested then that the mills should change from single shift for some months to double shift for some months and *vice versa*, but they kept on working whatever shifts they were on no matter whether they were working four days or five days or six days a week?—That was so.

E-2472. Will you explain on what basis you paid the bonus to your workers when you came down from six days a week to five days a week and from five days to four days a week?—Taking the standard fabric of 40 Hessian, on a six-day week we paid 2 annas for the first 9 cuts and 3 annas for the 10th cut; on a five-day week we paid 2 annas for the first 8 cuts and 3 annas for the 9th cut. When we came down to four days we paid 2 annas for the first 6 cuts and 3 annas for the 7th cut.

E-2473. Between the years 1909 and 1921 I notice from the statement you have given you have changed your system sometimes twice or three times a year?—Yes.

E-2474. And there was no trouble of any description during all those changes?—None whatever.

E-2475. In 1929 when you made the last change the weavers had been drawing bonus on the basis of a stent of 6 cuts for 4 days?—Yes.

E-2476. Therefore when you went up to five days it was but natural that the stent should be put to 8 cuts for five days?—Yes.

E-2477. If it was so simple as that about what did the strike arise?—It started at one group of mills. This particular mill took the benefit of half a cut instead of distributing it to the workers. The workers complained to the mill authorities and they put it right at once. But the Bengal Jute Workers' Union for some reason or other brought about a strike.

E-2478. Are you speaking on correct information, for the information I got from that mill in the vicinity of which we were the other day was that the workers objected to changing the stent from 9 cuts in 54 hours to 10 cuts in 60 hours which was not more than a proportionate increase?—I do not think that was the point.

E-2479. At any rate the settlement that was arrived at through the intervention of Government was on the basis that the number of cuts for five days should be the same as the number for four days?—Yes. They also got a proportionate increase in *khoraki*.

E-2480. In your memorandum you give figures of the amounts of remittance sent from the post office at Titaghur where there has been no extension of jute mills since 1910 and where the population has likewise remained more or less stationary?—In 1913 Kennison No. II was opened.

E-2481. The figures show that the amount of remittance varies in the different years?—Yes.

E-2482. A perusal of those figures in connexion with the figures regarding the number of days worked per week in the different years shows that every time you increased the number of days worked per week the amount of remittance increased. For instance the amounts of remittance in 1915 and 1916 when you worked six days a week were greater than those in years when you worked four days and five days a week?—Yes.

E-2483. That would seem to show that there is a direct gain to the workers in working six days a week?—I think it must follow.

E-2484. Reference has been made to the right of appeal to the managing agents. How long have you been acting as a managing agent yourself?—Four years just now. Previous to that I was connected with the mill from 1908 to 1926.

E-2485. You were connected with the mill for 18 years before you became a managing agent. What was your daily routine in those days?—I was a salesman most of the time. I used to go to the mill in the evening, stay there overnight, attend the mill in the morning between 5-30 and 10-30 a.m. and then come back to the office at Calcutta.

E-2486. I think it is almost a universal practice in all the mills and makes it possible for the managing agent to keep in close touch with what goes on in the mill?—Yes, very close touch indeed.

E-2487. Were the workers permitted to talk to you on any matter they liked?—Yes.

E-2488. Do salesmen generally know the language of the workers?—With one or two exceptions salesmen generally have a very good knowledge of the language of the workers.

E-2489. Mr. Williamson, how many years were you an assistant manager before you became manager?—(*Mr. Williamson*) Nine years. I came out as assistant manager.

E-2490. Therefore you had plenty of opportunities to learn the language of your workers before responsibility actually rested upon you?—Plenty. I have never had anything interpreted to me yet.

E-2491. *Mr. Cliff*: Would your Association have welcomed intervention in the last dispute?—No, certainly not.

E-2492. Did you not approach Government?—No, Government approached us.

E-2493. The Government say that, first of all, your Chairman, and later on a representative of the managing agents, approached the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Police Department?—Yes, we asked for police protection.

E-2494. The Government say: "In spite of the action taken by district and subdivisional authorities to prevent illegal intimidation, the workers in the mills concerned would not go back. Indeed the strike spread. Once it began to spread it developed so rapidly that the issue of intimidation was submerged." Do you agree with that?—Absolutely.

E-2495. The Government in defence of their action say: "The fact that so many workers were on strike, however, was a great menace to the peace of the community especially as there was a possibility of communal friction." Surely the Government were justified in intervening under those circumstances?—I suppose they were, but we held the opinion that the Government should not have intervened between the strikers and ourselves.

E-2496. Surely your Association is not going to protest against what was their obvious duty of intervening when they were faced with a situation like that?—It is a question of principle. We think we should have been given more time to try to settle the matter ourselves. The position was undoubtedly very serious, and Government was probably justified in doing what they did, but we objected to it. We objected to the terms of settlement.

E-2497. If you thought that the Government were justified in doing what they did, how can you object to their doing what appeared to them to be their duty?—It was a question of peace then.

E-2498. That was the way of obtaining peace, according to the Government?—What we objected to were the terms of settlement. Our workers went back having got something for which they never asked.

E-2499. We were told yesterday in evidence that there was a meeting of the workers on the 12th March; that they sent resolutions to the Government, and that they also sent resolutions to the managing agents of the local mills?—Yes.

E-2500. The resolution which was quoted yesterday was as follows: "In view of the misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of a 60-hour week in the jute industry from the 1st July, the conference urges upon employers to meet labour representatives at a conference and discuss the new terms and new rates of bonus for piece-work to be paid to workers." We are told that that was sent to some of the managing agents. The resolution was acknowledged, but none of the managing agents were willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours, and the consequent change in wages. Is that true?—So far as I know it is not true. That can only refer to one group of mills.

E-2501. It is the particular group where the union was actually operating?—I do not know anything about that.

E-2502. If a trade union calls attention to a matter nearly three months previously and asks for a discussion and the agents of the particular mills to which the resolution was sent refuse to discuss it, can that course of action on the part of the agents be defended?—No, certainly not.

E-2503. The final sentence of the terms of reference to this Royal Commission, which terms were sent to your Association, places upon the Commission the duty of making recommendations. Dealing with part of the terms which deals with the relations between employers and employed, may I ask in what way your Association suggests that it can help this Commission to arrive at a proper recommendation?—By recommending that we get into close touch with our labour through welfare work.

E-2504. You think it should be by closer contact between the management and the workers and that there should be an extension of the welfare work which has been taken up in certain mills?—Yes.

E-2505. Speaking generally with regard to the terms of reference have you any other suggestions with which you can aid the Commission in order that they may make recommendations?—I shall need time to think over it.

E-2506. I have been reading very carefully your memorandum and as far as I can see it seems to suggest merely a policy of inaction. I fail

to find any help from it?—I am afraid there has been a certain amount of apathy over the whole matter, but I will put up your suggestion to the committee and to members and see what we can put forward.

E-2507. The Chairman has put to you many points which, you have said, your Association will willingly consider. With a view to assist the Commission will your Assocation consider these points and let us have their advice?—It is not a matter for the committee. It is a matter of getting an expression of opinion from all members, which we will take steps to do.

E-2508. *The Chairman*: Or of getting authority from the whole of your members for your executive to deal with certain matters?—I do not think we can do that, but we can put up recommendations from the committee for the consideration of members which I do not think will be turned down.

E-2509. *Mr. Cliff*: I gather from your memorandum that you have objection to standardization of wages?—Decidedly so. We do not think it is feasible.

E-2510. It seems to me on reading the record of the recent dispute that the fact that you have not standardized wages for equal conditions has apparently caused trouble. May I make this suggestion to you? The standardization of wages does not necessarily mean a uniform wage right throughout the industry, but a standardized wage might cover the points which you put up as difficulties. Would it not be better for your Association to give consideration to the question of wages being standardized relating to the particular conditions which obtain in different localities?—I think that now in different localities the wages are practically the same.

Mr. Cliff: Probably there is a rough attempt, but if you are going to satisfy the work-people it does appear that it would be well to have a regular agreement covering the whole of the wages.

E-2511. It seems to me, with regard to the rules of your Association, that a generous interpretation would cover the consideration of all the points which have been put in front of you to-day?—I do not think they were meant to cover them.

E-2512. They were not meant to, but they were laid down in 1902, and this is 1930. Dealing with the question of bribery is it not possible to stamp out bribery by collective action on the part of your Association?—It is very difficult.

E-2513. Is there going to be a real radical beginning in the matter without collective action on the part of your Association?—The mills are starting in that direction now. I do not think they will ever stamp out bribery altogether, but I think it will be reduced to a minimum very soon.

E-2514. I can quite imagine that individual mills might sustain loss in trying to stamp it out. Could there not be a policy of insurance with your Association in order to meet any deficit that might be incurred in the matter?—No.

E-2515. The trouble I see with your Association is that with regard to questions affecting work-people there is real difficulty in getting you to take collective action?—We never have taken collective action.

E-2516. *The Chairman*: You have suggested to-day that you will consider the possibility of taking collective action?—Yes, in matters pertaining to welfare, but in regard to wages and bribery, I can see endless difficulty. There will have to be individual action to begin with.

E-2517. *Mr. Cliff*: I will leave it that you promise to consider the matter as an Association?—I will bring it up before the committee.

E-2518. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Here is a statement made by Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: "In 1925 the reserve funds which have come out of profits amounted to 22 crores, and when reserve funds and profits are added together the total gain to the shareholders in the ten years 1915-1924 reached the enormous total of £300 millions sterling or 90 per cent per annum on the capital . . . A profit of £300 millions taken from 300,000 workers in ten years means £1,000 per head. That means £100 a year from each worker, and as the average wage is about £12-10-0 per head, it means that the average annual profit is eight times the wages bill." Is that a correct statement?—I have not any idea whether it is correct or not. All these statements must change with the conditions of trade.

E-2519. The statement refers to a period of ten years 1915-1925?—Those were very prosperous years.

E-2520. Whether they were prosperous or not, is the statement correct?—I cannot say whether it is or not.

E-2521. Have you seen this report?—I have not.

E-2522. Can you tell us what is the proportion of overhead charges as compared with the labour wages bill?—It is about 55 per cent.

E-2523. Can you send us a statement showing actually how you work out that figure?—I will send it later on.

E-2524. Will you look at this statement giving the number of mills, looms, number of workers, block account, reserve fund and profits from 1920 to 1928 (handing statement to witness); is that a correct statement?—How can I answer that?

E-2525. Will you give me the total capital sunk in the industry divided up according to your preference shares, ordinary shares and debenture capital?—I have the figures here. Ordinary capital £10,108,485; preference £4,822,850; debentures £2,410,650; reserve and other funds including depreciation, £29,425,022.

E-2526. *Mr. Cliff*: What does the reserve represent?—Money set aside.

E-2527. Does it represent physical assets?—Yes.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Does it include block account?—Yes. Profit and loss carried forward, £957,605; total £47,724,612. That does not include the Angus Mill or Hastings or Ludlow or some newer flotations.

E-2528. Would it not be easy for you to give us the total profits from 1920 to 1928?—You can get them more easily from the "Capital".

E-2529. I was only trying to save time?—You will get it quicker from the "Capital" than you would from us. The Association does not deal with these figures at all.

E-2530. *Mr. Clow*: Does the "Capital" give the figures of the profits of the companies registered in England?—Yes.

E-2531. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have you included in those figures the depreciation written off from the profits?—Yes.

E-2532. Referring to the question of indebtedness, what was the figure which you gave the Commission about indebtedness?—I do not think we gave the Commission any figure. We gave a figure to the Banking Enquiry Commission.

E-2533. What was the figure?—It was that about 20 per cent of the labour were indebted.

E-2534. Here is a report of the Inspector of Co-operative Societies, Calcutta, on special duty; he says; "Over 80 per cent of the labourers are indebted." That is for the Titaghur area. "The average debt of one labourer would be about Rs. 40. There are, however, instances of a single man's debt being Rs. 200 or over." Then he says with regard to Bhatpara area that about 80 per cent of the mill operatives are indebted, their average debt being also between Rs. 20 and Rs. 40 per head. He says further: "I doubt if a single labourer will be solvent enough to remit a farthing home if he fails to get loans and procure necessaries on credit"?—I do not agree with that.

E-2535. He says: "It is really inconceivable that a poor labourer who earns Rs. 5 on the average per week should be at all in a position to remit any portion home from his saving. These illiterate, heedless, and irresponsible men are able to send money home because they get loans, at whatever interest it might be, and get things on credit of whatever quality and price these might be"?—I do not think that is a statement of fact at all.

E-2536. Have you made any private enquiries into this matter?—We have talked to our workers. We know what they remit. I am certain that the figure of 80 per cent is far too high.

E-2537. You have made no special enquiry?—We have not the facilities for doing so.

E-2538. Can you tell me what your Association intends to do in regard to the terms of reference of this Royal Commission; what does your Association intend to do in order to improve the standard of living of the workers?—We intend to give effect, as far as possible, to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

E-2539. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you know that the Trade Disputes Bill was passed only a few months ago?—Yes.

E-2540. Do you approve of it?—Yes.

E-2541. And will you loyally abide by its provisions?—We have no option in the matter.

E-2542. Do you welcome negotiation as a means of settling differences and misunderstandings between employers and employed; are you willing that some machinery should be set up for doing so?—We prefer to do it ourselves if possible.

E-2543. Have you not tried many times to do it, but failed?—Never before.

E-2544. This particular case to which you refer is the only instance in which you have failed?—Yes.

E-2545. Since you are prepared loyally to carry out the provisions of the Trade Disputes Bill are you prepared to accept also the principle of negotiation in any disputes which may arise between employers and employed?—We have no option in the matter. The Bill is in existence.

E-2546. Would you recognize a trade union?—Most certainly, if it is registered. We have no option there either.

E-2547. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are in touch with what is done by the International Labour Office at Geneva, are you not?—I am afraid I am not.

E-2548. Do you as head of your Association not keep managers of mills informed as to up-to-date legislation in the matter of labour?—I am afraid not.

E-2549. Are you in favour of educating workers?—Undoubtedly.

E-2550. What steps has your Association taken in the matter?—I do not think it is a question for the Association. It is a question for Government.

E-2551. *Colonel Russell*: Are maternity benefits now being paid in some form or another, in most mills?—Yes.

E-2552. You say that the report of birth of a child is made to the *sardar*. Would it not be better if the report of a birth was made to a lady medical officer? Do you think it reasonable that a woman worker should report the birth of a child to a *sardar*?—I do not think in actual practice the woman does so; the birth is generally reported by her husband or a relative.

E-2553. What is meant by the sentence: "In the event of any trouble or doubt the mill doctor will make enquiries?" I understand that the mill doctor only visits once a week?—It is the European doctor who visits once a week. The Indian doctor is there all the time.

E-2554. What is the trouble or doubt to which you refer?—The report of the birth may not be true.

E-2555. How can a man find that out; would it not be easier for a woman doctor to find it out?—I think Indians can find it out accurately. What other way is there of doing it? We had a case recently where the same woman applied for maternity benefit twice within three months.

E-2556. May you not get over the difficulty by employing a lady doctor or a trained health visitor? In describing the system of payment what do you mean by the "The 5th payment being a special payment?"—A woman is supposed to get four payments, and if she is still unwell there may be a 5th or a 6th payment.

E-2557. When we were taking evidence at one of your mills the other day a woman worker told us that during her 12 years' service in the mill she had had three children, and that on each occasion, when she returned to the mill, she had to pay Rs. 4 to the *sardars*?—I think that woman was speaking the truth.

E-2558. I understand that you would approve of the establishment of crèches in mills?—Yes.

E-2559. In your memorandum you describe the activities of the health centre and clinic at Titaghur. If you were developing welfare work of this kind you would have to obtain trained women workers with salaries on the scale you have quoted. Generally are members of your Association prepared to extend this form of welfare?—Yes, they are extending it.

E-2560. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of whether the mills are prepared to spend money on education, does it strike you that if the millhands became educated they would cease to be millhands and join the large number of educated unemployed?—It strikes me forcibly that that is what would happen.

E-2561. Is it not the idea of the mills, first of all, to improve the health conditions before spending money on education?—I think primary education should be extended on the same lines as in other provinces.

E-2562. By Government?—Yes.

E-2563. Have the mills not spent a great deal of money on health schemes and sewage schemes?—Certain members of the Association have contributed Rs. 30,44,000 for municipal improvement schemes in various districts, and other schemes are under consideration.

E-2564. Do you find that you are assisted by the local authorities in these schemes?—That has not been our experience so far as Titaghur is concerned. (*Mr. Williamson*) We had a considerable amount of trouble because the local municipality objected to our running the effluent into the river. The plant was delivered and has been on site for about four years. It was decided to put the effluent on to the land. Land was acquired by certain interested parties with the ultimate intention of its being sold to us, but we could not buy it at the figure we were prepared to pay.

E-2565. *Colonel Russell*: Does not the local Government interfere in cases like that?—We had a conference with the public health authorities but they would not move in the matter. The local municipality would not sanction the scheme.

E-2566. *Mr. Tassie*: Cannot the local Government insist on a scheme of that sort being put through?—I have no idea what the powers of the local authority in that connection are. (*Mr. Laird*) In Titaghur the Government acquired the land for the sewage farm.

E-2567. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In your memorandum you give figures as to remittances from Titaghur in 1928. You give the number of jute mill workers as 45,000 and the amount of remittances as 7¼ lakhs; and it comes to Rs. 16 per head per annum?—Yes, but I do not think it all comes from the jute mills.

E-2568. Then it would be less than Rs. 16 per head per annum which would be 5 annas per week.

E-2569. *The Chairman*: I suppose some of them take money with them when they go on their annual leave?—Yes; they take it and they send it.

E-2570. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Among your clerks at your head offices you have co-operative credit societies?—No, we do not.

E-2571. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Would you be prepared to advance loans at low rates of interest to a properly constituted co-operative credit society under Government control in your own mills?—That is a matter for consideration; I cannot reply to that offhand.

E-2572. You know that millhands are fleeced by shop-keepers; they are given adulterated food at very high prices?—Yes.

E-2573. If the Union places before individual mills such as yours—not the Indian Jute Mills Association—a good scheme for a co-operative stores would you be prepared to help it by giving advances at low rates of interest?—I think we would consider that very favourably.

E-2574. If the Union puts before you a scheme of co-operative housing on land near your mill and under the supervision of the co-operative housing society, would you help that?—Personally, I would say no; we are prepared to build our own houses.

E-2575. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: How many Government aided hospitals are there from Titaghur to Naihati, which is an area of 14 miles, where the majority of the jute mills are situated?—Not more than two or three.

E-2576. Do you consider that is adequate?—No, I think it is inadequate.

E-2577. Have you ever addressed Government on this subject with a view to the provision of more hospitals in districts such as Naihati and Titaghur where there is a great demand for them?—Not that I can recollect.

E-2578. Are there any Government aided schools for the children of the workers in the district extending from Titaghur to Naihati?—Yes, there are schools.

E-2579. Do you think the unemployment which you tell us at present exists is due to the change from the double shift to the single shift system, or is it due to there being plenty of labour?—It is generally due to there being plenty of labour.

E-2580. You do not think it is due to the change from the multiple to the single shift system?—Not now.

E-2581. In the course of the strike were any grievances submitted?—No.

E-2582. Then the strike must have been due merely to intimidation?—There were some grievances which were put right; there were irregularities such as are bound to happen with the change of working hours; we adjusted those irregularities.

E-2583. *Miss Sorabji*: My information is that workers with slight injuries due to accident make those injuries worse by the application of mud or cow-dung and by removing the dressings which they have been given at the dispensaries. Then when blood poisoning sets in the *Baboo* may get into trouble for entering the injury as slight. My information is that the tendency now therefore is to enter all injuries as serious so as to be on the safe side. Is that within your knowledge; it must affect the record of accidents?—To a very small extent I think.

E-2584. You have heard of the practice?—I have heard of it, yes.

E-2585. What is your experience of workers in regard to safety in using machinery?—They are not particularly careful, but that has been counteracted to a great extent by very elaborate fencing on the part of the Factory Inspection Department and it is becoming more elaborate as time goes on.

E-2586. Is the known indifference to death and the belief in fatalism of Hindus and Mussalmans likely to make Indian workers less careful than English workers?—I think they are on the whole more careless.

E-2587. If the grounds of defence to claims in regard to permanent total or permanent partial disablement under section 3 of the Workmen's Compensation Act were removed, would that not tend to aggravate carelessness?—I think it would.

E-2588. That being so, do you wish these grounds of defence to be retained in the Act or removed?—Retained.

E-2589. With regard to welfare work among women I gather you approve of a labour officer such as was described to you by the Chairman this afternoon?—Yes.

E-2590. Would you not also advise the employment of a woman labour officer to get into personal contact with the women, to persuade them to accept all the benefits that you are providing for them, to send their children to crèches and to see generally that everything possible was done for them—all such ancillary work being based on the establishment of more effective contact?—We agree we must have a woman in charge of the crèche.

E-2591. That is the woman executive officer who must be there looking after the children all the time, but would you not like to tie all your welfare work together, so to speak, by the employment of one woman officer who would go from house to house, be in personal contact with the women and persuade them to accept the good things you have to offer?—I think it will be necessary to see how things work with the man officer; the employment of a woman officer would probably come sooner or later if the work of the man officer was a success.

E-2592. But the man officer would be working on a rather different basis?—There are very few women; at the present time they are only 17 per cent of the workers.

E-2593. However good may be the things you have to offer people, you have to make them want those things before they will accept them?—Yes. I think it is a question for consideration.

E-2594. Do you think groups of mills would be likely to combine both as to the services of such an officer and as to the services of a good whole time woman doctor?—I do not think they would combine; I think it would have to be done individually.

E-2595. If it were done collectively you could have a whole time supervising officer?—I think you will want a whole time officer for each particular mill.

E-2596. *Miss Power*: Have you any suggestions as to how you could help the administration to overcome the difficulty of preventing the double employment of children?—I think it is gradually solving itself. The children are being driven out of the mills so quickly that in a year's time I do not think there will be any double employment of children. The only children who are employed are half-time shifters in the spinning department; the mills are concentrating on getting full-time shifters and children are disappearing very quickly.

E-2597. Is it the policy of the Association to eliminate children altogether?—It is the policy of the Factory Inspector; he tries to get us to eliminate children. I think probably it is a pity. There are only 17,000 children in the whole of the trade now.

E-2598. When a child reaches the age of 15 he becomes under the Act an adult and his hours jump from 6 to 11; that is a very big increase. The Senior Certifying Surgeon says: "In my opinion persons between the ages of 11 and 17 years employed in textile factories need official supervision and some degree of protection. I have observed a large number of young persons obviously unfitted for full time work actually working but I am unable to prevent it". Do you think it would be possible with the medical facilities at your disposal to arrange for children of 15 to have a medical examination to see whether they are physically fit to go on to full time employment and thus prevent a child going straight from half time to full time working when his physical equipment is obviously unsuited to it?—I should think it would be possible.

E-2599. Could your Association give that matter consideration?—Yes. Of course there are very few of them and I think it is a matter for the Certifying Surgeons.

E-2600. The Certifying Surgeon has not necessarily the powers to do it, but you could do it voluntarily through your own medical officers?—Yes.

E-2601. It would probably mean your keeping a child a little longer on half time if his physique was obviously backward?—Yes. Probably he would not be willing to stay on half time.

E-2602. Has any mill ever tried a production bonus scheme?—We have production bonus schemes, but they do not apply to the workers generally. For instance, all weavers and winders have a production bonus.

E-2603. How long has that been in operation?—As long as I can remember.

E-2604. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum you say: "The general monthly charge made by the mill is about 12 annas per room capable of housing four people, but this figure may be as high as Re. 1 per room per month or as low as 4 annas per room per month". Do you know what rent the *sardar* charges for similar accommodation in his *busti*?—About the same; there is very little difference.

E-2605. Is the distance between the mill and the *sardars' chawls* very great or is it about the same distance as your lines?—A little further as a rule but not appreciably.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

CALCUTTA

Thursday, 13th February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. R. P. ADAMS, Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

Mr. J. B. McBRIDE, Senior Inspector of Factories.

Mr. R. C. PARSONS, Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

Mr. T. B. GLOVER, Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

Captain W. O'CONNOR, Senior Whole Time Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Bengal.

E-2606. *The Chairman*: What is the length of your experience, Mr. Adams?—(*Mr. Adams*) I have had 17 years' experience as Chief Inspector of Factories.

E-2607. *Mr. Clow*: Dealing with the question of unregistered factories you say "The majority of these factories are badly situated and they are structurally not designed for the housing of machinery and employees," but you go on to say that the difficulty is "that compulsory fencing and structural alterations would probably precipitate liquidation"?—Not compulsory fencing.

E-2608. You say: "There is, therefore, a limit to the utility of the Act in such cases, for generally the concerns have so little capital that compulsory fencing and structural alterations would probably precipitate liquidation"?—What I mean is structural alterations.

E-2609. Is that an argument for refusing to bring these factories within the scope of the Act?—There is no useful purpose as far as I can see for doing so.

E-2610. Do you mean to say that, if structurally the walls of a factory are unsafe for carrying machinery, that is an argument for not bringing them under the Act?—It is not a question of being unsafe.

E-2611. It is in some cases. There was an instance of a house which fell down at Amritsar?—There may be a few such cases, but it is not generally the case.

E-2612. You state: "No case regarding the abuse of the fining system has ever been reported to this department". Do you think it is likely that it would be reported?—No.

E-2613. You have no powers to deal with it even if it were reported?—No.

E-2614. You deal with the very important subject of the inadequacy of the fines secured in factory prosecutions and the delays in procedure. Do you know whether in any case the Local Government have moved the High Court or any superior court to enhance fines?—No, in no case have they done so.

E-2615. Have you suggested that?—No.

E-2616. Do you not think it would be worth trying?—The question of inadequacy of fines has been sent up to Government on one or two occasions.

E-2617. If you were able to persuade the High Court that the fine was inadequate, and if they were to enhance it and give their views, might it not act as a lead to magistrates throughout the country?—Possibly it might; it has done so in Bombay.

E-2618. Do you think there would be any advantage in having a special magistrate for factory prosecutions—say in the Hooghly area?—Certainly.

E-2619. Would it be useful to have a section in the Act saying that on a second conviction there should be a minimum fine of so much, unless the magistrate thinks there is a special reason to the contrary?—Yes.

E-2620. I want to turn to your direct suggestions in connexion with the Factory Act. You give a general review of the position in which you think that the Indian Factories Act has not been evolved. You are probably aware of the history of Indian Factories legislation?—Yes.

E-2621. You remember that we began with the question of children in 1881. We went on to deal with the question of women in 1891. Then very bitter experience showed us the necessity of protecting an adult male labourer who was then working 14½ or 15 hours a day; steps were taken in that direction in 1911. The earlier Acts made a distinction between textile and non-textile factories; that distinction was abolished in 1921. There were amendments made in 1923 and 1926; on the latter occasion there was a conference in which you participated.—In face of all that do you think it is accurate to say that the Act has not been evolved and to suggest, as you do here, that it is a tame copy of English law?—Totally no.

E-2622. That is what you say?—No, I do not say it has been totally evolved.

E-2623. You say: "The Indian Factories Act has not been evolved. The peculiarities of Indian conditions and labour have not been allowed to make themselves properly felt during the process of law making . . . The Act, foreign in form, has been imposed on workers and establishments not parties to this evolution, and so the present position resolves itself into an attempt at enforcing something in advance of Indian industrial conditions."—The whole scheme was originally English. India started off with the 1881 Act which was practically modelled on the lines of the English Act of 1878.

E-2624. That dealt only with children. There was a radical departure from English procedure in introducing the principle of limitation of hours for adult males in textile factories.—So far as I can see the suggestions which follow seem to suggest that India should follow England more than she is doing at present, and not go further away from English practice.—All I can say is that you want to go a long way away from the amendments which were introduced in 1922.

E-2625. Which cannot be enforced?—I am talking of 1922 amendments. Most of the amendments of the 1922 Act cannot be enforced.

E-2626. Tell us them?—Sections 26, 27, 28, so far as the adult male labour is concerned: section 35 dealing with registers, and section 25 dealing with children working in two factories in one day.

E-2627. Let us take, first, section 25 dealing with children working in two factories. Do you say it is impossible to prevent that?—Yes.

E-2628. But they seem to have been successful elsewhere?—The conditions in other provinces are not the same as they are in this province.

E-2629. What is your remedy?—It is difficult to find one. Educate the children.

E-2630. Do you seriously suggest that children must be allowed to be employed without any restriction in two factories in one day unless every body is educated?—No, I do not say we should allow that. What I say is that we cannot prevent it.

E-2631. We are dealing now with the amendments of the Act. You say that that amendment should not have been made. As a matter of fact I do not think it was brought in in 1922. It was earlier, was it not?—Possibly it was.

E-2632. What do you suggest in its place?—You find fault with the section?—I do not find so much fault with that particular section; the sections I find fault with are the section which I have particularly noted in my written evidence. I do not think section 25 is mentioned in my written evidence.

E-2633. No, but, I asked you for the sections just now and you mentioned section 25. Let us turn to section 26. You suggest abolishing the register so far as adult male workers are concerned. Suppose that is done. How do you propose to enforce the weekly limit of hours?—We propose that factories should fix standard working hours, and that all work done outside those standard hours should be registered in an overtime register.

E-2634. Take the fairly numerous classes of factories which are working on continuous processes for 24 hours a day. How do you propose to enforce the weekly limit if you have no register of hours during which the workers are employed?—We propose a register with the hours laid down in it, not an attendance register.

E-2635. But you do propose the specific hours within which workers are to be employed?—Standard working hours, not specified hours.

E-2636. Take the case of a flour mill working three shifts of eight hours; what do you propose in that case?—There will be a register. The register will contain the names of the persons employed. They are working in eight-hour shifts. A shift is for one period of from 8 o'clock to 4 o'clock, B shift is another period from 4 o'clock to 12 o'clock and so on.

E-2637. Then you are specifying the shifts?—Yes, but not overtime hours.

E-2638. How will you know to which shift a man belongs?—His name is in the register.

E-2639. Then you are specifying the shifts?—That is a register of persons and not an attendance register. Section 26 lays down specified hours for the employment of each person employed in the factory. That is all. What we are asking for now is an attendance register of employees under normal working hours.

E-2640. I am not asking you what you are wanting; I am asking what is the section to which you object. I will come to section 35 later on. I am dealing with section 26 at present.—We want to specify normal working hours. Section 26 specifies the actual working hours including overtime.

E-2641. No; it says: "Shall fix the specified hours for the employment of each person employed in the factory".—"And no person shall work during those hours."

E-2642. Outside those hours?—Beyond those hours.

E-2643. That is what you are doing when you are saying "We must know who is employed between 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock, between 4 o'clock and 12 o'clock" and so on.—What about the people who work outside the hours of the factory?

E-2644. What do you mean by "outside the hours of the factory"?—I mean if there is a factory working from eight in the morning till five in the evening—persons employed before and after those hours.

E-2645. Let us deal with the case of continuous process factories—factories working 24 hours a day. Take another instance. Suppose you have no register of hours during which a man is being employed; how are you to satisfy yourself that he is getting the prescribed intervals?—Because his normal hours are specified, and he works during those hours only.

E-2646. But the interval need not be given to every employee at the same time?—The normal working hours and the rest hours must be noted in the register.

E-2647. How do you know which persons are enjoying each particular rest period?—The register tells us that.

E-2648. My point is that without section 26 you would not have that?—You would have that in compliance with section 35.

E-2649. Section 35 is another section which you say is unworkable. I am dealing with section 26 at present. Let us go on to section 28, another section which you say is unworkable. You propose to abolish the daily limit for men?—Yes.

E-2650. I am not dealing at present with whether it is desirable or not on general grounds. I do not understand why, if it is workable to enforce a daily limit for women, it is not possible to do it for men?—Because women are never allowed to work outside the normal hours of a factory.

E-2651. Taking section 35, surely you had in mind mainly those factories in which the working days are short ones, like engineering works?—No, all factories.

E-2652. *The Chairman*: May I take it, Mr. Adams, that your objection to section 35 arises out of your strong view against the multiple shift system?—No, my objection concerns all factories.

E-2653. *Mr. Clow*: You say: "There is one condition which appears to have been entirely overlooked by the framers and which indicates a too strict adherence to European conditions. This is connected with temperature." You remember taking part in discussions which were held in 1924 on the control of temperature, and you recollect the proposal put before the Assembly afterwards and the rejection by the select committee and the subsequent discussion with the Local Government?—Yes.

E-2654. Is it not a little hard to suggest that the question has been entirely overlooked?—In the Act.

E-2655. What do you mean by saying there has been "a too strict adherence to European conditions" in this connexion? After all the British Act does provide for control of temperature?—Yes, but the climatic conditions are quite different at Home from what they are here.

E-2656. You say in this respect, in omitting a reference to temperature, that there has been "a too strict adherence to European conditions"?—At Home the requirements are exactly opposite to what they are here.

E-2657. I do not quite see how the present form of the Act indicates too strict an adherence to European conditions in respect of temperature; the Act says nothing about it?—The Act should include a provision in order to enable us to control the temperature.

E-2658. In other words you move a little nearer towards European conditions?—Is it coming nearer really? I suppose it is in a way.

E-2659. I think your proposal is coming a little nearer. Your proposal, which I think on the whole is a sound one, is that the Chief Inspector or Inspector should be empowered "to enforce simple structural alterations or other simple improvements in factories where the temperature is obviously excessive and irremediable by simple means". The word "simple" occurs three times; who is going to be the judge of whether it is simple or not?—The Inspector of the Factories.

E-2660. Is that not rather a dangerous power to give him? My opinion of "simple" might differ from the opinion of many of my colleagues?—We have never abused our powers up till now.

E-2661. Surely the employer is entitled to say "What safeguards have I against being required to incur expenditure which is unreasonable in the circumstances"? Would you allow an appeal to the Local Government against the Inspector's orders?—Certainly.

E-2662. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean by the distinction you draw in Appendix M to your memorandum between English and Indian labour?—The workers in India have had no say in framing the Factories Act.

E-2663. Has the effect been that the law has been much in advance of the times?—Yes.

E-2664. What has been the actual effect of that on the industries?—Difficulty in administration, that the Act cannot be enforced in regard to control of working hours of labour particularly.

E-2665. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you mean that the labour will not help you?—Yes. We never get any assistance from labour; we usually get opposition in regard to enforcing working hours.

E-2666. *The Chairman*: I think Mr. Adams' point is that in India up to the present there has not been sufficient organization on the part of the

workers in taking a large share in seeing that the law is observed; and it has therefore rested wholly on his department, which is not sufficiently staffed, to deal with such complicated law?—That is quite correct. We have never succeeded in getting a worker into court to give evidence on our behalf. We have had complaints from workers in regard to overworking, we have discovered that excess hours have been worked; we have taken the case into court and then the same workers have come into court and supported the manager of the factory.

E-2667. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Is it not due to the fact that the workers are always afraid of getting the sack?—That may be so.

E-2668. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean when you recommend a definition of "Managing Agent" in the Act?—We want the managing agents so defined that we shall know whom we can prosecute in addition to the manager in the factory; in other words we want to know who is the occupier of the factory as well as the manager.

E-2669. Are not the names of the managing agents' firms very well known?—We cannot prosecute a firm of managing agents; we cannot prosecute, for instance, Bird & Co.; we have to name a partner or some one in the firm who is responsible for running the factory in respect of which one wishes to prosecute.

E-2670. *The Chairman*: Your point is that if the real authority within a factory resides in a person in a managing agent's office, he should take legal responsibility and not be able to put the responsibility on the manager?—Yes, that is the point.

E-2671. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have also stated that factory legislation in England is based on a spirit of compromise between the employers and employed?—Yes.

E-2672. In making your suggestions with regard to the amendment of the Factories Act have you taken into consideration that spirit of compromise which should prevail between employers and employees?—Yes, of course.

E-2673. Do you think that the effect of this further amendment will be salutary from the point of view of both employers and employees?—What I think is that if regulations are introduced on similar lines to those which are introduced at Home, Government will have the opinions of the industries concerned, regulations will be framed to suit industries or groups of industries and the persons concerned in those industries will be consulted in the framing of those regulations. These regulations would include all the main provisions of the Act and would abolish numerous exemptions which the Inspectors themselves have now to frame or advise Government upon.

E-2674. Have you considered the cumulative effect of all the amendments which you propose both on the efficiency of labour and the cost of production?—Yes.

E-2675. In Appendix H you point out that between 1920-21 and 1928 the number of children employed has decreased from 30,000 to 18,000. Do you think the effect of these recommendations having regard to cost of production would be such as to cause ultimately the elimination of child and woman labour from factories?—No.

E-2676. Why has this substantial reduction already taken place since the present Factories Act dealing with child labour was enacted?—Because mills have been trying to keep the children out of their factories in order to avoid prosecutions.

E-2677. In the past the husband, wife and grown-up children worked and their combined wages enabled the family to keep going, but if as the result of your recommendations women and children are no longer employed the whole burden of maintaining the family may be placed on the wages of the husband. If that is so, the workers will require higher wages and will be likely to strike if higher wages are not paid because the male adult worker will then have to earn sufficient to maintain his wife and children. Could the industry afford it? Have you considered the cumulative effect of all these measures on the industry and on labour?—Because children of employable age are being driven out of the factory it does not necessarily follow that the women will also be thrown out of employment.

E-2678. Will not the further factory legislation which you propose with regard to the employment of women have a similar effect to that produced by the Factories Act of 1922 in regard to the employment of children?—No.

E-2679. Do you propose that in any further legislation that may be undertaken consideration should be given to this aspect of the question?—Certainly.

E-2680. Are managers transferring their own guilt in breaking the Factories Act on to the shoulders of subordinates?—Yes, that is almost universal now; in practically all cases the manager transfers his guilt to a subordinate.

E-2681. And the law at present is powerless to bring home the guilt to the real party?—Yes, we have not succeeded in showing that the manager himself is responsible; in all cases we have taken up he has been able without much difficulty to transfer his guilt to a subordinate, which of course means a small fine.

E-2682: *Mr. Joshi*: In Calcutta where a number of people are seeking employment, partly owing to the mills changing from the multiple shift to the single shift system, would it not be to the convenience of the workers to have a public employment agency with an office in a central place communicating with employers, finding out which mills have vacancies and giving that information to workers seeking employment?—I do not think so, because if there are any vacancies anywhere in the industrial area the workers get to know about it without any employment agency. In addition to that, so long as these people are being employed by *sardars* there is no hope of their getting employment except through the *sardars*.

E-2683. But perhaps the *sardar* system exists because there is no public employment agency; if there were a public employment agency the worker would be able to approach the manager directly?—The corruption which obtains amongst the *sardars* would probably grow up in an employment agency.

E-2684. With reference to what you say as to maternity benefits, why should the ignorance of the workers cause them to be averse to taking wages at the time of confinement?—They are not averse to taking wages, but they are averse to going to a clinic.

E-2685. If the Maternity Act took the form of providing clinics and similar benefits in kind the people would be averse, but if the maternity benefit were given in cash the people would like it?—Yes; as soon as they realized the benefits they undoubtedly would.

E-2686. With regard to accidents you say that "in most cases the Indian workers themselves or their colleagues were largely responsible for the accidents or they were victims of circumstances which could not be foreseen". Do you make this statement as the result of enquiries which you yourself have made or have you taken this statement from the employers?—We make our own enquiries.

E-2687. Do you investigate every accident?—Not every accident, but all serious and fatal accidents. We do not investigate all the slight accidents. If there are any accidents, even if they are slight, when the Inspector visits the factory it is his duty to enquire into them. It is the duty of the Inspector to enquire into all accidents.

E-2688. Have you sufficient Inspectors to enquire into every accident that takes place?—Not immediately.

E-2689. Whenever an Inspector goes to inspect a factory he enquires into accidents?—Yes, and when the report of an accident comes in, the Inspector is in a position to judge at once as to whether it is necessary to enquire into it or not.

E-2690. What percentage of accidents are investigated by your Inspectors at some time or other?—Practically all the serious and fatal accidents are investigated.

E-2691. But the statement which I have quoted does not refer only to serious accidents?—A large number of accidents are small cuts and bruises; you would not expect an Inspector to be sent to a factory to enquire into things of that kind.

E-2692. Referring to Appendix K, when you give exemptions in respect of preparatory or complementary work, do you make it a point to lay down certain conditions which will compensate the worker?—Yes. The compensation varies in different processes. In all cases compensation is given to the worker; in every case conditions are arranged according to the class of work. We have no exemptions for preparatory or complementary work.

E-2693. You propose 55 hours' work per week; would not 54 hours be more convenient, giving 10 hours a day and 4 hours on Saturday, while in other cases there could be six days of nine hours?—It is merely a suggestion; I could agree to 54. The idea of suggesting ten hours for five days and five hours on Saturday was that the five hours for children would work in with the ten hours for women.

E-2694. *Miss Power*: With regard to prosecutions, do you think the smallness of the fine of which you complain has anything to do with the employer being able to pass the guilt on to a subordinate?—In many cases.

E-2695. If there were a clause in the Act which made it possible to prosecute both the subordinate who might be directly responsible and the manager as the person who must ultimately take the responsibility for his subordinate officer's actions, do you think you would be able to get higher fines?—Yes.

E-2696. You realise that is already done in certain industrial legislation in England?—Yes.

E-2697. Would you also suggest a minimum fine for a second offence as a way of getting over the difficulty of inadequate fines?—Yes.

E-2698. What sort of minimum would you suggest? You have to take into consideration both the large and small units; you could hardly distinguish between the two in that legislation?—It is difficult to say. Fines might be imposed in proportion to the numbers of persons employed; for instance, there might be a minimum fine for every 100 persons employed.

E-2699. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You would not do it on the basis of the character of the offence?—I do not think so.

E-2700. Would it be on the basis of the number employed, leaving out of consideration the character of the offence?—Both should be considered.

E-2701. *Mr. Clow*: If 200 persons are being employed illegally, it is possible to bring into court 200 cases?—It is possible.

E-2702. *Miss Power*: Do you not do that?—We have tried to bring a number of cases, but we have never succeeded. The Magistrates take so little interest in the working of the Act that they will impose an absurd fine. Although we have sent up as many as 30 or more names the fines imposed are often less than could be imposed for one case.

E-2703. But could you not do what we frequently do in England: lay informations in respect of a large number of workers, take one typical case and deal with that and then have the fines spread over the number of informations laid?—No.

E-2704. You never do that?—No.

E-2705. We visited a factory with you the other day in respect of which you informed us that there had been as many as eight prosecutions, but we found that the employer held and had continuously held for some years public contracts. Do you think it would be possible to have a clause in the Factories Act making it impossible for anybody who had been prosecuted more than, say, twice, to hold a public contract?—Yes. I do not attach much importance to that, but there is no objection to it.

E-2706. Is that very common?—No; that is the only case that has come to my notice.

E-2707. Your memorandum implies that you are not very sympathetic to the extension of the Act to unregulated places although both the Certifying Surgeon and the Director of Industries are very strongly in favour of it. Would you be in favour of it with regard to places employing twenty or more persons where no power machinery is installed?—Yes.

E-2708. Provided that you could exercise the same sympathetic administration that you have done in respect of new legislation in the past?—Yes.

E-2709. *Mr. Clow*: Would it ease your difficulties if in extending the Act to that kind of factory only certain sections of the Act and not the whole Act were applied?—Yes, that is what I mean by regulations.

E-2710. *Miss Power*: Can you let us know the number of infractions under the different clauses of the Act and the number of prosecutions instituted?—In one particular district the number of infractions detected last year was something over 8,000; they were practically all employment infractions.

E-2711. Who determines whether there shall be a prosecution; does that lie with the individual inspector or with you?—It is sanctioned by me.

E-2712. You determine whether there shall be a prosecution or not?—Yes; that is a departmental order; the inspector has full powers.

E-2713. *The Chairman*: I presume those were infractions discovered by your inspectors?—Yes.

E-2714. How many prosecutions followed from the detection of those 8,000 infractions?—34 cases. Each case may involve more than one person.

E-2715. The 8,000 infractions were with regard to individual persons?—Yes.

E-2716. Then the two things do not quite correspond?—No. One case cannot include more than three persons because you can only take up three persons in one case.

E-2717. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In that list of 8,000 were there many cases of more than three?—Yes; we sometimes send up 10 or 20 or 30 persons as one case. That is only dealt with as one case and the maximum fine for that is Rs. 500.

E-2718. To take an extreme case: if a factory employing 8,000 workers was working at 8 o'clock when it ought to have stopped at 7 o'clock that would be 8,000 infractions?—Yes, if the inspector had time to take down the 8,000 names on his particular visit. These 8,000 infractions are infractions which have been noted by the inspector and as to which he has collected sufficient evidence in his opinion to take the case to court.

E-2719. *Miss Power*: With regard to recruitment of inspectors, have you any difficulty in getting the type of inspector you want for this work?—We have had difficulty in the past.

E-2720. Do you anticipate any difficulty in the future if you have to increase the staff?—I do not think so.

E-2721. You imply in your memorandum that it is possible to have direct recruitment to the inspector's grade?—Yes.

E-2722. Does the possible block in the promotion of an assistant inspector affect the type of man you can get as assistant?—No; up-to-date assistant inspectors have not quite the same qualifications as are possessed by inspectors.

E-2723. Does that mean that a large number of assistant inspectors, if there were such, would be unable to become inspectors after a considerable length of service?—No, it does not mean that. One of our assistant inspectors who was appointed about four years ago has already been promoted to the grade of inspector.

E-2724. Is there any reason why you should appoint as assistant inspectors people with lower qualifications than are required in the grade to which they may justly look for their promotion?—It is the policy of Government to Indianize the staff and we take in Indians as assistant inspectors; they do not possess the qualifications that we require for the senior grade, but after they have been trained in the department, if they are considered suitable, they are open to promotion.

E-2725. Quite apart from the question of Indianizing the service, why do you appoint Indians with lower qualifications? Is it not possible to get Indian assistant inspectors who have the necessary qualifications?—No, we cannot get them with the necessary practical training.

E-2726. *Mr. Joshi*: What are the general qualifications for the position of inspector?—They must be trained engineers, having served the full apprenticeship as an engineer; they must possess some academic qualifications and have had subsequent experience in practical engineering.

E-2727. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you mean to say you cannot get an Indian with practical experience of engineering or with the necessary academic qualifications?—We have advertised twice within the last year or so and we have had none.

E-2728. *Mr. Joshi*: Do you state in your advertisement that you want men with engineering experience?—Yes; the qualifications are stated in detail.

E-2729. *Miss Power*: With regard to the people you appoint, who do not possess that engineering experience, are they blocked for the rest of their career and do they have to remain permanently assistant inspectors?—No; we have already promoted one man who came in as an assistant.

E-2730. Without the engineering qualification?—He had a certain amount of engineering training; he had had two years' apprenticeship.

E-2731. You say it is impossible for managers or inspectors to detect the double employment of children. At Ahmedabad we were told by the inspector that he had broken the back of the double employment problem in the cotton mills of Ahmedabad. One of the reasons which he gave was the additional assistance given to the inspector by the clause enabling him to prosecute the parent. What difference is there between the parent in Calcutta and the parent in Ahmedabad which makes it impossible for you to use that clause here?—In Bengal the parent never exists. He is either dead or you cannot find him. It is also difficult to prove connivance. We have never had a case.

E-2732. *The Chairman*: You have never tried a case?—We have tried to get evidence against parents or against the manager or any one whom we considered might be responsible.

E-2733. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Must the parent's connivance be proved?—Yes.

E-2734. *Miss Sorabji*: From what you have said in regard to maternity benefit, I gather you do not mean that the woman worker is averse to taking the money but that she has yet to be persuaded to make use of the provisions which would alone make the benefit effective?—That is quite right.

E-2735. That is the use of *dais* and of anti-natal and post-natal care?—Yes.

E-2736. What does a Factory Inspector ordinarily do under the Factories Act?—Assuming he knows nothing about the factory, the first thing he does is to satisfy himself as to the working hours; then he would look into sanitary matters, lighting, fencing of machinery, safety of buildings, maintenance of employment registers, records as to how the people had been employed in the past months or weeks, as to whether they had been working in excess of the hours permitted, if children are employed, as to whether they are granted certificates and as to whether they are working in accordance with the hours permitted.

E-2737. Do you consider that women inspectors would serve a useful purpose in factories?—I do not think so in India.

E-2738. Would you not agree that in factories you want a somewhat different woman officer from the usual Factory Inspector; that you want a woman officer to serve the interests of women and children particularly, not necessarily to look after the provisions with regard to safety and other matters?—Yes, I suggest that if any ladies are appointed they should be attached to the Public Health Department and their duties should be confined to welfare work.

E-2739. Would you suggest some one who could help to keep children out of the mills, to see to the working of the regulations in so far as they affect women and children, who would explain the necessity of safety precautions, help to check the register of all dependants under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and would generally help to make industrial legislation more effective in regard to women and children?—There is no possible hope of a woman inspector or a male inspector regulating labour in jute mills under the existing system. I would not advise any increase in expenditure under the present circumstances. I think it is a matter which should be taken up when the Act is amended, if it is amended.

E-2740. It was suggested that it was through the fault of the employers that the Apprentices Act had become a dead letter. I suppose under the Act as it stands there is nothing to prevent applications being made to any employers by guardians or orphan children, or in respect of children in charitable institutions, asking that the section of the Apprentices Act, which provides for employment, should be applied?—I do not know anything about the Apprentices Act.

E-2741. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Why do you propose that the multiple shift should be made illegal?—Because you cannot regulate the labour with an overlapping shift system.

E-2742. But we have been told by a very experienced manager that he can do so?—I do not believe he could ever do it.

E-2743. In Appendix M, you say that "the managing agents usurp the functions of the manager in many ways". What are the many ways?—The managing agents dictate the system under which the manager has to employ his labour.

E-2744. Do you not think it is sufficient to prosecute a manager and that the managing agents should not be dragged into it?—No.

E-2745. Then why not prosecute the whole of the staff?—I would prosecute the whole of the managing agents if I could, but I never get a chance to do so.

E-2746. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In view of the present housing conditions of the workers, do you not think the Factories Act should be so amended as to empower inspectors to enquire into the sanitary conditions to which the workers are subject outside the factories?—That is a matter which is in the hands of the municipalities. We should require powers to compel municipalities to carry out our recommendations; they will not do so at the present time.

E-2747. You are concerned with the health of the workers?—Yes.

E-2748. The health of the worker may be protected while he is in the factory, but for 14 hours a day he is outside the factory and is living under extremely insanitary conditions?—It would be very good if it could be worked in conjunction with the municipalities.

E-2749. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you mean that the Factory Inspector should have power to go into the worker's private house and tell him his house is not built in the proper way?—I suppose Mr. Ray Chaudhuri is referring to drainage and that sort of thing.

Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: Yes.

E-2750. *The Chairman*: Would you not then be overlapping the work of the Sanitary Inspector?—Yes.

E-2751. Is it not better for each man to stick to his last?—Certainly.

E-2752. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: The housing of the workers should be regarded as part of the industrial concern. You have suggested in your memorandum that people who arrive at the factory at 5-30 must leave their homes very early?—Yes.

E-2753. Do you know that in the south of Calcutta a large number of Bengalis live in their own cottages three or four miles from the factory and if they are to be at the factory at 5-30 they cannot possibly take any meal before they start?—Yes, I believe that is so.

E-2754. Having to walk three or five miles to the factory they have to get up at 3-30?—That is part of my complaint.

E-2755. Is that a reason for continuing the double shift system?—I do not see why that should be so.

E-2756. Under the double shift system some of them start at 9 o'clock?—I should change those hours. Why should they not start at 6 in the morning or 6-30 instead of 5-30, and why should they not stop at 6 or 6-30 in the evening?

E-2757. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do not some of these people prefer multiple shifts because it means a shorter week?—I very much doubt that; I think the managing agents prefer that.

E-2758. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Twenty-two per cent of the labour is local labour, many of whom have to walk 3 to 6 miles to the factory; do you not think it is to suit their convenience that the double shift system is maintained?—I am absolutely certain it is not.

E-2759. *Mr. Tassie*: You referred to the fact that you have difficulty in getting the labour to assist you in carrying out the provisions of the Act; do you not think that this difficulty and many of your other difficulties in carrying out the Act are due to the fact that most of the factory legislation in India is a slavish copy of western legislation and that Indian conditions have not been sufficiently seriously considered?—Yes. It is a question of regulations.

E-2760. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How many European and Indian inspectors have you in your department?—Five Europeon inspectors, one Indian inspector and three Indian assistant inspectors.

E-2761. What work do the inspectors and assistant inspectors do?—The inspector has full powers under the Act; the assistant inspector has full powers with the exception of one or two sections, particularly sections 18A and 19A.

E-2762. Apart from the fact that the inspector has full powers while the assistant inspector has not full powers, the work is the same?—Yes, except that the inspector is responsible.

E-2763. The only difference is the difference of responsibility?—Yes.

E-2764. Have you ever appointed an Indian direct to be inspector?—No.

E-2765. Have you appointed Europeans directly as inspectors?—Yes.

E-2766. Do any of those Europeans whom you appoint directly as inspectors pass an examination in any of the vernaculars?—Yes, all of them.

E-2767. Why do you not promote from amongst the assistant inspectors who are Indians?—We have done so and we do so.

E-2768. You have done so in one instance?—Yes.

E-2769. How many years has it taken you to promote one?—I think he was about two years in the department before he was appointed.

E-2770. That is the only case?—All the others are more junior; he was the first appointed. That is the only case.

E-2771. You say in your memorandum that the worker is completely employed in the business of keeping his job. May not that be one of the reasons why you are not able to get the worker to come and give evidence when you institute a prosecution?—That is the reason.

E-2772. Have you any objection to the hours of work per day being reduced to eight?—You do not want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg; you have got to go gradually.

E-2773. Do you seriously mean to imply that the goose that lays the golden egg would be killed if the hours per day were reduced from ten to eight?—Not in the jute mills.

E-2774. *The Chairman*: Do you think it will be possible to have one law for one industry and another law for another industry?—That is precisely the difficulty I have in mind. The fundamental conditions to be laid down in the Act would apply to all industries, but there might be separate regulations applying to separate industries.

E-2775. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: With regard to hours of work what is your experience of the cotton industry?—We have about 16 cotton mills in this province and we find no difficulty with regard to them; they all work the single shift.

E-2776. Would it not increase the efficiency of the worker if you laid down a daily limit of eight hours for the cotton mills?—I do not know.

E-2777. If a worker has to walk two or three miles from his *busti* to the factory and then work ten hours in the factory it gives him no time for home life or recreation?—Yes.

E-2778. Would it not be better to give him some time for recreation and home life, thereby possibly increasing his efficiency both as a citizen and as a worker?—It may be desirable, but you have to take the industry into account and consider whether the industry can stand it or not. These workers of whom Mr. Chaudhuri spoke who have to come from long distances are the workers in a few mills in a particular area.

E-2779. Apart from the question of whether the industry can afford to pay, from your point of view as Chief Inspector of Factories, would it not be better for the worker to have leisure and home life?—Of course.

E-2780. Would it not be better if his hours of work could be reduced to eight hours?—Of course.

E-2781. *The Chairman*: I suppose you would qualify that by a proviso that it did not throw the industry out of business?—Yes. I was asked by Mr. Chaman Lall to leave aside the question of industry altogether.

E-2782. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: On the question of fines you say: "The system, as at present carried on, falls naturally within the chief provisions of the English and other Truck Acts and the recommendations of the English Truck Committee of 1906-08, in that fines are rarely imposed on children" (you are referring not only to children but to all the labourers,

I take it?—Yes) "and that fines do not exceed 5 per cent of the employees' wages and that in some cases fines are credited to a fund for the sole benefit of the workers. Further, the fear of strike or loss of labour where only skilled labour is acceptable, is a sufficient deterrent to abuses." Have you any objection to this system being legalized; that is to say, restricting the fines to a certain percentage of the wages?—There is no object in doing it. It is not abused and is not likely to be abused.

E-2783. The difficulty is this: Sometimes you hitch yourself on to industries throughout India in your replies and sometimes you restrict yourself to the jute industry. You say that the jute industry here is working on that basis and therefore legislation is not necessary. But there are other industries. If the jute industry is working on that basis, what objection have you to its legalization?—I have not confined my remarks entirely to the jute industry.

E-2784. I suppose there were instances, or instances might arise, in which particular jute mills did not work up to these specifications. Would it not be desirable to have legislation?—The workers themselves would prevent any abuse of the fining system.

E-2785. Suppose the workers are not powerful enough to prevent it?—My experience tells me that they are.

E-2786. They are obviously not powerful enough to get their wages increased?—I think they have had them increased.

E-2787. Once in how many years?—I think there has been an increase of 20 to 30 per cent since the war. In lots of industries it goes up nearly as high as 60 per cent.

E-2788. What is the average?—I cannot tell you.

E-2789. Will it be 20 to 30 per cent?—At least 20 to 30 per cent.

E-2790. That is the position since the war?—Yes.

E-2791. It does not show that the workers are powerful enough because where an industry is in a position to quadruple their wages they have not been able to get that done. What I am driving at is this: Granted all the factors that you suggest, would it not be desirable, if you agree that it is a good thing, to have legislation? After all you are depending upon the good-will of the employer and upon the fear of a strike. The conditions to-day have changed. In former times there was definitely a shortage of labour, but there is no shortage of labour now. Therefore the bargaining power of the workers has minimized. Instead of depending upon the good-will of the employer, would you not, if you think it is a desirable thing, agree that it would be better to have legislation?—If the evils become rampant then legislation will of course be necessary, but my experience is that there is no necessity for legislation in that direction.

E-2792. *Mr. Cliff*: You are proposing that the present Factories Act should be extended to wharves, jetties, docks, railway sidings, warehouses, quays, and buildings under construction?—Yes, by regulations.

E-2793. By regulations under the Act to be made by the Provincial Government?—No, by the Governor-General in Council.

E-2794. With regard to the extension of the Act to other factories, I take it that one of the reasons you urge in your memorandum against the extension is that you fear that the firms will go into liquidation?—If you apply the Act according to the letter of the law, a very big majority would have to go into liquidation.

E-2795. But you would not assure to the workers in those cases the same security that you want to assure to the employer?—I do not think that there is the slightest hope at present.

E-2796. Is it your view that it is not possible to extend the Factories Act to any small factories other than those I have just read out?—It is possible to extend the Act, but it will not do any good by extending it. Not only that; there is the question of workmen's compensation for these places.

E-2797. Because of the financial inability of the people to run these factories you say you should not extend the workmen's compensation?—The workmen's compensation would be extended automatically.

E-2798. But you are objecting to it?—I am not objecting to it. My point was that it is possible that these people may have to go into liquidation for paying compensation to the workers.

E-2799. I want to ask a question arising out of your experience. Have you got any suggestion that you can put to the Commission regarding making known to the work-people their rights under the Acts which have already been passed?—The abstracts are posted in the factories. I believe they are more or less useless from that point of view.

E-2800. Have you any suggestion to make whereby the rights could be got over to the work-people themselves?—Education.

E-2801. Have factory Inspectors, in your knowledge, ever sought to make known to the work-people themselves by any method other than those abstracts?—Workers are frequently questioned by Inspectors as to the hours they work and matters of that kind. Of course, the Inspector does not go out of his way in going into the factory and start lecturing to the persons employed there. I do not think they would listen to him even if he did it.

E-2802. Is it within your knowledge that the managers have ever taken steps in that direction?—No.

E-2803. In your memorandum you say: "Where workers live at a distance from the mill, no matter what the shift system, the extreme hours of departure for work and return encroach on the home life and deprive the families concerned of time for leisure, common association and improvement." Is that one of the reasons why you propose a limitation of 55 hours?—Yes. I hope that is one of the reasons which would enforce these mills to go on to a single shift; and the single shift necessitates a long break in the middle of the day for all workers.

E-2804. Is one of the other reasons the fact that a great number of industries are at the moment not working more than 55 hours a week?—That is so.

E-2805. You propose, along with the reduction of hours, that the control of shifts should be left to the making of rules and the decision of the Factory Inspector; is that right?—Yes.

E-2806. Talking of shifts you say definitely that it is impossible to operate the Factories Act in respect of multiple shifts?—We propose that the local Government at least should have the power to regulate the shifts.

E-2807. Have you got any suggestions to put before the Commission as to how the regulation of shifts should be made and how they should be controlled?—If I have anything to do with the recommendations I should certainly ask Government to accept no shift which overlaps.

E-2808. If there should be no case of overlapping that would mean that the split system should be abolished?—That is right.

E-2809. But you might make such a regulation that a shift might commence at 6 a.m. and be booked off at 10 a.m. and then a new crew to come along and work till 2 when the 10 o'clock people would come again and work till 6 and so on?—I would not favour that.

E-2810. You would have a system of split shift?—No.

E-2811. Your objection to the multiple shift is then that it is mainly a question of enforcement of the Factories Act?—My complaint is mainly based on the question of the enforcement of the Act.

E-2812. What about the convenience of the work-people if your suggested remedy allows such a condition of affairs as I have outlined?—The existing system has not, in my opinion, been arranged to suit the convenience of the worker.

E-2813. The difficulty I see about your suggestion is that the mills may start at 5-30 and go on till 7 as at present, and it is possible to arrange a very arduous system of split shifts and yet have no overlapping?—I think economically it would not be possible.

E-2814. Suppose for a moment you take a 16-hour day?—But women and children cannot work between 16-hours owing to the restriction of the morning and evening limits.

E-2815. You suggested earlier that there should be no register with regard to adult male labour?—There should be a register, but it must be a register of workers and not an attendance register.

E-2816. I agree. It means posting of a notice with regard to the shifts to be worked?—Yes; that is quite right.

E-2817. If you take a 16-hour day, as far as male labour is concerned, you can have split shifts which pay no regard to the convenience of the work-people and yet would be within the solution that you put forward?—Yes. We ask for control of shifts, and no system would be accepted unless we were in a position to regulate the hours of labour as laid down under the Act.

E-2818. That means that you are proposing to regulate the maximum mill time?—Not necessarily.

E-2819. Then are you putting up to the Commission that not only should you control the hours but that you should actually control the periods of work in a split shift?—No; the period of work is controlled by the number of hours a person is allowed to work without being given a rest.

E-2820. It does that, but as far as I can see it still leaves out the question of comfort of the work-people. You should suggest that Government by rules and regulations shall actually limit and determine the number of hours that may be worked in any period in the split shift, or else you have got to leave it free. How do you propose to cover that?—I do not quite follow.

E-2821. The difficulty I have with the millowners' association is that they are speaking of the comfort of the work-people and they put in all kinds of meal time, and I have a diffieulty to reconcile the fact as stated with their provision. They start at 5-30 and work till 8-30, that is, three-hours' work. There is no reason, under your scheme, why a worker should not be booked off at 9-30 for an hour and then brought in at 10-30 and then booked off again at 2-30?—The reason is that it would be uneconomical to bring in a fresh squad of workers to the factory to work for that one hour in the morning that you are allowing the other squad of workers to go out.

(*Mr. Cliff*) I am afraid that argument applies to the multiple shift as it stands at the moment.

E-2822. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The multiple shift is uneconomical?—Certainly it is.

E-2823. *Mr. Cliff*: We have got at the moment a recorded vote as to whether the multiple shift system should be declared illegal, and as many as 45 per cent of the members of the millowners' association have decided by vote that they are in favour of its being made illegal. But with regard to the solution that you are putting in front of us, I could see no suggested control to prevent those men being brought in at the finishing hour even for one-hour's work?—We ask for control of shifts. We assume that no one will put up for sanction a system of shift which is not economical; and if a system of shift is arranged which is economical, then it would be more likely to be satisfactory provided it was not overlapping.

E-2824. The millowners' association at the moment, or at least several mills, are pursuing that uneconomic proposition. It seems to be that you are proceeding on the assumption that there would be straight shifts with the exception of a break for meals; is that so?—That is right.

E-2825. *Mr. Ahmed*: You will admit, I take it, that you will be able to discharge your duties better if you are in touch with the trade unions?—No. I should be able to discharge my duties better if I kept myself aloof from the trade unions. Because, so far as I stand, they only give me a lot of trouble and worry, sending in malicious complaints which we have to enquire into, regarding working hours and non-payment of wages, and all matters of that kind.

E-2826. The question of working hours forms part of your duty, is it not?—Yes, but we can carry out our duty without getting complaints from trade unions.

E-2827. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I thought you said that you wanted co-operation of the workers?—Yes. We would welcome if the complaints were genuine and if the workers would assist us in carrying out our duties.

E-2828. *The Chairman*: Your complaint is that they are not sufficiently sifted and tested before they reach you?—Yes.

E-2829. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They are not justified?—No.

E-2830. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: It would be an advantage if they were genuine?—Yes.

E-2831. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Did you have any malicious complaints from the Kankinarah Union ?—No. There was one gentleman of Kankinarah Labour Union that made a complaint, and it was the only one from the Labour Union on which we got a prosecution.

E-2832. *Mr. Ahmed*: When there was the last strike did you not have any talk with the workers?—I did not go there.

E-2833. Where were you then?—In Calcutta.

E-2834. As Factory Inspector you have to enquire into the complaints made by the workers, is it not?—It all depends upon what the complaint is. So far as I know, the complaint in this particular case to which you have made a reference related to the question of wages and had nothing to do with the hours of employment.

E-2835. May I know whether you helped Government with a view to making a settlement of the strike which had something to do with the hours of work?—Personally I did nothing.

E-2836. Government did not ask you to offer your help, is it?—They did not ask for my assistance at all.

E-2837. Did you submit a report to Government with regard to the strike?—You would have noticed that my annual reports have something to say about strikes.

E-2838. I am not referring to your annual reports. When the house is burnt down it serves no useful purpose to report after one year of the occurrence how it was burnt down. I want to know whether you make a report to Government at the time when the fire rises?—The fire in most cases does not concern us.

E-2839. So you did nothing in this case?—Nothing.

(The Chairman): The duty of the Factory Inspector is only to administer the factory law.

E-2840. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have already said that you know the union people?—Some of them.

E-2841. Did they tell you anything?—I did not see them. They are in Kankinarah, I am in Calcutta.

E-2842. Did none of your five assistants go to the strike area?—I think one of them went to the place; I am not quite sure.

E-2843. Did you not read in the newspapers that there was a strike?—I do know that there was a strike.

E-2844. But you did not take any action in the matter?—No.

E-2845. *The Chairman*: You kept to your own duties?—Yes.

E-2846. *Mr. Ahmed*: You know that there is a strike going on at present in a Champdani mill?—Yes.

E-2847. What have you done as far as that strike is concerned?—Nothing.

E-2848. I suppose your assistants also have done nothing?—The Inspector in the district tells me that he has enquired into the causes of that strike.

E-2849. What are the causes, will you tell us?—The strike is alleged is be due to a difference in the rates of wages paid in that mill and the Wellington Mill under the same managing agents.

E-2850. Can you say what wages they get and what they are claiming for?—I do not know.

E-2851. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you tell us what is the general condition of the workers, especially with regard to their indebtedness?—I cannot tell you.

E-2852. Is it not a fact that the housing condition of the workers is very bad?—Are you speaking of the housing provided by the mills, or the houses in the *bustis* outside the mill area?

E-2853. I want your opinion on both?—The mill accommodation as a rule is good; and outside it is unsatisfactory in most cases.

E-2854. Did you report to Government about the unsatisfactory condition of these houses?—No; it is not part of my duty to look into the housing conditions outside the mill premises.

E-2855. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it your duty to look into the housing conditions inside the mill area?—No; but we do it.

E-2856. *Mr. Ahmed*: When you go to the mills, do you enquire from the workers whether they received any injury, and if so whether they got sufficient compensation?—If the matter is brought to our notice we enquire into it.

E-2857. I understand that a letter was written to you in September last that about twenty men were suffering from lead poisoning. May I know whether you received that letter?—I think so; it might probably be on the file in my office.

E-2858. I am told that twenty persons were suffering from lead poisoning and some of them died?—I think I received a complaint that 60 per cent of the workers in the press to which you are referring were suffering from lead poisoning.

E-2859. Will you please tell the Commission whether you made any enquiries in the matter, and if so with what result?—I asked the Certifying Surgeon, who is a doctor, to visit the factory and to advise me as to whether there were persons suffering from lead poisoning or not. He informed me that there was no lead poisoning except in one case which was a little bit doubtful.

E-2860. Have you got a copy of the report of the Certifying Surgeon?—I have not got it here.

E-2861. Will you kindly send it to the Commission later on as also copies of correspondence that passed between you and others on the subject?—Yes.

E-2862. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say in your memorandum that the only way in which the jute mill employees can be controlled is by controlling the working hours of the mill. What do you actually mean by that?—If the mill works for 11 hours, the worker cannot work beyond that; in other words, the working hours of the mill regulate the working hours of the worker.

E-2863. Supposing we eliminate all the women and children from the mills and we are only using adult male labour, and supposing the mills decide to work two shifts of 8-hours, would you object to that?—No. But you have got to give them rest periods.

E-2864. Naturally. Therefore you are not in earnest when you say that the only way of controlling the workers is by controlling the working hours of the mill?—I am in earnest about that. It is a special case when you are talking of adult labour going into straight shifts of that kind; that is a case in which you have more or less control.

E-2865. You do not suggest, at any rate so far as male labour is concerned, that there should be any limit put on the working hours of the mill provided that the shifts meet with your approval?—That is so.

E-2866. If it were possible to work, for instance, three 8-hour shifts, there is no reason why the mill should not run for 24 hours?—There is no objection to that.

E-2867. As an example, let us take the Angus Mill. It has 1,200 looms; under the single-shift system it requires 6,000 workers. Suppose we are going to work two shifts of 8-hours each, we would require 12,000 workers, or let us say we would require from 11,000 to 12,000. How would you propose to regulate the hours within which the individual men should be employed; that is to say, how would you make sure that somebody was not working both on the day shift and on the night shift?—It is very easy to check it.

E-2868. I am not asking whether it is easy to check it or not. I want to know how you would propose to deal with the double shift system. Suppose Tom works by day and Harry works by night, how would you make sure that Tom is not also working by night and Harry is not also working by day?—I could not tell you definitely, but I do not think that is a sort of thing that is likely to arise.

E-2869. I think it is a very likely thing to happen. Where the tendency is to eliminate women and children, the likelihood is that we will be reduced to male labour. I am only putting it to you how you would regulate the employment of a day shift and a night shift; I want to know how you would prevent a man working both in the day shift and in the night shift?—The mills themselves could prevent that because they would be in a position to know their labour which they are not under the present circumstances.

E-2870. You think that the manager would really know all the 12,000 workers by name?—I think the manager and his assistants know, under the present single-shift system, a considerable number of them.

E-2871. We are not speaking of the single shift?—It is practically a single shift.

E-2872. Will you tell us whether you think that an employment register is necessary?—Yes an employment register, but not an attendance register.

E-2873. I cannot follow the distinction myself?—An employment register is a register showing the names of all persons employed in a factory and the normal hours during which they work each day. That is all ; nothing else. An attendance register is the same thing with attendance marked for every time that the worker comes and goes out of the mill.

E-2874. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Supposing the management indirectly encourage a worker to work double shifts, how could a Factory Inspector detect it?—Only by checking the name in the register.

E-2875. *The Chairman*: You propose to abolish the double shift?—Yes.

E-2876. And therefore you would be lessening your own check?—Yes. We think that under the existing circumstances the managers or their assistants do not know their labour, and however willing they are to regulate their labour according to the Factories Act they are unable to do it.

E-2877. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What I would like you to answer, if you would, is this: Assuming we have two eight-hour shifts, which is not an unlikely assumption, I want to know what you would do, from your experience of factory inspectorship, to ensure that a day shift man would not be working on the night shift either in the same mill or in another mill?—It would be possible.

E-2878. Would it necessitate an employment register or an attendance register?—An employment register.

E-2879. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would you not need an attendance register as well?—We propose that the attendance register should take the shape of overtime register and should only record the work done outside the normal hours at the factory. Our point is that at the moment these registers are all faulty.

E-2880. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I want to know whether you have an adequate factory inspection staff to make sure that the people employed in the morning shifts are not working in the night shifts?—Our staff is already adequate for that purpose ; at least I think so.

E-2881. Do you not think that it will be necessary to have employment registers?—Yes.

E-2882. If your staff is adequate, how is it that you had only 23 prosecutions for these seven years for failing to maintain proper employment registers?—I cannot get convictions.

E-2883. You tried and you gave it in despair?—Yes. I started again at the beginning of this year just for the benefit of the Royal Commission ; otherwise I should have been more or less quiet in regard to that.

E-2884. Coming to the question of multiple shift system with which you deal in your memorandum, we find that the spread-over for time-workers in A and C shifts is ten hours. Do you know what is the actual spread-over under the Factory Act at Home?—I do not know.

E-2885. Do you know when they start and when they stop work at Home? —I do not know.

E-2886. You can take it from me that in Forfarshire they come to work in the morning at 6 and go at 5 in the evening ; that is to say, there is a spread-over of 11 hours, which is longer than the spread-over of the workers in A and C shifts here?—Yes.

E-2887. Coming to the question of variations between different places you find that at Home some people prefer to work with two breaks in the day and some prefer only one break. I am sure you will concede the same thing to the workers here as well?—I do not suppose you suggest that the habits and conditions of the people here are the same as those of the people at Home.

E-2888. That is why we have been working a different system here?—The reason why you work this system is because you want to get the maximum out of the machinery and plant in a mill. I have never believed that this system is so arranged in order to suit the requirements of the worker.

E-2889. Is it not advisable to get the maximum output out of the machinery as long as you conform to the Factories Act? The hours are no longer than those prescribed under the Act?—That is only on paper. It is all theoretical, nothing in practice.

E-2890. You suggest that the mills should start at 6 o'clock in the morning and close at 6-30 in the evening?—That is a mere suggestion of mine.

E-2891. A mere suggestion from the Chief Inspector of Factories is entitled to great weight?—I think it is quite a good one.

E-2892. Do you suggest that half an hour later in the morning and half an hour earlier in the evening makes difference between heaven and hell so far as these workers are concerned?—Not only that, they will be working on single shift. The spread-over will be only 12½ hours with an interval of 2½ hours for rest in the middle of the day.

E-2893. You suggest that the managing agents and the managers ought to be prosecuted jointly or separately for any breach of the regulations. I entirely agree with you in that suggestion. But would you not agree that the manager, the *baboo*, the *sardar* and other people who are responsible for the working of the mill on the spot should also be prosecuted?—It is for the Factory Inspector to decide who is responsible. If he decides that the time *baboo* or the *sardar* is responsible he will prosecute them.

E-2894. We have had a lot of evidence to the effect that the *baboos* and the *sardars* are always in the habit of doing things in a way which the managers disapprove. We are told these things in connexion with allegations of bribery.

E-2895. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Who pays the fines imposed on the sardars?—The managing agents.

E-2896. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any proof of that? Or is it merely your opinion?—It is my opinion.

E-2897. Do you not think it a reasonable proposition that any illegal employment of the workers by the *baboos* and the *sardars* should be brought home to them by prosecution?—Certainly.

E-2898. Do you not think that they ought to be prosecuted just as much as the managers and the managing agents?—Certainly.

E-2899. Your suggestion is that the manager, the *baboo* and the *sardar* should all be held responsible?—No, the Inspector decides as to who is responsible.

E-2900. Then what do you have the magistrate for?—He decides whether he is guilty or not.

E-2901. But you have already decided who is guilty?—If we decided who was guilty or not and the magistrate imposed fines according to our decision we would not have had any worry with the administration of the Factories Act.

E-2902. By your decision as to who is responsible do you not indicate to the magistrate in what direction he should proceed?—If the magistrate finds that the man we prosecute is not guilty he is not fined.

E-2903. Would you not be in favour of all the three being prosecuted and fined jointly or separately as the case may be?—No.

E-2904. *The Chairman*: Is it your point that the managing agent if he is the person who issues the orders in the mill, as well as the manager and the *sardar* should be prosecuted jointly?—No, my point is that the managing agent and the manager should be held jointly responsible. The managing agent should not be allowed to transfer his guilt to the manager because the managing agent is responsible in the main for the system under which the mill works. It should be left to the Inspector to decide as to who is responsible and whether the managing agent is responsible or not. If the manager was illegally employing labour although the mill was working under a correct system then the Inspector would not proceed against the managing agent; he would proceed against the manager.

E-2905. *Sir Alexander Murray*: On the question of double employment of children I notice that both the managing agents and the Factory Inspector agree for once that there is double employment of children, but they say that it is a fact which cannot be proved. Why do you say it is a fact when you cannot prove it?—Circumstantial evidence will convince you of it.

E-2906. Since 1921 you have reduced the number of boys and girls employed in mills from 30,000 to 19,000. Are there not sufficient number of boys and girls running about unemployed without anything good to do?—I do not myself consider that it is a good thing to drive children out of factories. I would rather see all of them employed. But we have to resort to prosecutions in order to convince Government and possibly the Royal Commission that the Factories Act is not workable in these mills.

E-2907. Mr. Chaman Lall asked you about the increase in wages since the war. I have just referred to a statement by the mills which says that the increase since the war ended—there was an increase before the end of the war—was 50 per cent?—That is probably correct.

E-2908. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I understand that the difference of personnel between a multiple shift mill and the same mill working single shift is something like 22 or 25 per cent?—Theoretically, yes.

E-2909. According to the register?—According to the register.

E-2910. But it is said that owing to a number of names being put down in a register of multiple shift who are not actual workers, when you turn over from the multiple shift to the single shift the percentage of personnel thrown out of employment is much less; and we were told by a witness yesterday that it was under 10 per cent?—Yes.

E-2911. On the other hand a witness speaking for the multiple shift said it was not so?—I know that it is a considerably less than 10 per cent. That is the information I have got. I have no figures to prove it. I cannot tell you exactly how much. All I can tell you is this. In 1926 seven mills in the Bhatpara area changed over from the multiple to the single shift. But within a few weeks there was shortage of labour in the same area.

E-2912. *Mr. Clow*: At what time of the year was it?—In April. If 22 per cent of the labourers had been thrown out of seven mills there should not have been a shortage.

E-2913. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Did not many workers go home when they were thrown out of employment?—Yes, but this was not the only district that changed over.

E-2914. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did that shortage last after the monsoon was over?—No.

E-2915. Was there a big surplus?—I do not remember. Probably there was. I could not tell you. Although these seven mills changed over to the single shift the multiple shift mills working in that area said that they got hardly any labour from the other mills which had gone over to the single shift in spite of the fact that they were in need of labour. In other words if these people actually existed they must have disappeared without going to other mills to work.

E-2916. On the question of attendance registers and employment registers, surely you do not expect a Factory Inspector to know everybody by sight?—No.

E-2917. Even if you had two eight-hour shifts you could not expect a Factory Inspector merely by getting a list with Tom on one side and Dick on the other side to go into the factory suddenly and say, "You are Tom who was in the previous shift. How did you come to work in this shift also?" Surely the Inspector would have to rely on the management?—Yes.

E-2918. The point probably in your double single shift is that the management will be in a better position to check the attendance and clear the mill between the shifts and make the men take tokens with different numbers and so on?—Yes.

E-2919. And also make it difficult for men with borrowed tokens to come in?—Yes. That is the point.

E-2920. Even then some might slip in?—Quite.

E-2921. Could a manager know his 3,000 workmen by name?—No, that is not possible.

E-2922. We were told the other day that a manager knew them by name not only by sight?—No, that is not possible.

E-2923. The reason why you prefer a single shift is that the managers in the mills will be in a better position to check the attendance?—There is no checking of attendance in the case of single shift mills.

E-2924. In the cotton mills they check the attendance register in order to pay wages?—That is quite a separate thing. That is the wage sheet. If the mills wanted to keep a register for the payment of wages that has nothing to do with the Factory Inspector.

E-2925. By checking for payment of wages we can know whether the man has worked once or twice in a day?—Quite.

E-2926. Would not the danger then be that a man who has worked the day shift in one mill might go to the night shift in another mill?—Yes.

E-2927. Could he not work in mill A under one name and mill B, under another name? How could you make sure that it did not happen?—I do not think it would happen.

The Chairman: Mr. Adams proposes that the daily limit for men could be swept away. A man can work 16 or 20 hours even if he chooses?—The witness (*Mr. Adams*): But not the weekly limit.

E-2928. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Even that it is very difficult to know. Your point is probably that the employer would not have a man for working a night shift if he knew he had already worked a day shift?—Quite.

E-2929. That would probably act as a check?—Yes.

E-2930. *The Chairman*: You suggest that the maximum limit of hours for women should be reduced from 11 to 10?—Yes.

E-2931. And the maximum for half-timer children should be reduced from 6 to 5?—Yes.

E-2932. You suggest also that the working of the mill should be limited to between 6 o'clock in the morning and 6-30 in the evening with an interval of 2½ hours in the middle of the day?—That is so far as woman and child labour is concerned.

E-2933. I have already observed that you propose to have no restriction on the hours that a man may work during the day?—Yes.

E-2934. In your view is that long rest of 2½ hours really to the advantage of the workers? Would it not be to their advantage to shorten that two hours and finish at 6 o'clock?—No. The general opinion is that the workers like a long period in the middle of the day, because they have to prepare their food and take their food.

E-2935. You think that they prefer that to finishing their work earlier in the evening?—Yes.

E-2936. In addition to your bold suggestion, if I may say so, of entirely abolishing the usual limit of hours for the men in the day you say that the greater part of the Factories Act should be left to regulations by the local Government?—By the Governor-General in Council.

E-2937. Based mainly on the advice of the Chief Inspector of Factories?—Not at all. Each industry would be dealt with by a representative committee appointed by the Government of India to frame regulations embodying the main provisions of the Act to suit the industry or group of industries.

E-2938. Do you not think that the amount of lobbying that would arise in a system of that kind would be serious?—As matters stand at present we draw up a list of exemptions for certain classes of labour in the factories and ask the local Government to accept them. The Government accepts them and when we put them into force we get continuous complaints that those exemptions are not workable. If on the other hand the industry itself had consented to those exemptions there would be no difficulty afterwards. There would be no room for complaint.

E-2939. Do you think that labour at present is sufficiently strong in India to take its proper share in these consultations?—No.

E-2940. Then it would come to this: It would be in the main the employers' interests and commercial interests along with Government who would decide the matter?—That is right.

E-2941. Labour would not be a third party as it might be in other countries?—Quite.

E-2942. Is it not a serious difficulty?—I believe I have a good enough opinion of the factory owners to think that they would carefully guard the interests of labour. In any case even if that is not the case you have got the Factory Inspectors and Government to do that.

E-2943. Then you might have different set of regulations and rules affecting the jute industry as distinct from cotton for instance?—Probably as distinct from other industries cotton and jute will be grouped in one category of textile industry.

E-2944. Probably, but not if you were consulting people industry by industry?—I think they would be because the conditions in both the industries are more or less the same. Probably you will find it very difficult to get over the jute people.

E-2945. *Miss Power*: Do the regulations under the Factories Act apply to the question of dust in tea garden factories?—(*Mr. Glover*): No, they do not.

E-2946. In what way do you suggest that the Act should be amended?—At present we are quite aware that conditions in factories on tea plantations are not satisfactory as far as dust regulations are concerned. We are more or less co-operating with the tea garden agents in producing suitable mechanical means for the elimination of dust.

E-2947. You have adequate authority to get them installed?—Yes, the Act covers that. On this question we have not had sufficient experience and it is my intention to study the problem in home factories.

E-2948. Is there any difficulty in maintaining an employment register in tea factories?—There is considerable amount of difficulty because the form of the register is not suitable owing to the peculiar nature of the tea industry which requires people to go in and come out at frequent intervals during the day.

E-2949. Have you any suggestion to get over the difficulty?—I have no suggestion for any feasible form of register which can be maintained in a tea factory.

E-2950. Do you think it necessary to have such a register?—I do not think it is necessary. We can safely say that the average number of hours worked in a tea factory never exceeds 30 a week. At the peak output it will probably necessitate exceeding 60, but that is only for one or two weeks in the year.

E-2951. Mr. Adams, in Appendix M to your memorandum you say: "The framing of these separate regulations should be the work of bodies representative of the various industries throughout India." I take it you advocate a system where the Factories Act would cover merely the general or more simple regulations and where you would have what are called in Great Britain "Statutory rules and orders" covering the peculiar conditions affecting individual industries?—(*Mr. Adams*): Exactly.

E-2952. *Mr. Clow*: In Appendix M to your memorandum dealing with section 21 (1) (a) (ii) of the Factories Act you say: "As the section stands, however, it appears that both half-hour rests must be given before the seventh-hour of work commences." That is a point you will remember that was raised about 1923 and the section as it now stands was introduced to meet that point. To me it is not clear how the revised section you suggest differs in any essential from the one that exists at present?—We intended to make it clear but there is still the same difficulty in its application. We have referred the question to Bombay also. We are continually getting difficulties in the administration of that section.

E-2953. The section, as it stands, runs thus: "At the request of the employees concerned, periods of rest at intervals not exceeding five hours, of not less than half an hour each, the total duration of the periods of rest each day not being less than one hour for each period of six hours. . . " How does your amendment improve the position?—Suppose a factory worked nine hours a day, how would you arrange the two half-hour rests.

E-2954. It is perfectly open to them to arrange in any way they like provided there was no more than five hours continuous work?—But Government ruled that it should be before the seventh hour of work commences.

E-2955. Was that ruling given subsequent to the amendment?—Yes.

E-2956. But it was because of that opinion given by the lawyers that this amendment was introduced?—This is the ruling of the local Government.

E-2957. In Appendix M to your memorandum you make certain remarks about the register of workers and say that the Factories department put forward certain essentials, that "this, however, was not accepted and in consequence a type of register satisfying the views of employers but futile and inadequate for ensuring establishment of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act was adopted." Who did not accept that?—The Indian Jute Mills Association did not accept that.

E-2958. It was not the local Government that refused to accept it?—No.

E-2959. Do you agree that it is desirable as far as possible to encourage the employment of women in jute mills?—I think so.

E-2960. Especially from the point of view of sex disparity in the mill population?—No, I am thinking more from the point of view of the need of employment for these women.

E-2961. If you made more stringent regulations in regard to the employment of women than that of men would it not tend to discourage the employment of women?—Certainly. But I do not want to discourage the employment of women. What I want is to employ them under proper conditions.

E-2962. Would not retaining a daily limit for women and abolishing it for men tend to discourage the employment of women?—No, I do not think so.

E-2963. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In reply to the Chairman you said that labour was not sufficiently strong and organized to take its part as a third party in framing industrial regulations. Are you aware that labour representatives played their parts in the drafting of the Workmen's Compensasation Act, the Trade Unions Act, and the Trade Disputes Act and that many of the suggestions made by labour representatives have made those Acts what they are?—But the representatives are not labourers themselves.

E-2964. But they were representatives whom Government thought worth consulting in connection with all legislative measures concerning labour?—That may be so.

E-2965. *Mr. Joshi*: In reply to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that labour legislation in India was in advance of the time. Do you know that the important part of factory legislation fixing an 11-hour day and a 60-hour week was the outcome of the hard struggle of the workers in Bombay who had to go on strike to secure their elementary rights?—I do not think that the conditions in Bombay are the same as the conditions in Bengal.

E-2966. My point is that it was not something given to the workers without their asking for it ; that it was the outcome of their hard struggle at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Cawnpore?—Had not wages a lot to do with those strikes.

E-2967. The strike was partly for wages and partly for hours. The hours were reduced in Bombay. The Bombay millowners agitated that the hours everywhere else should be the same and legislation came. But legislation was never ahead of the time as you have just suggested?—What about Bengal?—Did Bengal struggle for it?

E-2968. The Bombay millowners agitated and the Government yielded to their agitation and fixed the hours on a uniform scale all round. You will agree with me that this legislation was not in advance of the time?—As far as Bengal is concerned it would be.

E-2969. At any rate Government yielded only after the agitation of the millowners, but not before.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

1. **Dr. CHAS. A. BENTLEY, C.I.E., M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. & H., Director of Public Health.**
2. **Mr. F. C. GRIFFIN, M.I.C.E., M.I.E. (Ind.), Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, Bengal.**
3. **Dr. M. E. SUFI, B.A., L.R.C.P. & S., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Vaccination and Vital Statistics.**
4. **Dr. G. L. BATRA, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health for Industrial Hygiene.**

Dr. B. C. MUKHARJI, M.B., D.P.H., Inspector of Septic Tank Installations.

6. **Dr. A. C. RAY CHAUDHURY, D.P.H., Diet Survey Officer.**

E-2970. *Colonel Russell*: Referring to the question of housing, do you maintain any standard plans in your office by which you might be able to give advice to millowners or industrial employers for building houses for their employees?—I have no actual standard plans, but I have been favoured by some of the railway companies and many of the jute mills and others with actual copies of the plans of the houses that they have erected.

E-2971. They did not consult the Public Health Department as to the suitability, and so on, of what they proposed to erect?—No, they come under the Bengal Municipal Act and the powers under that Act regulating housing. They have to conform to the rules issued under that Act.

E-2972. Are the rules under the local Municipal Act suitable for that purpose?—They are a guide.

E-2973. Taking the tables showing the amount of floor space available, in the first column, for instance, in some cases the floor space per house is as low as 67, and in the last column the average total area available per worker is as low as 28 or 29. Do you think that it is a reasonable standard?—These data, which have been prepared from information kindly provided by the jute mills, have been worked out in my office merely as an approximation.

E-2974. What is your opinion as to the suitability of these areas?—It may be said that the greater the space that can be given to anybody the better.

E-2975. I take it that when the variation is so great as between 29 and 62, there is no real standard?—I do not think, as a matter of fact, in the rules that any figure is actually laid down. In the rules under the Calcutta Municipal Act, habitable rooms must be 10′×10′ or 96 square feet and 10 feet high, as far as I remember.

E-2976. Although municipal councils have the power to deal with these areas, they do not take any action in actual fact?—I cannot say that many of them have their own Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors who deal with these matters. In many cases some of these mill quarters have been erected many years. How far action was taken to regulate building in the past it is impossible to say ; I do not even know the date of the erection of the quarters mentioned in my note.

E-2977. Are the conditions improving?—Certainly.

E-2978. The Commission has had before it various statements with regard to the difficulty of acquiring land for additional housing accommodation under the Acquisition of Land Act ; have you any information to give the Commission on that point?—No, it does not concern my department.

E-2979. You are not acquainted with the difficulties?—No, all I can say is that I have heard difficulties expressed.

E-2980. What difficulties?—I have heard it is very difficult in certain places to acquire land ; and in some congested areas it is easy to understand this.

E-2981. The difficulty is not covered by any section of the Municipal Act? Would you look with favour on the framing of a Town Planning Act for Bengal?—I certainly think that anything that can safeguard the development of towns would be advantageous. This, of course is my private opinion.

E-2982. Have you ever made any enquiry into industrial housing in Bengal?—We collected, with the acquiescence of a number of jute mills, the data from which these tables have been prepared.

E-2983. That was made the subject of a special enquiry?—Yes, a certain amount of data was collected.

E-2984. You have no industrial hygiene department?—Not at present. We had one for six months.

E-2985. What happened to that?—It was a time of retrenchment, and the provincial resources did not enable Government to continue it.

E-2986. I take it you would favour its resuscitation?—Undoubtedly.

E-2987. It would be an advantage to the industrial population in Calcutta and the surrounding industrial towns to have an industrial hygiene department?—It would certainly give us an opportunity for collecting the data that is necessary.

E-2988. Are your district health officers and municipal health officers *ex-officio* Inspectors of Factories?—No.

E-2989. Do you not think it would be an advantage if they were?—Probably it would. That again is my personal opinion.

E-2990. *The Chairman*: Are your assistants constantly moving about in the industrial areas outside Calcutta?—They have to move when they make their municipal inspections ; we have not a large number of officers ; there are 116 municipalities which have to be inspected. There are also the rural areas. Recently we have established nearly 600 health units in rural areas, all of which have had to be initiated, and the few officers I have have also been engaged in inspecting these areas.

E-2991. *Colonel Russell*: I come to Mr. Griffin's note in the memorandum. He has apparently had a certain amount of trouble with sanitary works in various places. What was the trouble with the Titaghur Sewage Works, Mr. Griffin?—The acquisition of land.

E-2992. Or was it any other point?—There was no other point. It is not exactly a difficulty. We have acquired the land required for the actual scheme, but the scheme would have been better if we had been able to acquire more land than was actually required for the widths of the road. If we had been able to acquire extra land, the scheme would have been much more profitable.

E-2993. We have had evidence at Naihati that the sewage scheme had been held up because of the difficulty of getting land for the sewage farm?—A scheme has never been started at Naihati.

E-2994. What was that due to ; the difficulty of getting land?—No.

E-2995. I understood the position was this: that the municipality would not allow the sewage to be run into the river, the mills wanted land for a sewage farm and they have not been able to acquire the land? Is that not the case?—No.

E-2996. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Where is the place where they had the whole plant lying there for four years?—It has nothing to do with my department.

E-2997. *Colonel Russell*: You do not know whether that is the case?—It is no part of my department.

E-2998. Can you not interfere in a case like that in order to put matters right?—I do not know anything about these particular matters ; it must be in the hands of the mill. It has nothing to do with my department.

E-2999. I understand that you have had considerable success with septic tank latrines in the mill areas?—(*Dr. Bentley*) Yes.

E-3000. We have been told again and again that workers in India will not use latrines even if you build them. What do you say to that?—I think you ought to visit the industrial areas provided with septic tank latrines and see how popular they have become.

E-3001. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are there open fields in the near neighbourhood?—Here and there in a few areas. I can speak of Bansberiah where there is a good deal of open land; nevertheless the septic tank latrines there are exceedingly popular with the people.

E-3002. *Colonel Russell*: As a matter of fact I have seen one or two that were being overused?—That is one of the difficulties. There is generally a tendency, we find, for the people outside the mills, if they can gain access to a septic tank latrine, to crowd into it. In one particular case we found that a septic tank latrine was being badly overworked. The matter was reported to the manager; he complained that it was because the people coming from outside his mills used it, and he could not keep them out. He made every effort to do so; he kept the gate through which they came closed. As a result he had a strike in his mill. The workers and their friends in the bazaar, when they found that they could not gain access to this septic tank latrine, struck.

E-3003. You refer to various sections under the Municipal Act dealing with drainage, insanitary houses and so on. Can you give us an idea how often sections 242 and 244 are acted upon by Municipal Commissioners?—No, it would be impossible without special enquiry.

E-3004. In section 245 you describe the method by which the Act compels you to take action with regard to an insanitary area. Are you satisfied with the method detailed in this section? A report by 'competent persons' has to be made and then it is to be inspected by two medical officers. I understand that sometimes you get a general practitioner to inspect the area?—That has happened in the case of Howrah. That is the wording of the Act. The Act dates from 1885, and there have been proposals for the amendment of that Act.

E-3005. Would it not be better to have a Public Health Act?—I think every sanitarian wishes to have a Public Health Act.

E-3006. Have you ever drafted one?—I have assisted in the drafting of a Bill.

E-3007. What has happened to it?—The Bill has not been submitted to the Legislative Council.

E-3008. Is it proposed to bring it in the Council?—That is a question I think you must ask the Secretary to Government who was appearing before the Commission.

E-3009. With regard to registration of births and deaths, you notice under the heading of "Mill towns", the death rate is 20·6 whereas the Calcutta rate is 33·5. Do you think these figures are accurate?—I have stated above that there are a great number of omissions in the case of all municipalities, and not merely industrial municipalities. You may say practically that it is only Calcutta and Howrah, Dacca and a very few of the larger municipalities in which there is a presumption to accuracy.

E-3010. You would not be prepared to draw any deductions from a comparison of those figures?—No, you can only compare them from year to year for the same place.

E-3011. What is the practice in Bengal about the registration of still-births?—It differs in the rural areas and in the municipalities; in the rural areas the *chowkidars* report the births and deaths; they record them in *hatchitas*.

E-3012. What we want to know really is how you register still-births?—In the rural areas the still-births are recorded in the death *hatchita*, and there is a special column in the actual record in which these reports are copied.

E-3013. So they do not appear either as births or deaths?—In this book they appear among the deaths.

E-3014. But not in your return?—No.

E-3015. They are quite separate?—Yes, there is a possibility in compiling that here and there there may be errors; but without investigation it would be difficult to say that.

E-3016. *The Chairman*: Did I understand you to say that in some cases still-births were registered as deaths and not as births?—No, I said there may possibly be errors in compiling.

E-3017. If I understand you, there is one practice in Calcutta and another in the rural areas?—In the municipal areas the relations are obliged to register at the Municipal office, or either at the Birth Registration office or at the burning ghat or the burial ground as the case may be.

E-3018. My point is this: has not the Government of Bengal issued any order to establish uniformity throughout the Presidency as to whether a still-birth is to be counted in the births or in the deaths, or to be kept quite separate and put in another column?—It is supposed to be kept separate. What I say is that there is a possibility of an error occurring subsequently during compilation.

E-3019. You now say there is a rule which governs the whole Presidency?—Yes, that has been definitely issued, and it is stated in the forms; it is actually stated in Bengali in the *chowkidar's hatchita*.

E-3020. Have all your Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors got definite instructions on this point? Do they inspect the registers and see they are kept in the proper way?—Yes, but there is only a limited staff, and they have many other duties to perform.

E-3021. *Colonel Russell*: You have given us details of a diet survey of industrial labour. How long did that survey take, and how was it done?—Some selected data relating to workers were collected in the course of a general survey of dietary, not merely among workers. Having a certain amount of data with regard to workers, I asked the officer in charge of that survey to submit that for the information of the Commission.

E-3022. What staff was employed in doing this work?—Dr. Ray Chaudhuri and two medical graduates.

E-3023. What experience did they have in collecting family budgets?—Before they started this work they had no experience. They have been at work two years.

E-3024. How long did they take to carry out the survey?—The survey of dietary has been going on very nearly two years.

E-3025. Who has been supplying the money?—This has been supplied by the Indian Research Fund Association.

E-3026. It was a private enquiry?—Yes.

E-3027. At what cost?—I think this probably cost about Rs. 30,000 for the two years.

E-3028. With three officers?—Yes.

E-3029. You have not any woman assistant?—No.

E-3030. How did Dr. Ray Chaudhuri and the medical graduates make their investigation?—(*Dr. Ray Chaudhuri*): What we did in the mill areas generally was this: 10, 15 or 20 men mess together; they buy their rations for 15 days. We collected the data from the man who keeps accounts of the prices and quantities of their rations; we got the number of men under him and their ages. Those below 14 but above 10 we counted as three-fourths of a man, and on that we calculated how much food they take every day.

E-3031. What was the total number of individuals?—724.

E-3032. Did you have to reject any cases that were considered to be inaccurate?—No, we did it in the presence of the manager himself or assistant manager. We got their pay and then also the amount of foodstuffs that they bought for 14 days; from that we calculated for one month. We then found the amount of money that they spent for their food, and we took the average price of the different foodstuffs. We also have opportunities of seeing the foodstuffs which they actually eat. We went there during their midday meals.

E-3033. If you look at the columns under "Oorias, jute mills" you will see there that the calories amount to 3,868?—Yes.

E-3034. That is a very high figure?—Only eight people were examined in that group. That is a figure which cannot be relied upon.

E-3035. Under jute mills you have 2,700; then 3,500, and the last one is 4,286. Which would you say was most reliable?—All these figures are reliable.

E-3036. Dr. Bentley, what do you say with regard to these diets and the amount of calories in each: you accept them, I take it?—(*Dr. Bentley*) Yes, these are crude figures. Sometimes observers usually deduct 10 per cent, but these are the crude figures that have been ascertained.

E-3037. Do they represent fairly the diet of workers in the Calcutta area?—Yes. It is amazing what some of the upcountry men take. Such a large amount of pulses raises the number of calories.

E-3038. And the enormous amount of protein, 111 grams?—Yes.

E-3039. You are quite satisfied that that is correct?—Yes, for certain classes of workers.

E-3040. Are the two figures of average income and average expenditure on food equally reliable?—I cannot say.

E-3041. I am rather pressing for an opinion on this point because I want to draw your attention to two memoranda which had been sent in by Dr. Batra, one on the housing and health conditions of jute mills marked B, and another on housing and health conditions in collieries, and in both of which he says that the diet is not satisfactory?—It depends entirely on the standard one sets. It is a question of the particular type of people. You will see that in this statement there is a vast difference between calories consumed by a Bengali in the first column and again in the fourth column; and again in the last column there is a tremendous variation here.

E-3042. But Dr. Batra gives various details here. I want to ask Dr. Batra this question: in his memorandum dealing with jute mills he gives details of diet. Are these the same as we find in Dr. Chaudhuri's survey?—No.

E-3043. How did he get these figures?—(*Dr. Batra*) I asked these questions of some of the workers at the Clive Jute Mill.

E-3044. How many?—About 12.

E-3045. So you took your figures from about 12 men?—Yes, of different classes.

E-3046. There is one question about venereal diseases. Have you any figures showing the rate of venereal diseases?—No.

E-3047. In one industrial centre in India we have been told that venereal disease exists to the extent of 50 per cent of the population. What do you say is the Calcutta figure?—I do not think it is anything like that. I have no actual data.

E-3048. I notice also in the same connexion the percentage of still-births in Howrah is relatively high. I suppose if you get a high still-birth rate it means there is a considerable amount of venereal diseases?—It is generally assumed to be that.

Sir Alexander Murray: Howrah is the lowest of any of the areas in Bengal.

E-3049. *Colonel Russel*: 1·9 is your registered still-birth?—(*Dr. Batra*) That is calculated on the population.

E-3050. The figure is given as 0·2. How do you explain those two figures?—(*Dr. Bentley*) That is Howrah district, not Howrah town.

E-3051. It is lower than any other area in Bengal?—The Howrah district is. You will notice among these districts there are considerable discrepancies, whereas in some districts in Eastern Bengal the highest is 7·1 per cent of live-births; yet you find in the figures quoted from the Asansol Mining Settlement it is only 1 per cent; that, I think, is purely and simply a question of non-recording. It depends to a great extent, in rural areas, on the method that is used in disposing of the actual dead bodies of children born dead. In Calcutta and in Howrah these are all disposed of at the burning ghats, and that is why they are recorded accurately. Among Hindus in many rural areas a still-born child is not burnt, but is buried, and in many cases probably there may not be any actual record kept.

E-3052. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But the outlying districts are all higher?—Except that you find in some districts, mostly in Western Bengal, they are lower. It is rather interesting that many of these districts with low figures are largely inhabited by Hindus.

E-3053. *Colonel Russell*: You have in Bengal in two areas, Asansol and Jalpaiguri, Boards of Health?—There is not one in Jalpaiguri yet.

E-3054. We came across there a Bill which had been drafted but which had not been enacted. With regard to the Jalpaiguri Bill, which seemed to me to contain a considerable number of valuable proposals, why was it never passed?—I cannot say. There was some local opposition, and as far as I recollect the Bill never even got as far as the Legislative Council.

E-3055. Could you tell us what the local opposition was?—Some of the local people opposed it.

E-3056. From what point of view?—I believe at different times it was opposed from different points of view. At one time one section of the community opposed it, and then at another time another section of the community opposed it. Certain provisions were disagreed with ; there was not unanimity, and there were certain rather difficult points to arrange.

E-3057. Was the opposition from local boards' areas which might be included in the Board of Health area?—I could not say that. This is a matter which concerns the Administrative department, and the Legislative department does not directly concern the Director of Public Health, and I only hear these things indirectly.

E-3058. Do you think that the Asansol Board of Health has functioned reasonably well?—I think on the whole there has been an improvement since that legislation has been in operation.

E-3059. With regard to the composition of these Boards of Health can you give us any suggestions as to how they should be composed?—That really does not concern a technical officer like myself. We are concerned with technical matters. This is an administrative matter and involves questions of policy.

E-3060. I suppose you have a personal opinion with regard to the composition of the Board of Health?—I prefer an administrative body rather than a body composed of supposed experts.

E-3061. Would you have a medical officer on the Board at all?—No ; I think I would have him working under the Board. That is my private opinion.

E-3062. In the Asansol and Jharia areas there was a certain amount of difficulty with regard to the control of outside *bustis* and huts ; would you have such places included in a tea garden area or a coalfield area in order that such dangerous spots might be reasonably controlled?—In the Jalpaiguri district there are *khas mahal* bazaars adjoining which there are *bustis* and there are villages which lie between the tea gardens. As far as I am aware the Asansol area was rounded off as far as possible to include all the collieries and the villages in between, because it is very difficult to deal with an isolated spot here and there ; it is reasonable to have a compact area.

E-3063. Was that the reason for some of the opposition?—I could not say. The Bill was under discussion for a considerable time and I know there were objections from many sources. If I had to manage an area as a Health Officer I should find it very difficult if between the areas with which I was concerned there were areas which I could not command.

E-3064. Particularly if you had to deal with epidemics such as cholera and malaria?—Yes.

E-3065. If you had a properly run Board of Health, I take it you would be able to control cholera as effectively as it has been controlled in Asansol? —Yes.

E-3066. Has the Bengal Government any policy with regard to the training of midwives and *dais*?—Yes, for some years there has been a special grant for the purpose of assisting local authorities and certain voluntary institutions to run classes for the training of indigenous *dais*.

E-3067. What has happened to those who have been trained?—They have been at work in the Province ; there are several thousands altogether.

E-3068. Then you think this training has raised the standard?—I certainly think so.

E-3069. So that it is a policy which might be developed still further?— It has certainly been accepted and it has been very popular.

E-3070. We have been told that in some of the mill areas it has been found to be almost impossible to get trained midwives, *dais* and health visitors?—I have spoken of the training of indigenous *dais;* the midwives

are trained in hospitals, mostly in Calcutta ; there are a few mission hospitals in the rural areas and a few *zenana* hospitals in which training is given.

E-3071. The training which these *dais* have had has not made the women workers shy of them?—Not as far as I am aware.

E-3072. Have you a training school for health visitors in Bengal?—Yes ; it is not run by Government. Mrs. Cottle is the Secretary. It is run by a voluntary organization, largely supported by the Red Cross ; I think it has been running since 1925 or 1926.

E-3073. Are these women who have been trained employed?—I think most of those who have been trained are employed except those who have got married.

E-3074. Is there any difficulty in recruiting a suitable class of women for this work?—Yes, it is not very easy to get them. I believe there is another school in which training is given in the vernacular in connexion with the Chitaranjan Hospital or Seva Sadan in Russa Road. I believe they are training health visitors there for employment in villages but not for employment in the industrial areas.

E-3075. Does your department deal with child welfare work?—It is concerned with it. We have an officer who is employed in connexion with the medical inspection of school children and he also devotes a certain amount of time to this question of child welfare.

E-3076. Has the Public Health Department any proposal for the employment of a Lady Assistant Director or Lady Medical officers to do this work? —In connexion with the medical inspection of schools a lady doctor was employed at one time.

E-3077. Would the appointment of an Assistant Director to do nothing but this child welfare and maternity work recommend itself to you?—It would. One of our difficulties is finance because this Province is very badly off.

E-3078. You already have a male assistant doing this work?—Yes, but he devotes what time he can to the supervision and the administrative work in connexion with these classes for training *dais*, he has nothing to do with the actual running of the classes.

E-3079. Would it be better to have a lady asssitant taking full charge?— It would undoubtedly be an advantage.

E-3080. Have you had any grants from Government for this child welfare work?—In connexion with this training of *dais* a grant is given. In connexion also with child welfare and what was called "Baby Week" but which is now called "Health Week" grants are given and also for actual child welfare clinics, which exist in a few places. There are a certain number of child welfare clinics in Calcutta.

E-3081. We have seen two baby clinics at work in certain mill areas ; does the Government give any grant for them?—No, I do not think so.

E-3082. But they give grants for others?—Some of them.

E-3083. What is the reason for that differentiation?—I do not think any grant has been applied for.

E-3084. If they did apply would you support their application?—My own view would be that you cannot have too many of these clinics if you can get them established.

E-3085. Have you ever given any advice to those who wish to have these clinics?—Yes, two doctors came to me only the other day representing a number of people in the south of Calcutta, who were anxious to establish clinics. I gave them what little advice I could and asked them to see Mrs. Cottle who could give them still more advice.

E-3086. In the Bengal evidence it is stated that general welfare work such as is conducted in the factories in Europe is practically non-existent. Is there any Government department that deals with this?—Anything concerning health work is ordinarily dealt with by the Public Health Department. But there is a great deal of voluntary work going on, of which we have not much knowledge.

E-3087. You have no special officer co-ordinating all these voluntary associations and trying to bring them into the same line?—No, there is no special officer for that.

E-3088. May I suggest it would be a good plan to have a Lady Assistant Director who could do all that kind of work?—All these things depend very largely upon finance.

E-3089. I take it your officers are constantly inspecting Municipalities from the public health point of view?—Yes, at intervals.

E-3090. Can you explain how better progress might be made in an industrial area such as Howrah?—There again it is largely a question of finance.

E-3091. The Howrah municipal budget is a very considerable one?—Yes, but I think anybody who knows Howrah can appreciate that it would be a very difficult thing to carry out a mass improvement without, for example, a sewerage scheme. That again cannot be easily carried out without an alteration in many cases of the alignment of the streets. It really entails a general improvement. Recently action has been proposed with regard to the improvement of Howrah which has been under discussion by Government; I think the Secretary to Government could give more definite information on this point.

E-3092. I take it you are not satisfied with the way in which Howrah has been allowed to develop as to housing, drainage and general sanitation?—I do not think anybody could be very pleased with Howrah as it stands.

E-3093. Then do you not think it is a case in which a Town Planning Act might be of very considerable use?—It would undoubtedly solve a number of difficulties.

E-3094. What does your Sanitary Board do?—It examines schemes mainly connected with municipal improvement, water-supply and drainage and makes recommendations to Government in respect of grants-in-aid to those schemes.

E-3095. Do you think you ought to have a local Government department under a proper Public Health Act?—That involves a question of policy and I can only give my private opinion. I think every sanitarian would like to see such an organization.

E-3096. You are purely an advisory officer?—Yes.

E-3097. No Director of Public Health in India is an executive officer?—That is so.

E-3098. How long did Dr. Batra investigate conditions in the Asansol Mine area?—(*Dr. Batra*): I have been to the collieries before but this time I was there five or six days.

E-3099. Did you find any evidence of industrial disease in the colliery areas? There was a considerable amount of cholera which they have successfully stamped out.—Yes.

E-3100. You say there were very few men, women and children who can be called physically fit for a hard day's work in the mining area. How many did you examine?—About 50. I was there about eight years ago and I now find they have very much deteriorated, specially the *Santhals*.

E-3101. In 1922 you made an investigation in the Calcutta printing presses with regard to lead poisoning and you stated quite definitely that 80 per cent of the workers have blue-coloured gums. I suppose you know that may be due to pyorrhoea?—Yes.

E-3102. You say that you yourself and your child have this blue line and you cannot explain it, but you draw the conclusion that the blue gums of the compositors are due to lead poisoning?—They had other symptoms. The enquiry was not combined with laboratory work so that we could not rely upon it.

E-3103. Any conclusion that you have drawn with regard to lead poisoning is simply a general casual conclusion?—Absolutely.

E-3104. You did not find any definite instances of lead poisoning?—No.

E-3105. You mention as another industrial disease a particular kind of rash among the jute workers?—When they come to the jute works they get that rash in the beginning but it disappears after a time and they become

immune. It is found specially among the sorters ; it is itchy and troublesome ; they told me that if they applied turmeric all over the body it gives relief.

E-3106. You are definitely of opinion that this is an industrial disease?—I have not seen it in cotton or any other similar industry.

E-3107. What do you think as to the possibility of introducing a scheme of sickness insurance among industrial workers in Bengal?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I think it is a matter for experiment by an insurance company ; valuable data might be collected in that way. It is very difficult to express an opinion either way when you have no data. I have not had an opportunity of studying the question in the way I consider necessary.

E-3108. *The Chairman*: You have no actuarial knowledge of this subject?—No, not as regards India.

E-3109. We have been told it is the custom for women in industrial areas to go home to their own country when child-birth is approaching?—I believe that is so.

E-3110. We have been told that more than half the women do so?—I could not say what the proportion is. (*Dr. Batra*) In the jute area about 40 or 50 per cent will go home.

E-3111. If children are born in the villages, are they brought back to the industrial area and die in the industrial area that would vitiate the figures as to infant mortality?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I would not care to express a definite opinion on that matter because I have not the figures. A number of towns have a relatively low average infantile mortality, for instance, Asansol is 149, Kotrung 139, Serampore 128, Champdani 144, Bally 145, Uttarpara 126, but Titaghur is 220. The figures of infantile mortality must be affected by women going back to their villages when child-birth is approaching.

E-3112. *Mr. Cliff*: And in addition in municipal areas are not the figures subject to gross errors owing to the large number of omissions?—That is so.

E-3113. *The Chairman*: In another Province we found that the vaccination officers have vaccinated more babies than have been registered?—About 15 years ago the same thing happened in one of our rural districts where the vaccinators recorded about three times as many vaccinations as they had actually done.

E-3114. *Mr. Cliff*: Did the Government of Bengal consult you in regard to sickness insurance?—I could not say ; I believe the question came up for consideration while I was away on leave.

E-3115. In your view is it possible to provide medical facilities in the Province generally?—I certainly think there should be possibilites of that ; we are getting an increasing number of medical men trained ; a great difficulty at the moment is to arrange that they may get a living in the rural areas.

E-3116. *Colonel Russell*: If a sick workman returned to his own village, would it be possible for him to get medical facilities in the village?—Many of them come from other Provinces and I can tell you nothing about the other Provinces.

E-3117. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it possible to provide the medical facilities that are requisite for any scheme of sickness insurance?—It would undoubtedly be possible to provide medical men, but the difficulty would be to pay for the scheme. I know very little about the working of an insurance scheme.

E-3118. If medical facilities are provided in your view would they be acceptable?—My experience is that where medical facilities are provided now they are largely utilized. I think I could take you to certain mill dispensaries which are utilized not merely by the mill workers but by thousands of people from outside.

E-3119. If your department has answered the question which the Government of Bengal put on this point, might the Commission have the benefit of the answers?—I think you must ask the Secretary to Government for that.

E-3120. Dr. Batra says that in the jute mills there is not adequate arrangement for taking off dust, and this is specially important as mostly women are employed ; usually these women bring in their young children who toddle about and live in that dust-laden atmosphere during the working hours of the mills. Have you spent much time in jute mills?—(*Dr. Batra*) Yes.

E-3121. Is this the general experience?—Yes.

E-3122. Have any recommendations been made by your department with regard to this state of affairs?—I send my notes to the Director of Public Health ; it is for him to recommend action and bring it to the notice of the manager.

E-3123. Has your department made any communication to the Jute Association or has it been the subject of a special memorandum to Government?—Not as far as I know.

E-3124. You say with regard to the housing provided by the mills that very often the rooms are dark and in none of them can sunlight penetrate through ; regarding ventilation, it is unsatisfactory, being back to back houses, the only openings in the rooms being the doors, and if there are windows they are kept shut. Is that the general condition which you find in mill *bustis*?—Yes.

E-3125. You suggest the ordinary *bustis* are worse than the mill *bustis*? —Yes.

E-3126. You say the conditions prevailing in the workers' native village or town are better. Have you experience of that?—Yes, I know the villages ; conditions in the villages are better because they get more sunlight, and they get milk, fresh vegetables ; they are not living in congested areas ; in the villages the people spend most of their time outside except at nights ; the worker has his women there to clean the house whereas in the mill areas he is busy all day earning his living and has no time to clean the house. The village houses are separate houses with a little compound. They are not back to back. The ventilation in some cases is better and in some cases is not better.

E-3127. *Miss Power*: Is it still lawful in mill lines or *bustis* to build back to back houses in a town?—(*Dr. Bentley*) In Bengal the building rules do not prohibit back to back houses. The Bengal Municipal Act dates back to 1884 and has not been amended in respect of matters of that kind for a long period.

E-3128. *Mr. Cliff*: You think the practice of the workers going to their native villages for three months should be encouraged and made obligatory? —(*Dr. Batra*) Of course it is an utopian idea, but it would be to the advantage of the employers and employees because the worker keeps in better health if he goes to his village. People who live here for a long time deteriorate physically. That is because the workers here do not get fresh air and sunlight, fresh vegetables and milk which they get in their own villages. Food is very poor here ; a worker cannot get a pound of milk for less than 4 annas or 5 annas and that may not be pure.

E-3129. *Colonel Russel*: Do you say that the ordinary villager and his children get a satisfactory supply of milk in the villages?—Compared with here, yes.

E-3130. I am not comparing it with here. Is the milk supply in rural areas satisfactory?—Certainly ; I will not say it is the ideal, but it is better as compared with the conditions in the town where the workers live in *bustis*. When the workers go back to their villages they recoup their health.

E-3131. *Mr. Cliff*: Is your point really this that you would advocate periodic leave?—Yes, that is what I mean.

E-3132. How do you propose that the workman should live during the period of leave ; do you mean he should live out of his savings?—I do not mean that ; I mean that the employers should bear that burden. Where workers cannot make both ends meet here, are in debt and cannot afford to go back to their villages they go on getting worse and worse as far as illness is concerned and deteriorate physically ; if the worker gets back to his village it is to his advantage and to his employer's advantage.

E-3133. You think that annual leave with pay is a good thing?—I should think so and it would not cost any more than they are paying now for illness and absence from work.

E-3134. Were your figures as to diet and prices of diet very carefully compiled?—It was done by asking these people in the presence of the manager who went round with me. It was done at Clive Jute Mill, only one mill.

E-3135. Was the manager a European?—Yes.

E-3136. Does he know the habits of these people in regard to food?—The mill doctor was also there ; he is an Indian and knows their habits ; he has been there for three or four years.

E-3137. How long did this enquiry take?—It took me three weeks to go round these mills ; I dealt with different mill areas and found that the figures obtained in these areas tallied.

E-3138. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How long did it take you to take the Clive figures with the manager?—I spent about four hours at that particular place.

E-3139. *Colonel Russell*: Did you make any comparison of your figures with the other doctors' figures?—No, these were taken much later.

E-3140. They are rather antagonistic?—It is quite possible ; he took very much longer time than I did.

E-3141. You mean his figures are more accurate?—Quite likely.

E-3142. *Mr. Cliff*: In the special investigation which you made did you find much indication of tuberculosis?—I have collected data from some Municipalities. In some places they kept the figures and at others they did not. Some mills have tuberculosis while others have not. It is rather difficult to collect data because when people get ill they go away home.

E-3143. You have no reliable information?—No.

E-3144. Where did you get the figures from as to the grog shop?—From the grog shop which is mentioned in my statement.

E-3145. Are they the figures of an ordinary average month?—I could not say.

E-3146. Did you take these figures from the account book in the shop? —No ; we took them from the man who sells the liquor who is in charge ; he gave us the figures from his memory ; he did not give them from his accounts.

E-3147. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With regard to housing you say that the average total area available per worker comes to between 40 and 62 square feet. Do you say that is a reasonable floor space?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I do not say it is ideal. But that average in many cases exceeds the average laid down for lodging houses in Great Britain.

E-3148. Have you ever read the Workmen's Housing Act of Great Britain?—Yes.

E-3149. Do you know that there is a schedule in that Act which provides the space for each individual worker?—I could not tell you off-hand.

E-3150. Do you think the floor space which you mention in your memorandum is sufficient in view of the climatic conditions in India?—I should certainly like to see a much larger area given. In Bombay I have seen the Improvement Trust single storey *chawls* supposed to be let out for a man and wife. I have visited these *chawls* in the very early morning and have found the whole floor of the verandah and house occupied by innumerable lodgers so that there was not even stepping room. That is the sort of thing which it is very difficult to prevent.

E-3151. After your experience of the housing conditions in *bustis* and other industrial areas, do you think that there is a necessity for legislation on workmen's housing in this country?—I think probably legislation would be an advantage. That is my own private opinion.

E-3152. Talking of industrial hygiene, did you ever think of the necessity of appointing any industrial hygiene officers in Bengal?—One was actually appointed.

E-3153. What happened to him?—He was retrenched.

E-3154. Did you not make any further proposal that such an officer is absolutely essential, considering the vast industrial area that you have to deal with from sanitary point of view?—The original proposal that I made was accepted and then financial stringency forced Government to curtail its expenditure.

E-3155. We have boards of health in the mine area. Would you recommend that there should be boards of health for the jute mill area and that there should be a levy on the production of jute for this purpose just as there is a levy on the production of coal?—That is a question of policy, and one on which it is very difficult for me to express an opinion here.

E-3156. Dr. Chaudhury, you have given in your statement the quantities of diet that a worker consumes per day. If you total the principal items like wheat, rice, *dal*, etc., it comes to 13 *chataks*. Do you think that 13 *chataks* are enough for an able-bodied upcountry workman who works in the jute mill for 11 hours a day?—(*Dr. Chaudhury*) It is not the number of *chataks* that counts, but the caloric value that he gets out of these articles. You will find that the Corporation sweepers and Hindustani coolies have increased their figure of caloric value by taking 2 *chataks* of gram a day. The price is less, the volume is less, but the food value, that is the amount of heat that is got out of that is great.

E-3157. Would it surprise you to hear that from the enquiries that the Calcutta Corporation has made from some of the sweepers and other workers, it is clear that a least 1 seer in the shape of rice, *dal*, *ata*, *etc.*, is required to keep a strong healthy working man going?—I will never go by *chataks*; I will go only by the calories that the worker will get out of it.

E-3158. Dr. Bentley, do you not think that the sanitary conditions in Bengal warrant the appointment of a minister of health?—The Health department is under the local self-government department and the local self-government and several other departments come under the ministry of local self-government.

E-3159. Therefore neither the minister nor the single secretary in charge of that department can do full justice to such an important matter as public health of Bengal and specially the public health of industrial areas?—Public health, as a State function, is so closely associated with local self-government that you cannot separate it. In fact, I have always considered that public health is a function of local self-government. In that sense we have actually at the present time a minister of public health.

E-3160. In the portfolio of the minister there are about twelve departments and public health is one of them, and therefore it is very difficult for the minister or his secretary to do full justice to the question of public health?—Public health is the main function of the local self-government department.

E-3161. By 'local self-government' we understand municipalities and district boards?—If I may point out, in England these things were all managed by the President of the Local Government Board until that portfolio was handed over to the minister of public health. It was merely a change in title. The President of the Local Government Board was practically a minister of public health although he was not called by that name before.

E-3162. *Mr. Ahmed*: You admit that education has a potent influence in improving the public health?—I have not expressed any opinion on that.

E-3163. Will you kindly refer to page 3 of your book "Dynamics of Public Health" where you say that education has a potent influence in improving the public health?—That deals with the history in Great Britain. Education is advantageous for all progress.

E-3164. I am merely quoting your own words. You admit that education has a potent influence in improving the public health, is it not?—That has been the experience of the world generally.

E-3165. Compulsory education is therefore absolutely necessary?—That is another matter. I am not concerned with education at all. I have my own private opinion as to the value of education in connexion with public health, but I am not officially concerned with education.

E-3166. You would admit, would you not, that education is absolutely necessary for the industrial workers and the masses if you want to improve the sanitation and health of the workers generally?—It is a very great advantage.

E-3167. On page 22 of the same book you say that the health of the people in Bengal is deplorable?—Relatively speaking, yes.

E-3168. I think you know that the Government of India spend only 4½ per cent of their revenue on education, health and sanitation?—I do not know what the figures are.

E-3169. You have suggested that you want more money to spend on education?—I have nothing to do with education.

E-3170. But money is wanted for health and sanitation and therefore it is essential to know how we could get the money?—Yes, but I do not know how money can be raised.

E-3171. During your inspection of the mill areas in which the industrial workers live, it must have struck you, did it not, that there is not sufficient provision made by the employers for the recreation of the workers, playgrounds and other amenities, and I think you will agree with me that such provision should be made by the employers?—I have not actually considered that matter. There are many amenities of life that I would like to see improved, but it is a very very difficult thing to express an opinion on what should be done or can be done.

E-3172. But you will agree that it will be a very good thing if the employers make provision for recreation of their workers in the shape of playgrounds and other amenities of life, would you not?—Yes, it would be an excellent thing if they made such provisions.

E-3173. I take it that you would have seen crèches in some of the factories which you have visited?—No; I have done very little visiting of factories.

E-3174. I suppose you would have read in newspapers sometime ago that the working-class women were in the habit of dosing their babies with opium at the time of going to work?—I have seen such statement.

E-3175. If crèches were provided in all the mills, I suppose that difficulty will be removed?—It might assist that.

E-3176. You are in favour of it, is it not?—Certainly; I think anybody would approve that.

E-3177. You know that the babies of these poor working-class people do not get a sufficient quantity of milk because the wages paid to the work-people are not at all sufficient to meet this expense. If a living wage is given to them, I suppose you will agree with me that there will be a decided improvement in the condition of health of the babies and the next generation among the working-classes will be much healthier and efficient?—It might be; I cannot say that I have sufficient information to express a definite opinion. I can only say, as a general rule, the better the nourishment the better the health.

E-3178. And I suppose milk is essential for good nourishment?—For children, yes.

E-3179. If the work-people are provided with better housing accommodation, I take it that that will improve a great deal the health of these people?—Better housing is generally associated with improvement of health.

E-3180. *Miss Sorabji:* I take it that you would agree that in order to bring about a widespread consciousness amongst the people in regard to the improvement of health and so forth, some propaganda should be done?—Propaganda is fruitful.

E-3181. In order to secure that, do your health officers do regular and specific propaganda by means of lectures and demonstrations both in rural as well as in urban areas?—There is a good deal of that done.

E-3182. What training is required for these officers?—The health officers go through a definite curriculum laid down by the University for their diploma in public health.

E-3183. All your public health officers have taken the public health diploma?—The district health officers, and nowadays nearly all the other health officers pass through a definite training and take the diploma in public health of the University of Calcutta.

E-3184. Are the officers, who do propaganda work in the rural and urban areas, trained officers?—Besides the health officers there are a number of Sanitary Inspectors. Those who are employed by my own department have all had some training.

E-3185. How many of these people do propaganda work in the villages?—There are a number of voluntary organizations that are doing propaganda work; the local authorities, that is, the District Boards are also doing propaganda work; in some cases, the Municipalities are doing propaganda. Besides that we have a small staff connected with my own department.

E-3186. What is the strength of your staff that you can use for propaganda?—I have two lecturers and two assistants.

E-3187. Would you consider your staff to be adequate?—I would like to see a larger staff.

E-3188. You will agree that in some respects there is a greater need for propaganda among women than among men?—Yes, because women have to do with the bringing up of the children.

E-3189. Have you any women public health officers?—There are no women at the present moment attached to the Public Health Department of Bengal.

E-3190. Are you prepared to make a proposal to Government to employ women public health officers who can look after the general condition of women and suggest improvements in various directions?—If Government ask my opinion I am prepared to give it.

E-3191. In favour of the employment of such women officers?—I am prepared to give my opinion if Government ask for it.

E-3192. Would that opinion be a recommendation for employment of such women health officers?—Until the question is asked, I cannot say what my reply would be.

E-3193. But I want to know what your opinion is in the matter?—On general principle, as a sanitarian, I am in favour of the employment of women health workers.

E-3194. Would you go further and agree that there is scope also for the employment of a senior woman health officer, who may be a personal assistant to yourself, to check the statistics which we hear are not properly collected and to recommend to you what cannot come under your personal observation in the villages?—There is ample work for a very great increase of staff, both male and female.

E-3195. And, in this direction, particularly for a woman?—There are certain classes of work for which women are undoubtedly specially suitable.

E-3196. Have you ever seen boys in Calcutta streets going down the manholes to clean them out?—I have seen that occasionally.

E-3197. The mud in the sewage which they take out is likely to be fatal to them under certain conditions?—I doubt whether the mud would be fatal to them.

E-3198. Tetanus, if they had their skin broken?—There is a possibility, but I have no data to express a definite opinion on that.

E-3199. If it were found to be dangerous, have you any suggestions to make for the protection of those small boys?—I have not actually considered the question.

E-3200. Would those small boys be under the direct observation of your Sanitary Inspectors?—I have nothing whatsoever to do with Calcutta. Calcutta is under the Calcutta Corporation, and the Calcutta health department.

E-3201. You do not take any cognizance of this at all?—This is all governed by the Calcutta Municipal Act, and I do not think you will find any reference to the Director of Public Health in the Calcutta Municipal Act.

E-3202. You have Sanitary Inspectors under you?—No; they are employed by local authorities.

E-3203. You never see them at all?—All the executive work vests in the local authorities.

E-3204. You would not know what their duties were?—No, except for the rules and by report and inspection.

E-3205. Your officers inspect them?—They inspect the work of the Municipalities.

E-3206. Then they would inspect the Sanitary Inspectors employed by the Municipalities?—They inspect the work of the Municipalities only at long intervals.

E-3207. How would the work which these Sanitary Inspectors do, come under your cognizance?—The work may come under my cognizance as a result of reports by my officers who inspect the Municipalities, but these Inspectors are not under my control.

E-3208. They are not under your personal observation?—No.

E-3209. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Do you think that the Municipalities in mill areas of, say, Bhatpara, Titaghur and Champdani, have sufficient power under the Act to compel the owners to improve the *bustis*?—They have power. I do not know to what extent those powers have been utilized.

E-3210. Who prepared the statement as regards the diet of the industrial labour in India?—(*Dr. Chaudhuri*) I prepared it.

E-3211. Where did you get the figure from to show that a Hindustani jute mill worker takes one-fifth *chatak* of meat every day?—It does not mean that every day he takes one-fifth *chatak* of meat. We took his consumption for a fortnight and gave the average per day.

E-3212. Dr. Bentley, will you tell us whether you are going to appoint a special officer to enquire into the conditions of health of industrial workers in Bengal?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I cannot reply to that because it is a matter for Government to decide.

E-3213. Do you not think that it should be the duty of the public health department to investigate into the question of food and housing of the workers?—It is one of the duties of health officers to investigate into food and housing.

E-3214. Has your department submitted a report on the insanitary condition of the *bustis* situated outside the mill area?—It is not the function of my department; it is the function of the local authorities.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-SIXTH MEETING

CALCUTTA

Friday, 14th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.,
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. C. W. GURNER, I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Local Self-Government Department,

and

Mr. H. J. TWYNAM, I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Revenue Department.

E-3215. *The Chairman*: We have seen some of these *bustis* which are overcrowded, not drained and obviously insanitary. We have not yet clearly understood whether the continued existence of those conditions is due to a defect in the law or to a defect in the administration?—(*Mr. Gurner*) It is necessary to differentiate between the position in Calcutta and in Municipalities outside Calcutta. In Calcutta there is an up-to-date Act under which,

so far as the law goes, it seems to me to be possible to take the necessary action for clearing *bustis* and reconstruction. In the Bengal Municipal Act, which applies to all Municipalities outside Calcutta, there are a number of provisions governing the construction and regulation of *bustis* by which, if they were carefully applied a good deal of the insanitary *bustis* which have been inspected could be eliminated. But for various reasons it is admitted that the Municipalities outside Calcutta do not apply these conditions as stringently as they might, and the conditions themselves which were framed 40 years ago, have not been revised up to the standard established in the Calcutta Municipal Act. The Government of Bengal had a Bengal Municipal Bill, which was to follow the Calcutta Municipal Bill and was brought up-to-date on much the same lines as the Calcutta Municipal Bill. That was put before the Legislature in 1925, it was rejected on the First Reading and there the matter rests.

E-3216. Is it true to say that it was not thrown out on its merits?—It is difficult for me to discuss the party politics of five years ago, but I think we may say that the reason which predominated with Council in throwing it out was not so much a study of its intrinsic conditions as a feeling that it strengthened the control of Government over local bodies; that was the argument put forward in the single short speech which preceded its rejection.

E-3217. Has there been any attempt to reintroduce it since 1925?—All I can say is it has not been re-introduced. A Public Health Bill has not been brought forward; it was not considered more urgent than the Bengal Municipal Amendment Bill in 1925. That was the order of legislation in the mind of the Ministry in 1925 and it has not been reversed since so far as I know.

E-3218. It appears to be suggested in some quarters that the acquisition by a mill company of land in order to improve the housing both of their own people and in the neighbourhood does not come within the terms of section 40 of the Land Acquisition Act. Has that point ever been decided?—(*Mr. Twynam*) There have been acquisitions in the past for that purpose, but the cases are very rare. There was a case in 1916 when land was acquired for housing labour for the Burma Oil Company at Chittagong, but then it was certified that the activities of the Burma Oil Company served a public purpose. There have been other cases since in which the Legal Advisors of Government have stated that they did not consider that the conditions were such as to fulfil the definition in the Act; so that it really depends on the circumstances of each particular case. For instance there was an application from a co-operative housing society for the acquisition of land to put up dwellings. In that particular case the Legal Advisors of Government said they did not consider it would come under the definition laid down in section 40, because it was scarcely a public purpose, the scope of the society being too restricted. There was another case in which a company applied for land for the housing of 100 labourers, and in that case also the Legal Remembrancer held that as only 100 labourers were involved it could not be said to be a public purpose. There is some obscurity with regard to the legal position.

E-3219. The words are "likely to prove useful to the public"—*It depends* on whether by "public" is meant the whole body of the public or a section of the public. The Government of India suggested that the Act should be amended in that sense to make it perfectly clear that it should apply to acquisitions for housing purposes. This Government replied that they thought that amendment would be desirable but that in view of the pitfalls which might arise if the Land Acquisition Act were subject to general amendment, they would recommend nothing should be done because at present no court has definitely pronounced that anybody but the local Government is the sole judge of whether the proposed acquisition fulfils a public purpose or not. There is a judicial decision in the famous case of Ezra *versus* Secretary of State in which it is laid down that the local Government is the sole judge of what constitutes a public purpose, either for acquisition on its own behalf or for a company.

E-3220. Have you in mind the actual terms of the amendment to this paragraph B of section 40 which was then under consideration?—No, it simply says that it should be amended so as to make it perfectly clear that the section should apply to acquisition of land for housing purposes; it did not get as far as the actual wording.

E-3221. Is it your opinion that an amendment of the law to make it absolutely clear that it should include housing is desirable?—I should say it

is desirable. The only reason why it was not proceeded with was that it was thought that the whole Land Acquisition Act might have come into the melting pot with rather disastrous results.

E-3222. But surely such a thing is known in India as a one-clause Bill to deal with a quite limited matter on which there is a large consensus of opinion without ripping up the whole framework of an Act?—Yes, that is so. The opinion of the local Government was re-invited on other matters also, and the local Government replied that they thought it would be very undesirable to throw the whole Act into the melting pot, but if a single clause Bill could be introduced it certainly would be desirable.

E-3223. Then you would think it a useful thing to have as promptly as possible a one clause Bill clearing up that point?—Yes.

E-3224. And making it quite clear that the housing of the people, whether by the local body or by any industrial concern which employs the bulk of the people in the neighbourhood should be possible under this Act?—That is a question of principle, but certainly I think it should be done.

E-3225. You are not aware of any one having put in legal terms the exact amendment to paragraph B of section 40 of the Land Acquisition Act, limited to that one point?—I am not aware of any formal drafting of a Bill to explain the section more clearly. I have consulted the Second Land Acquisition Collector, and the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector of the 24 Parganas ; I myself was Land Acquisition Deputy Collector of the 24 Parthought the Act as it stands probably does permit of the acquisition of land for housing purposes in case in which the local Government considers a public purpose is fulfilled; but in view of the fact that legal difficulties have been raised in the past I still think an amendment of the Act would be desirable so as to forestall any possible difficulties in the civil courts.

E-3226. The legal advisers to Government have given contrary opinions and that makes it difficult to proceed administratively without the amendment?—Yes.

E-3227. Sections 245 and 246 of the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884, appear at first sight to give adequate powers to lay an obligation on the owners of these insanitary *bustis* to carry out certain works within a fixed period?—(*Mr. Garner*) I had that in mind when I spoke of antiquated but partially adequate powers. A number of administrative difficulties would arise if it were attempted to exercise those powers, but the powers are there.

E-3228. In the event of owners and occupiers being unwilling to proceed with the improvement whilst some other party was willing to proceed, if those powers were exercised would it not have the effect of reducing the purchase price to a price which represented the value of the property with the obligation laid on it and not as at present the rack rent capitalized plus 15 per cent?—That is a new and very difficult question. I should say that the land acquisition price would have to be the market value of the land.

E-3229. Where the owner of the land wanted a price above the land acquisition rate, as the result of this procedure he would be prepared to sell at the land acquisition rate; that is to say, putting this obligation on a particular area would prevent extortion in the form of demanding more than the Land Acquisition Act value; if the existing owner, the *zamindar* or his sub-tenants, were unwilling themselves to carry out the obligations but preferred to sell, they would sell subject to the obligation which would then go along with the land?—The obligation would not go along with the land; the obligation would have to be created again when the ownership changed hands; that is one of the difficulties of the Act, that while the proceedings are going on the property may change hands and proceedings have to be taken all over again. The obligation lies on the owner. When the owner receives notice he may dispose of the property either genuinely or by some subterfuge and then the proceedings have to be taken all over again.

E-3230. Then that would appear to be a defect of the law in that the obligation is not a continuing one?—It is going rather far to say it is a defect. I take it that it has been the general principle of requisition powers in Bengal that the requisition must be served on the owner and when the property changes hands you must renew proceedings against the new owner.

E-3231. The existing powers just referred to are not freely used by local municipal authorities?—They certainly are not freely used and they are difficult to use. I have explained one difficulty; another difficulty arises out

of the joint ownership and all the numerous legal difficulties that arise when you begin to take proceedings against an owner in this country. That is a matter of which I have had personal experience in the Corporation where we have complete powers for the improvement of *bustis* but the actual working of those powers is a slow and tedious process.

E-3232. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Where the owner is a ground landlord who lets the land, for instance, to a *sardar* who builds these *bustis*, if you say you are going to improve the property, it would be impossible to recover the cost from the sardar?—Exactly; by the time the proceedings were completed he would probably be in another mill on the other side of the river.

E-3233. He probably would not have the money to pay?—I assume that in theory you could institute proceedings and get a decree against his pay, but in practice it would be quite impossible to proceed against a *sardar*. That is one of many difficulties.

E-3234. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The local Government have put in force the power to acquire land for industrial purposes in Bengal, have not they?—(*Mr. Twynam*) Yes.

E-3235. For ordinary industrial purposes and not for a company described as a public utility company?—After the war during the boom the local Government was invited to say whether it was desirable to use the Land Acquisition Act for the purpose of acquiring land for industrial development, not only where the company directly served the public needs but where it indirectly served the public needs. During the war the Indian Iron and Steel Company, for instance, acquired land for housing purposes and there it was definitely said that the company was doing war work and was serving a public purpose. The local Government readily agreed to that, which shows that the circumstances of each case must be considered. Then the principle was extended a little further; for instance, land was acquired for the Rajshahi Tanneries. Since the boom died down there have been very few applications; the test probably would be whether it served a public purpose or not.

E-3236. Then you suggest that if there were a war and the jute mills were supplying sand bags, if they applied for land to build workmen's houses they would be entitled to get it?—Yes.

E-3237. But because there is not a war on and the mills are anxious to get land to improve the conditions under which their workers live, you feel that is not a public purpose?—You must not put that into my mouth; on the contrary I think the Act as it stands permits of the acquisition of land; but I am not a lawyer, so that in face of legal opinion to the contrary I can only report what the legal advisers say.

E-3238. The Holland Commission made definite recommendations in its industrial report; have you as a Government ever taken any action directly or indirectly on that report?—The Industrial Commission, I think, recommended the acquisition of land for industrial purposes, but no modification has been made in the Act. The Government of Bengal in 1922 with regard to the compulsory acquisition of land for industrial purposes said they considered that the application of the Act for general industrial purposes would have to be very carefully watched because, quite obviously, there might be indirect interest brought to bear to secure that the Land Acquisition Act should be used for the purposes of industrial concerns in which the public had really no interest. They were against the extension of the Act for purely industrial purposes, but this was said: "The Minister is of opinion that there is a stronger case for the compulsory acquisition of land for housing industrial labour than for the development of industries. The Governor in Council accepts this opinion and agrees with the Government of India that in the absence of special legislation for the housing of industrial labour the addition proposed by them is desirable". That was the addition I have mentioned.

E-3239. It has gone to sleep since 1922?—Yes.

E-3240. Would your Government favour legislation subject to certain safeguards to enable land to be acquired for the housing of workers engaged in industries such as jute and cotton mills and iron works?—I cannot answer for the Government; your question raises a question of principle on which it is hardly for me to speak.

E-3241. Has the possibility of introducing an Improvement Trust been considered?—(*Mr. Gurner*) Yes; that is one of the proposals which is now being actively considered with regard to Howrah. It is quite obvious that no radical improvement can be made in the sanitary conditions of Howrah until there is an Improvement Trust working on lines analogous to those of the Calcutta Improvement Trust.

E-3242. What has the Improvement Trust in Calcutta done to provide facilities for workmen to live away from the congested areas?—The Calcutta Improvement Trust has powers for re-housing workmen disturbed by its operations. At the beginning of its operations it made certain experiments in housing which proved, for one reason or another, to be rather a failure. I think one can quite definitely say now that one does not regard the Calcutta Improvement Trust as primarily, or even secondarily, a housing body; it is a body for the purpose of urban improvement. So far as its housing activities are concerned they are entirely subsidiary to its work of urban improvement. We must dismiss the idea of its being a body responsible for the housing of labour as such or for the housing of the poorer classes on any large scale.

E-3243. In view of that experience and the very congested condition of Howrah are you making special arrangements in the New Howrah Improvement Bill whereby housing facilities will be provided for the industrial workers there?—The Bill itself is a very long way off; it has not yet been framed; that will be one of the questions of principle to be examined when the Bill comes to be framed. It is at present contemplated that the Bill for the improvement of Howrah would be analogous to the Calcutta Improvement Act; it would not, therefore, necessarily provide for the housing of labour or of the poorer classes as one of its primary functions. Whether the Bill would be extended to cover that function I could not say.

E-3244. Do you not think, in the special circumstances of Howrah, that ought to be the primary purpose of the Improvement Bill?—You raise a large question; our experience is that a body working for urban improvement such as the Calcutta Improvement Trust has a function before it which will occupy all its time and all its activities. So far as one can see, to place on that body also the onus of housing labour and the working classes would confuse its purpose and possibly extend its activities beyond anything reasonably within its capacity.

E-3245. Before you could make roads or open up squares in Howrah you would have to displace hundreds if not thousands of work-pepole?—Yes; I think the Bill would comprehend as an accessory to its improvement work the re-housing of the poorer classes displaced by its operations.

E-3246. Surely the purpose of setting up an Improvement Trust in Howrah is to open up the town and displace the working population?—I am afraid it is something much more humble than that; the primary reason for an Improvement Trust in Howrah is to put a sewer underneath the street; that alone would consume all the money the Trust is likely to be able to raise for many years to come.

E-3247. Then when you say there is going to be an Improvement Trust in Howrah, that is simply a red herring across the trail?—Not at all; the mere sewering of the town will at once immensely improve conditions. The position of affairs being as it is, the sewer cannot be put down except by an Improvement Trust.

E-3248. The conditions in the congested *bustis* of Titaghur are known to us; I understand you to say that under the Bengal Municipal Act notices can be served on the owners and occupiers of the huts?—The relevant sections of the Bengal Municipal Act have already been referred to. I quite agree they fall far short of the work that needs to be done, but a certain amount could be done under the sections as they stand at present which is not in fact done.

E-3249. Would the new town-planning clauses in the draft Bengal Municipal Act meet all that we have in view as regards giving facilities for condemning insanitary areas and acquiring the land?—No; I am afraid now I must take you to another of these Bills which the department has in various stages of preparation. It actually has a Town Planning Bill which would cover exactly the difficulties you are now thinking of.

E-3250. You have a Public Health Bill, a draft Municipal Bill and a Town Planning Bill?—Yes.

E-3251. When is there a possibility of these being put into effect?—That is a question which I am not in a position to answer. I suggest that a permanent secretary at Home would not have been asked two years ago when the English Local Government Bill would be brought before Parliament.

E-3252. *Mr. Joshi*: If you are making provision for the acquisition of land for private companies for the purpose of housing the working classes, are you thinking of making provision that the land shall be resumed by Government if it ceases to be used for the housing of the working classes?—(*Mr. Twynam*) No, we are not thinking of doing that at the moment. It is there; one of the conditions laid down is that it is to be used for the specific purpose for which it is acquired. It depends how many years elapse.

E-3253. But if it is not used for that purpose, does the Government take power to resume the land?—I think the power exists because there is a clause that it is only to be used for the specific purpose for which it has been acquired.

E-3254. *Mr. Cliff*: I understand under the Bengal Municipal Act you already possess statutory powers of a limited character; have those powers been fully exercised in respect of Howrah?—(*Mr. Gurner*) The powers which we already possess rest not with Government, but with the municipality concerned, and it is for the Commission who have visited Howrah to draw their own conclusions as to whether the existing powers have been fully exercised.

E-3255. Have you any powers of control over the municipality?—Government have certain powers of control over municipalities.

E-3256. Have the powers which you possess been fully exercised by Government?—I shall have to take a definite instance; I think, it is probably true to say that Government have taken no action to compel the Howrah Municipality to clear any particular *busti*.

E-3257. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Government have certain powers of compelling a municipality to put into effect municipal powers for improving the conditions of the municipality?—Now we are coming back to evidence which I gave a year ago to the Simon Commission. The powers exercised by Government over local bodies are extremely inadequate and cumbrous. Certainly the powers, such as they are, which Government possess, have not been applied to compel a municipality to clear any particular *busti* and they probably would not work for that purpose.

E-3258. *Mr. Cliff*: Under which Minister do these powers come?—The Minister of Local Self-Government.

E-3259. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it not a fact that before the plans of a mill are sanctioned application must be made to the Chairman of the municipality or Government?—No, that is not necessarily so as far as every municipality is concerned. It would depend where the mill is situated.

E-3260. The sanction of the municipality in whose area it is proposed to set up the mill must be obtained?—That is a legal point as to which there is some uncertainty, whether the powers possessed by municipalities to control building, when they have such powers, would apply to a purely industrial building; they might be applied. I am not sure whether it is correct to say that the mill would in certain municipalities have to apply for sanction of the municipality, but it might have to comply with certain by-laws, which is very much the same thing.

E-3261. *The Chairman*: That would be solely with regard to the structure?—Yes.

E-3262. It would have nothing to do with the surrounding land which might be used for building houses?—As I understood Mr. Ahmed, he was suggesting that the municipality might refuse its sanction on the ground that there was not sufficient accommodation for labour, but I do not think they could do so.

E-3263. *Mr. Ahmed*: Are you aware that the Calcutta Municipality does not allow any mill to be constructed within its boundaries and that generally they insist upon the mill being constructed at a distance from the town?—I cannot speak as to the practice of the Calcutta Municipality.

Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: As Commissioner of the Calcutta Corporation may I say that there is no such law; they can only approve of plans of a factory according to the standard plan; they cannot prohibit the building of a factory.

E-3264. *Mr. Ahmed*: Before any persons make up their mind to construct a mill it is for them to make sure that they can acquire land for housing in the neighbourhood at a reasonable price. I suppose you are aware that the workshops of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Bird and Company and the Port Commissioners and others are all situated far away from the town of Calcutta, and that they provide steam launches and other conveyances for the workers to go and come back daily?—I am not competent to say anything about the situation of factories round Calcutta.

E-3265. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You served as a Deputy Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation for some years?—Yes, some years ago.

E-3266. You remember that prior to 1923 the Act had no special clauses relating to the housing of the working classes?—Yes.

E-3267. The new Act empowers the Calcutta Corporation to acquire land for building houses for the working classes?—For the purpose of erecting sanitary dwellings for the working and poorer classes.

E-3268. Are you aware that the Calcutta Corporation appointed a special committee for the housing of the working classes?—I believe so in 1925.

E-3269. Are you aware that after enquiring into the various aspects of the question the special committee have decided to put up workmen's dwellings in two districts of Calcutta?—Yes, I believe the Committee reported in that sense. Whether it has been confirmed by the Corporation I cannot say; one can hardly speak of a decision until the recommendation is actually adopted by the municipal body itself.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. R. N. GILCHRIST, M.A., I.E.S., Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce and Marine Departments, Labour Intelligence Officer and Registrar of Trade Unions.

Mr. A. T. WESTON, M.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E. (India), Director of Industries, Bengal.

Mr. J. A. BEALE, Subdivisional Officer, Asansol.

Khan Bahadur TASADDAK AHMED, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.

Rai Sahib SUSHIL KUMAR GANGULY, Officiating Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal.

Mr. R. P. ADAMS, O.B.E., M.I.Mech.E., Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

Mr. J. B. McBRIDE, Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

E-3270. *The Chairman*: Was the proposal to establish a labour bureau in this Presidency dropped on the prevailing plea of lack of funds or was there any other reason for it?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) It was dropped because of lack of funds. The bureau was never established, but my post of Labour Intelligence officer was created with a view to the creation of a future labour bureau. Almost as soon as I took over the post, the Bengal Retrenchment Committee reported, and, being the newest post, it was one of the first to be recommended for abolition, so that the labour bureau never came into being at all. The Labour Intelligence officer continued to exist, but his duties were changed to other types of work.

E-3271. Has recent experience in Bengal convinced you that it was a mistake to abandon that proposal?—Yes; the Government of Bengal recognize that it is necessary to have a labour bureau and a labour office, whatever the name may be, and the labour bureau would have come into being, I suppose, soon after 1922, had it not been for the financial position.

E-3272. I suppose it is fair to say that the industrial interests of Bengal are second to those of no other province?—Yes, Bengal is the chief industrial province in India so far as the number of factory employees is concerned.

E-3273. And yet Bengal lags behind some other provinces in that respect?—It is purely and simply a matter of finance; there is no question of principle; Bengal would like to have such an office, but they have not got the money. The Government of Bengal have tried to improve the position by adding to the factory inspection department and utilizing its staff to a certain extent as an intelligence bureau. That is recognized not to be very satisfactory because the inspectors have plenty of work to do otherwise. The question of the future organization will depend partly on the recommendations of this Commission but the Government of Bengal have already considered the general lines on which the organization should proceed.

E-3274. Taking all these things into consideration, and considering the great industrial interests of Bengal, might the establishment of such a bureau be an economy and not an expense?—It is a matter for Government to decide.

E-3275. I notice that you had in existence in Bengal a conciliation panel?—Yes.

E-3276. But after the passage of the Trade Disputes Act that was dropped?—Yes.

E-3277. Did that conciliation panel do any useful work during its existence?—It never functioned. I have mentioned in the memorandum that there were a few instances in which applications were made, but they were very few. One or two special bodies were appointed for special disputes. The panel was formed year after year, we used to appoint the personnel of the panel about April or May and publish it in the Gazette; no case arose which Government considered it necessary to refer to the panel. The panel was merely a list of names from which conciliators might be chosen for any particular dispute.

E-3278. You said that in some cases there were "special bodies"; were they chosen from this panel or not?—No; that was before the panel was actually brought into being.

E-3279. Why was this panel dropped on the passage of the Trade Disputes Act?—Because the panel was established under a resolution of the Government of Bengal; it had no special status at all; it was an informal body and the Trade Disputes Act brought in definite machinery.

E-3280. But do you not think there is a place for such a panel quite apart from the more cumbrous and formal machinery of a court under the Trade Disputes Act?—That might be so; the panel has not been reconstituted, but the actual machinery under which the panel was appointed from year to year still exists; it is merely a matter of publishing the names. The panel was primarily constituted for public utility services. The Government of Bengal have adhered to the policy hitherto that in private disputes they should not intervene or use any machinery at all unless both parties ask them to intervene. The public utility of the panel was really superseded by the public utility sections of the Trade Disputes Act.

E-3281. But there are many places where there is such a panel which is open, if both parties are agreeable to use it, without any Government interference?—Yes; that could be done, I suppose, under the existing machinery although the panel has not actually been renominated.

E-3282. Do you support the suggestion which has been put before us that the time is ripe for a move in the direction of reducing hours per week from 60 to 55, and per day to 10?—Yes, that is the official view of the Government of Bengal.

E-3283. We have had a suggestion that in addition to that the daily limit, as far as men are concerned, should be removed; does that coincide

with the view of the Government of Bengal?—No; the Government of Bengal definitely recommend that the daily limit should be continued and reduced from 11 to 10.

E-3284. I think the Government of Bengal support the control of shifts and that control is presumably within these limits of which we have just spoken?—Yes.

E-3285. Supposing those alterations be carried out, the reduction of the week to 55, and the day to a maximum of 10 hours, for what reason does the Government of Bengal desire to have a control over shifts within those limits?—In order to ensure the observance of the principles of Chapter IV of the Act.

E-3286. That is for administrative reasons?—Yes.

E-3287. To have a control over the registration and inspection of the register?—Yes.

E-3288. There is no reason for the control of the shift within those hours except the convenience of inspection?—It is not for the convenience of inspection; it is to make inspection effective.

E-3289. *Mr. Cliff*: What industries have you in mind with regard to abolition of a daily limit?—The industries which work the shorter hours, which are the " heavy " industries here. It was a suggestion made recently by the Chief Inspector of Factories, and it seems worthy of examination in order to see whether industries which do work shorter hours could work a little more freely than they do at present under a daily maximum.

E-3290. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you referring to industries in which the weekly hours are shorter than the present maximum?—Yes, it applies to both weekly and daily hours.

E-3291. Then what is the point of allowing them to work as long as they like daily, which is the suggestion here?—We should have to have a guarantee that they would not work more than a certain number of hours per week. The suggestion to remove the daily limit has not been very carefully examined by the Government of Bengal; it was more a suggestion thrown out for the consideration of the Commission with a view to ascertaining whether there was any likelihood of finding a solution to some of the difficulties which have been encountered in connexion with those industries. It is not a proposal which the Government of Bengal have considered in principle to any great extent.

E-3292. *Mr. Cliff*: The answer to the Chairman stands?—Yes, so far as the Government of Bengal is concerned, on the main issue. If the Commission having regard to the evidence obtained in other parts of India finds that that suggestion is worthy of consideration, then the Government of Bengal would be glad to have its views.

E-3293. *The Chairman*: But, no doubt, you appreciate that to go back on the question of daily limit might reintroduce some of the very troubles that that limit was intended to avoid?—Yes.

E-3294. You have submitted to us a paper by Mr. J. M. Mitra dealing with the indebtedness of jute workers?—Mr. Mitra has been seriously ill and has had to go on leave, but his officiating successor, Rai Sahib Sushilkumar Ganguly, is here.

E-3295. The suggestions made in this memorandum are remarkable and hardly coincide with other information that we have; for instance, it is said " It is reported that as many as 75 to 90 per cent of the labourers are in debt ". What is meant by that; does that cover cases where they are in debt on their monthly food accounts to the *bania*?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Yes, I understand that that is the case.

E-3296. In that sense we are all in debt unless we paid up our bills last night?—These are cumulative debts that go on from month to month.

E-3297. I see it speaks of loans to the extent of four weeks' wages. We are told the labourer is accustomed to pay his accounts once a month and not sooner?—But these are permanent actual debts, a loan or money having been taken from a *bania*.

E-3298. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do not regard him as being in debt if he is merely receiving credit from his supplier?—No, this refers to actual sums which have been lent, and on which he is paying interest.

E-3299. *The Chairman*: It is said that enquiries have been made from amongst the labourers of several jute mills. How were these facts ascertained?—Several inspectors were deputed to study the conditions with a view to the formation of co-operative societies and from the study they made by observing a few types as well as by a general survey they came to these conclusions.

E-3300. Were the enquiries made in the post office?—Yes; one of the inspectors who made the enquiry is here.

E-3301. Has the report made by this gentleman been submitted to the Commission?—He is one of several officers. (*Mr. Gilchrist*) I have not those reports.

E-3302. Over what area was this enquiry conducted?—Various areas, Kankinarah and various other areas round about Calcutta.

E-3303. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Co-operative Inspectors came to our labour union and asked our co-operation in enquiring into indebtedness. We have been giving assistance in getting this information and the Inspector kindly gave us a draft report which he was going to submit to Government.

E-3304. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Then the reports are based on information supplied by the Kankinarah Labour Union?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) No, that is not the fact.

E-3305. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there any objection to the department handing over this departmental report?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) I do not know.

E-3306. *The Chairman*: If there is a document perhaps I might be permitted to see it?—Yes. I am not connected with that department, but I will convey your request to the department.

E-3307. The report also says that it is a significant fact that this class of people annually remit several lakhs of rupees to their homes?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Yes, there are workers who live on credit, and there are other workers who lend money, for instance, the *sardars*, the Kabulis, *Mahajans* or Marwaris. The post office can only say that so much money is remitted; it cannot distinguish between the classes of people who remit it. I understand that these figures are collected by enquiry at the post office. The actual labourer has got to remit some money home for the maintenance of his family, and he may at the same time be in debt.

E-3308. You say that these remittances are mostly for the maintenance of their relations to meet cultivation expenses of the fields in their native villages, and sometimes for the purchase of land; I suppose that statement must be balanced against the statement that 75 to 90 per cent are in debt?—Yes, to a certain extent.

E-3309. In your opinion has the system of weekly payments which is prevalent in the jute mills any influence in increasing or decreasing indebtedness to the money-lender?—I do not think it has.

E-3310. Therefore, in your opinion, the weekly system of payment does not increase the power of the money-lender over the individual?—*No*; in any case if the money-lender knew there was a fixed date for payment he would be there and would get his dues.

E-3311. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would it be possible that some of these remittances which have been sent might have been from borrowed money?—It is possible that workmen borrow money in order to remit home.

E-3312. On the question of weekly payment, in your view the question whether the worker is paid weekly or monthly does not affect his indebtedness. Why do you say that the worker is going to be more or less in debt if he is paid monthly or weekly?—Even if he was paid monthly he would get accommodation from the shop-keepers for the remaining three weeks.

E-3313. I am not talking of credit at all. Would he be more in debt if paid monthly or weekly?—I do not think otherwise it affects him at all.

E-3314. Let us take the question of interest. Take the case of a man who is not able to pay his interest every week. You say that the money-lender insists on weekly payments because wages are paid weekly?—Yes.

E-3315. If the man does not pay his interest at the end of the week the money-lender adds the interest on to the principal at the end of the week, does he not?—I do not think that is exactly the system under which money is lent. For instance, if he takes a loan of Re. 1 he pays it in nine instalments of As. 2 each.

E-3316. Let us take the case of a man who has borrowed a large sum of Rs. 100 for marriage or other purposes. He has got to pay so much per week for several weeks. If he does not pay the instalment for a week does not the money-lender add the interest on to the loan and charge interest on the compounded amount for the next week?—Yes, he does.

E-3317. Would the rate of interest then be the same as it would be to anybody else who is paid monthly and who pays his instalments monthly—usually one or two annas in the rupee per month?—The rate would be about the same.

E-3318. Therefore a man who was paid weekly would be a loser because if he did not pay his instalments every week the money-lender would go on compounding the amount every week instead of every month?—That is so.

E-3319. Is that one reason why some workers do not prefer the weekly to the monthly payment, because if they are paid weekly the money-lenders insist on weekly repayments whereas if they are paid monthly the money-lenders will take monthly instalments?—That may be so.

E-3320. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you know of this from personal knowledge?—No.

E-3321. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: With regard to the question of late payment of wages we were in a printing press the other day where some of the hands alleged that they had not been paid three or four months. When we asked them why they did not go to court they said they did not feel that the court would help them to get their arrears because the owner would win his case with the help of an expensive and able barrister. In your memorandum dealing with this question you say that "prompt recovery should be provided by some form of summary procedure and fines should be provided for offences". That would deal, would it not, with the case of a firm that was several months in arrears in payment of wages?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) Yes, I take it it would.

E-3322. Would it be possible for the local Legislative Council to bring forward a short Act providing for some form of summary procedure in cases like this?—I should not like to give an opinion off-hand without consulting the legal advisers of Government. It is rather a complicated question affecting the jurisdiction of courts and also at the same time dealing with the welfare of labour. I think under the Devolution Rules the local legislature can take this matter into consideration with the previous sanction of the Government of India.

Mr. Clow: It can be done with the previous sanction of the Government of India.

E-3323. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: A provision like the one I suggest might be helpful in dealing with firms who are three or four months in arrears of wages?—One or two allegations of that kind have been made but no definite cases have come to our direct notice. We reported to the Government of India that this question of late payment of wages was not a serious one in Bengal, but that it should be dealt with if abuses occurred.

E-3324. Your factory inspectors complain that the fines which are levied are not large enough and therefore they do not act as a deterrent. Can you as a Government approach the courts and do something to suggest to the Magistrates that they should levy fines more in conformity with the gravity of the offences?—Government can inform the District Magistrates of the view of the Chief Inspector of Factories that the penalties are too small. Beyond that they cannot take any action and the remedy seems to lie in other directions.

E-3325. Are you quite sure that it is not the High Court but Government which is the proper authority to give these suggestions to the Magistrates?—I think Government is in a position to do that.

E-3326. *Mr. Cliff*: Has that been done in any case? We have been in a province where they said that it had been done?—In one or two cases

Government drew the attention of the executive officers of a division to the fact that the penalties were not in accordance with the seriousness of the offences.

E-3327. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What was the result?—There was only a slight improvement.

E-3328. Have you taken up any case to the High Court asking for enhanced penalty?—No. This question has arisen recently on a complaint made by the Chief Inspector of Factories. The matter will have to be taken into consideration in consultation with the legal advisers of Government.

E-3329. With regard to the question of the advisability and possibility of statutory establishment of minimum wages we have heard from a number of Governments that they do not consider that the time is ripe nor the conditions suitable for the establishment of minimum wages. You have put your objections in more detail and as I understand your point of view you find difficulties in following the procedure which has been carried out at Home. You start by saying that difficulties would arise in connexion with the picking out of industries in which the wages are "exceptionally low" and end by saying that there is a danger that fixation of minimum wages may be used to stifle competition in big firms. Is there any particular industry in your province where you would say the wages were particularly low?—I cannot answer that question because we have not sufficient material at our disposal.

E-3330. You have no industry which stands out as a sweated industry?—I would not say that any one industry stands out as a sweated industry in the province of Bengal. The tenor of the letter of Government is to the effect that until we have complete machinery to decide what sweating is and how much sweating there is, if it exists at all, we cannot very well start taking up the question of minimum wages.

E-3331. You really do not know at the moment whether the need for minimum wages exists in this province?—Not on the ground of "exceptionally low" wages.

E-3332. That is the point and you have no information on the point. If you wanted to get that information how would you get that?—We should have to start a labour intelligence officer with staff on a large scale to find out the facts.

E-3333. It would be a wage census?—Yes, a wage census covering industries big and small, home industries and agriculture also.

E-3334. Therefore before dealing with the question of establishment of minimum wages a great deal of spade work would have to be done?—Yes, a tremendous amount of spade work would have to be done.

E-3335. *Mr. Cliff*: On what do you base that statement that a tremendous amount of work will have to be done?—Simply because we have not the information that is necessary.

E-3336. Do you suggest that there was any such Government enquiry in England before the conditions in sweated industries were brought to the notice of the country?—Not necessarily enquiries by Government. There were private enquiries in England which we have not had here. There was agitation going on in England for 20 years.

E-3337. I appreciate your difficulty, but it is quite different to say that before a minimum wage legislation should take place there should be an elaborate Government enquiry?—There must be enquiries of some sort, not necessarily a Government enquiry.

E-3338. Take the minimum wage of the miners in England. Was there a Government enquiry before that was established?—But the facts of the case were well known.

Mr. Cliff: I agree. But that is a different matter.

E-3339. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the question of indebtedness of the labourers we have two statements before us, one put in by Mr. Mitra and the other one which you have been good enough to give us. From your personal knowledge of the labourers among whom you have been moving about for years do you agree with the statement that 75 to 90 per cent of them are in debt? My impression is that it is an overestimate. But I have no definite data either to contradict or to confirm it.

E-3340. Do you think that the investigation might have been influenced by the fact that the officer went there for the purpose of finding out whether it was good to start a co-operative society in the mill areas?—It might have been, but I am not quite sure of the intensity with which the enquiries were carried out and I do not know the size of the sample which was used.

E-3341. There is a great variation here between the different mills situated in the same area?—That is one thing that struck me also; there is a variation not only in the indebtedness but in the rates of interest also.

E-3342. Take the three mills side by side in Titaghur. On the one side you have the Empire Mill where he says that the indebtedness is 20 per cent. On the other side you have the Standard Mill where the indebtedness is put at 60 per cent. Alongside that you have the Titaghur Mill where the indebtedness is only 25 per cent. These workers work under the same conditions in adjoining mills where the wages are much the same and yet you find that great variation in the figures?—I understand these figures were compiled from the returns supplied by the jute mill authorities and it is difficult to understand how there could be such a huge variation in contiguous areas where one would expect almost uniform conditions.

E-3343. Take the case of the Angus Company. The report says that the average percentage of employees indebted is 90 per cent. It makes a remark that the rate of the *Kabuli* money-lenders is 325 to 650 per cent per annum. But the investigator could not get any information with regard to the average amount of loan taken by an employee and the average period after which the loan was paid off. How would it be possible to compile the other information without getting information regarding the average loan taken by the employees?—I have not myself studied the statement which was compiled for the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee. I did not know that this enquiry into indebtedness was going on till four or five days ago. I thought that the information would be useful to the Commission and sent the pamphlet round.

E-3344. Do you not think that information regarding the average amount of loan taken by an employee is the first thing to get at before you can ascertain the percentage of employees indebted?—Yes.

E-3345. In your memorandum dealing with the question of the limitation of hours in factories you give a long list of irregularities in the employment of labour in jute mills using the multiple shift system. When you have all this information about the mills using the multiple shift system would it be possible for you to give us a list of similar irregularities in mills working the single shift system and the number of visits paid by the Factory Inspectors to single shift mills and double shift mills?—Yes.

E-3346. Dealing with wages you give a comparison between the average monthly wages in single and double shift mills. There is a big difference between the wages paid in Titaghur and the wages paid in Kankinarah and in other places. What were the areas of single and double shift mills from which these figures were drawn?—I understand and I think the Chief Inspector of Factories will be able to confirm my statement, that the various Factory Inspectors sent their wage returns for their respective divisions. An attempt was made in the Factories department office to compile them and they found a great deal of discrepancy and could not get them to agree. As a result after long consideration and the working out of details this estimate was prepared. It was carefully explained in the report that the statement was not a wage census taken from all the mills and that it did not describe the wages of individual mills. It was simply an attempt to give a general idea of what is paid to the workers of a jute mill.

E-3347. Seeing that it is not an average I should like to know the particular mills from which these figures were drawn?—(*Mr. Adams*) It was an average of all the mills in the Barrackpore area and other selected mills south of Barrackpore.

E-3348. Could you send us a note giving the figures you have taken from all the mills that have been taken into consideration in arriving at this general figure?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) Yes.

E-3349. In your memorandum you speak of a Government official, presumably yourself, specifically directed to take part in the settlement of the last jute mill strike. Who asked you to intervene and how did you come to

intervene?—The whole story is set out without any dubiety in my note. There was no question of some one asking Government to intervene unless an expression of the will of the Bengal Legislative Council amounted to asking Government to intervene. The circumstances and the magnitude of the strike called for action on the part of Government.

E-3350. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did it start as a personal action on your part?—No, far from it. Government knew that I was intervening in the dispute.

E-3351. It was a personal action started by you although Government knew about it. You were trying to help?—No. If you read the history of the dispute you will find that in the negotiations prior to the settlement the representatives of the employers and the workers were interviewed by members of the Government.

E-3352. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Did you merely act as a post office or did you try to influence either party to the negotiations?—Once I came in as a negotiator I tried my best to influence each party.

E-3353. On the question of stents did you indicate to either party that it amounted to rate cutting?—I did not indicate to either of the parties that it amounted to rate cutting, But the workers' point regarding the stents was conceded before the strike broke out. The strike broke out in the Begg Dunlop group of mills, and the management of that group of mills restored the old stent even before the strike broke out. They consented to retain the 54 hours' stent after they changed to 60 hours. If you read Mr. Lamb's speech to the Bengal Legislative Council that will be made clear. But the 54 hours' stent was not conceded by all the jute mills.

E-3354. And your influence was used afterwards to make them concede it?—I should like to give any further information you may require on this matter *in camera*.

E-3355. Dealing with the question of the relations between Central and Provincial Governments on matters of labour legislation and administration you say that sometimes Provincial Governments are not given sufficient time to consider references made to them by the Government of India and that there is not sufficient interchange of ideas between the Central and Provincial Governments. In this connexion you make a reference to the local Government having intervened in a railway strike. What is the actual point of that reference? Take the case of a strike in a printing press under the control of the Government of India: could you intervene in that?—No, we cannot.

E-3356. What is your suggestion in such cases?—The local Government should have the power to set up a board of conciliation or a court of enquiry.

E-3357. Take the case of a strike on the East Indian Railway here. Do you suggest that it should not be the Government of India through their Railway Board that should decide whether they should set up a court of enquiry or board of conciliation but the local Governments. In the case of railways might there not be difficulty?—I can foresee the difficulty, but the local Government also have difficulties to contend with.

E-3358. You recognize there is a difference between a localized industry however big it may be and a concern like the railways which runs from one end of India to another?—I quite recognize that. But I am speaking primarily of disputes in central services and railways which may be localized in a particular place. I am thinking of the strike in Lilooah which affected Bengal only.

E-3359. But one can never say that a dispute in a concern like the railways will be localized for two days on end?—I do recognize that difficulty.

E-3360. But you still insist that it is the local Government that should set up a tribunal and not the Government of India?—The local Government have considered the question carefully and that is their view with regard to localized disputes.

E-3361. Take an actual case where a dispute starts at Lilooah. You want to set up a local Government enquiry. Then within three days it spreads to Jamalpur, three days later to Moradabad and in another three days to Lahore. Do you suggest that different local Governments all along the line should set up their own courts of enquiry?—No, that is not suggested.

E-3362. If you followed the principle it should be so?—I only said that the local Government should have powers. This does not necessarily exclude the jurisdiction of the Government of India in cases likely to lead to all India strikes.

E-3363. *Mr. Cliff*: Would it meet the position of the Provincial Governments if the Central Government provided a machinery of enquiry to cover all the central services?—That might meet the difficulty, but it would depend on the machinery.

E-3364. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you think that people having lands in their homes will borrow money from *Kabulis* at exorbitant rates of interest when they can mortgage their lands and get money at cheap rates?—As I said before I have not studied this document from the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee myself. I saw this only three or four days ago and sent it round to the Commission thinking that it might be useful.

E-3365. From your personal knowledge can you say that the workers remit this borrowed money for cultivation expenses?—I have no personal knowledge.

E-3366. I take it therefore that 75 to 90 per cent of the workers are in debt because they cannot maintain themselves and their families on the wages given to them?—We have no information to determine what are the requirements of a standard family of a workman in Bengal. His indebtedness may be due to a multiplicity of circumstances one of which may be improvidence.

E-3367. Do you think that 75 to 90 per cent of the workers are improvident?—Some might be improvident and others may have special family reasons for getting into debt. It is difficult to apportion percentages.

E-3368. Was not the last strike in the jute mills due to the fact that the hours of work were increased without a corresponding increase in wages?—That was not quite the case.

E-3369. *Mr. Cliff*: In your memorandum dealing with minimum wages you have had occasion to remark: "nor even has there been occasion to appoint local commissions of enquiry into abuses in individual industries." That seems to be one of the reasons adduced in this elaborate document against minimum wage legislation?—Yes, the general tenor of the paragraph is that the reasons for the establishment of minimum wage have not been up to now apparent.

E-3370. But there may have been conditions which are not disclosed?—I quite agree.

E-3371. Take the position of this Commission which is making an enquiry. Is it the argument of the Government of Bengal that if the Commission's enquiry disclosed conditions which in the opinion of the Commission required minimum wage legislation, such legislation should not be undertaken?—That is a possibility which the Government of Bengal have not yet considered.

E-3372. Your document on minimum wages suggests a great many financial commitments. You say:

> "In view of what has been said in the previous paragraphs, it is almost needless to mention the financial implications of minimum wage machinery in India."

At the conclusion of that paragraph you say:

> "It may merely be said, as has been said so often already on similar references, that, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned they could not undertake a single item of such expenditure."

It is a declaration which is often repeated in the memorandum?—It is a declaration which one has to make under the existing financial conditions.

E-3373. Will you forgive me for saying that the Government of Bengal appear to have erected a hypothetical structure which is comprehensive and expensive and then demolished on the ground of cost? Is not that the position set out in this document?—I scarcely think this document has conceded that in principle minimum wage should be established in Bengal, but even were the principle conceded, a system cannot be established because the Government of Bengal cannot afford it.

E-3374. There seem to be two grounds running through this document: one is there has been no disclosure of abuses and the other is the comprehensiveness and the expensiveness of the creation of a minimum wage fixing

inachinery. Therefore the arguments is that there should be no minimum wage legislation?—It is not an absolute argument. The position might conceivably arise in Bengal or in any Province in India when the question of a minimum wage machinery might have to be taken up. But it is not one of those questions which the Government of Bengal will be prepared to consider until they have fully equipped the more essential offices under their control, namely, the Factories Office and the Labour Intelligence Office.

E-3375. You remember the provisions in the Assam Labour Act. Do you suggest that there was an enquiry by a comprehensive machinery of the kind you suggest?—So far as I know there was very little enquiry except the ordinary enquiries that might have been made in the districts. But a long road has been travelled since that section was introduced in the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

E-3376. I notice that the Government of India through the Railway Board have been addressing themselves to the question of ill-paid labour and they are endeavouring to apply some kind of minimum wage. Does the Government of Bengal suggest that it is impossible on the part of the Railway Board?—It all depends on how it is done. I do not say it is impossible if you spend enough money and have the necessary machinery to make the preliminary enquiry which must be a thorough one.

E-3377. Without the elaborate machinery which the Government of Bengal prescribe the Government of India through their Railway Board are actually taking decisions?—The Government of India and the Railway Board have an elaborate machinery already which no local Government are likely to have.

E-3378. Does the Government of Bengal express any opinion whether it is possible for the Railway Board to fix minimum wages?—We have no information.

E-3379. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would it be possible for any employer to fix minimum wages?—It is possible for any employer individually to put a minimum on to anything he likes, but it is a very different thing to prescribe minimum wages by law.

E-3380. Would you pay attention again to the action of the Government of India with regard to tea labour in Ceylon?—The Government of India mentioned this point in their letter to local Government on this subject. But beyond having read the section of the Act which says that a man taken to Ceylon shall be paid such and such a rate I have no knowledge of how the section works.

E-3381. You have no knowledge of how it was decided upon?—No. The Government of Bengal have no information.

E-3382. You have no opinion to offer whatsoever? Take the case of the workers in the mines. There are mines in Bengal where the workers are prevented from earning their daily rates of wages due to lack of supply of tubs or on the other hand due to bad working places. Does this memorandum submitted by the Government of Bengal stipulate that minimum earnings should not be fixed for miners in the mining industry?—That is a question to be examined with particular reference to the mining industry. If the particular instances to which you refer, are brought to the notice of Government they will examine them.

E-3383. This Commission have made certain enquiries and have had certain evidence brought before them. Do I take it that the Government of Bengal express the opinion in this memorandum against the possibility of this Commission recommending a minimum wage?—In no manner whatsoever have the Government of Bengal attempted to prejudge what the Commission is going to find.

Sir Victor Sassoon: After reading this memorandum we are very interested to hear that.

E-3384. *Mr. Clow*: Was not this document of the Government of Bengal prepared long before the Commission was thought of?—Yes, it was written in 1928 in connexion with the Geneva convention regarding minimum wages.

E-3385. *Mr. Cliff*: But the Government of Bengal received a communication from the Secretaries of this Commission asking their views with regard to minimum wages and the advisability and possibility of their statutory establishment. Has the Government of Bengal any constructive suggestions

to offer on this point of the establishment of a minimum wage fixing machinery?—The Government of Bengal have no constructive suggestions to offer.

E-3386. This document says: "The original dispute was a perfectly genuine one." Does that mean that it was a dispute on an industrial matter?—In my opinion, yes.

E-3387. This confidential document is one of Government. That is the opinion of Government?—The document is signed by my name. It was sent to the Commission by Government as a document written by a Government officer. I would not go so far as to say that the Government of Bengal commit themselves to every view that is expressed in this document. Towards the end you will find that there are a number of suggestions made regarding the amendment of the Trade Disputes Act, and the Government of Bengal have not considered these in detail.

E-3388. These are suggestions which the writer of the document has put forward which the Government of Bengal have not necessarily endorsed?—That is so.

E-3389. The document declares that the strike was very orderly. Is that the opinion of the people responsible for the preservation of peace?—Yes; I should think that would represent the views of the authorities except in one or two instances.

E-3390. Speaking of the Jute Mills Association, it says: "Their weak position is due to the traditional attitude of managing agents towards wages. One of the clearest lessons of the dispute is that the Jute Mills Association must take some common action regarding wages and conditions of work." First of all, have the Government of Bengal any considered suggestions to put in front of this Commission with regard to the settlement of disputes?—Apart from the evidence which has been given on individual items, I am not quite sure to what you refer.

E-3391. The Government of Bengal, as I understand it, had to intervene in this dispute particularly on the ground of preservation of law and order?—Yes.

E-3392. My point is has the Government of Bengal got any suggestions with regard to meeting a situation which might recur again?—There are several suggestions. One is that the industry should get together with the labour representatives. Another is that it should look to the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act, which came into effect just before the big strike broke out.

E-3393. Take the first suggestion: Has the Government of Bengal addressed a communication to the Jute Mills Association and to the union to put forward the suggestion that you are making now to the Commission?—No communications have been made to that effect either to the Jute Mills Association or to any of the unions. There is more than one union.

E-3394. Can you answer as to whether the Government of Bengal, having gone through a dispute of this character and in view of their declaration, are not of the opinion that they should address a communication to these parties?—That I am not in a position to answer.

E-3395. Is there any one who can answer that?—I would require notice of that question.

E-3396. When I asked whether there was any one who could answer I wanted to know whether there was the Secretary present here who could answer it?—It has to be considered by the Government of Bengal.

E-3397. It is said: "The *sardars* are the real masters of the men. His life, indeed, at every turn is coloured with *sardarism*." Has the Government of Bengal any suggestion to put in front of the Commission whereby the power of the *sardar* might be broken?—They have no single suggestion. A better control of labour through the labour provisions of the Factories Act according to the ideas which have been put forward by the Government of Bengal in their memorandum might help. I should say that the Government of Bengal have not definitely considered this question. I personally have considered it a good deal, and I think that much of the responsibility must be put on the employee himself; the same thing applies to bribery.

E-3398. You do make one suggestion that properly chosen welfare officers can do much towards fostering good relations between employers and workers?—That is my own suggestion. The Government of Bengal have not considered it officially. I personally have much faith in it.

E-3399. What I am concerned about is this: If a Government goes through a dispute of this character and is seized with the importance of proper measures being taken in order to prevent a recurrence, and then you as a representative of the Government make some suggestions (this document has been to the Government), I am concerned to know what action the Government wants to take. Is it that there will be no action taken until another dispute occurs?—I do not think any action will be particularly necessary, because the Committee of the Jute Mills Association has learnt a lesson, as well as the Government and every one connected with the industry.

E-3400. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the lesson?—Learnt the lesson of what Mr. Cliff is talking about, which is the difficulty of the employers getting together with the labour.

E-3401. *Mr. Cliff*: May I ask whether you have any knowledge as to whether the Association having learnt the lesson which you suggest is putting forward any constructive proposals?—I have no knowledge yet except that they are taking a number of steps in regard to the settlement; but as to whether they are taking any steps with regard to the employment of welfare officers, I do not know. This suggestion has not been put before them indeed; it has not been put before any one. So far, it has been mentioned only in this confidential document.

E-3402. It is said: "Government thus came into the position of intermediary, and though the Labour Intelligence Officer ultimately negotiated the items in the agreement on his own initiative, the negotiations were conducted with official cognizance and sanction." Have you any suggestion personally or speaking on behalf of the Government to put in front of this Commission, whether when a dispute is apprehended and before there is an open rupture, the Government might not use through its officer its good offices in trying to secure a settlement?—The normal method is for the parties concerned to talk the matter over and to try to settle it amongst themselves.

E-3403. What I see running through the memorandum is that the services of Government officers, presumably District Magistrates, in a number of cases have been availed of?—The number is small.

E-3404. In the last strike good use was made of a Government servant after the strike occurred?—There may be a difference of opinion as to this.

E-3405. I will not put any adjectives to it at all. Use was made of a Government servant and through that use a settlement was brought about? —Yes.

E-3406. That was after the strike occurred. What I am concerned about is the period before the strike occurs. Is there any proposal of the Government of Bengal to try to keep in close touch with the parties which might be discussing the matter before a strike actually occurs?—The Government of Bengal keeps in close touch with the developments, but not with the parties; this is in pursuance of the policy, which has been stated in this document, of non-interference in private disputes.

E-3407. The Government of Bengal of course must keep in touch from the view of the preservation of law and order, but the Government surely cannot have any knowledge of these discussions unless they receive reports? —As a rule, if there are negotiations going on between parties Government will come to know.

E-3408. I want to ask whether the Government of Bengal have considered utilizing the services of an officer—may be a special officer—for the prevention of strikes and lock-outs?—Not in private disputes. The policy of the Government of Bengal, which is the only policy that has been declared, is to keep out of private disputes.

E-3409. Arising out of your experience in the last dispute is it your view that the services of an intermediary appointed by Government would be of service?—It depends upon the strike. If your question is whether it would be advisable to have a Government officer who would go to various centres in order to search out causes and settle disputes, then I should say that

it would be a policy which would require very careful consideration on the part of the Government. The existence of such an officer might be a very troublesome thing for industry.

E-3410. You are personally, I think, well aware of the policy pursued by the Ministry of Labour in England?—Yes; I have some knowledge of what the conciliation officers do in England.

E-3411. Do you see any practical objection to such a system being adopted in India?—The two cases are scarcely comparable, because there the conciliation officers are dealing with a very well-established machinery. The two parties are as clear and as distinct as day light; the parties have negotiated with each other regularly, in all probability, for years. Here, to appoint an officer like the Home conciliation officers would, in a great majority of cases, be tantamount to the employer being on one side and the Government officer on the other for the reason that the Government officer would practically have to represent the other side which in a great majority of cases is entirely unorganized.

E-3412. Is there any objection to the workers in this country having such a form of protection?—It is a matter in which Government have not formulated any policy but from my own point of view I would say that there is a distinct objection to it.

E-3413. Why would you say that there is an objection to it?—Because the Government officer might become the centre of a large amount of artificial trouble. The function of the Government as I read it is to hold the balance between the parties and not to weigh the balance by giving an officer to help one side.

E-3414. When is the balance even?—It is very difficult to say in individual disputes. I have many cases on my records where the balance is weighted against the employer as much as against the employee.

E-3415. But the service of this officer is for both sides; he is to assist both sides, not only to assist one?—I do not quite see the point. I have just said that if you had an officer he would probably be assisting one side. He would not be holding the balance.

E-3416. Under the heading "Health", there are enumerated a number of questions, of which the first one is: The extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities. You have sent with this document a large number of replies received. May I know whether the Director of Public Health or any of the medical officers of the Province were communicated with on that particular question?—In all such cases we consult the Government department concerned. In this case we consulted the Local Self-Government Department of the local Government because under this Department there are the Department of Public Health and the Surgeon-General. The Department consult their officers and send their replies to us. All these officers, I presume, were consulted in the matter.

E-3417. My difficulty in reading the replies which have been sent in is to find the answer to question (1), viz., the extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities?—That is a very wide question. I should think that it would be possible to get medical graduates to do the work; the question of finance comes in of course, but that is a different matter. I may say that this is my own view, because I cannot express the views of other departments. I think the Surgeon-General to the Government of Bengal submitted a short memorandum on that particular point to the Commission.

E-3418. You say: "The Government of Bengal would welcome an extention of voluntary effort on the part of employers in combating sickness, and would gladly encourage the institution of simple schemes of sickness insurance as between employers and workers". May I know what form that encouragement, it is proposed, should take?—I do not think the question as to what form that encouragement should take was considered in detail.

E-3419. Has the Government of Bengal thought of any simple scheme of sickness insurance?—I do not think so. If they have, I would not be in a position to answer the question because it is hardly within my department to answer questions of detail on sickness insurance. The subject would be one for the Department of Public Health.

E-3420. I want to follow that. It is again stated: "While the Government of Bengal consider the institution of any scheme of sickness insurance premature at present, they recognize that, in due course, some measure of

the nature contemplated by the Government of India will have to be undertaken."; and they advise that it should be central. Is the Government of Bengal prepared to give us any indication of when they think this will have to be done?—No; I should not think so.

E-3421. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If you had information in regard to all the matters upon which in your statement with regard to minimum wage fixing machinery you say correct statistical information must be presupposed, leaving the question of cost of living on one side, would you have any difficulty?—It would help us assuming minimum wages were considered to be necessary. It would depend what sort of minimum wage you were going to try to impose. In Australia, for example, they have tried particularly to get at the subsistence wage.

E-3422. The expression "living wage" came from Australia?—Yes.

E-3423. I am not asking about subsistence wage but about the factors which would be necessary for you to make up your mind in regard to a minimum wage?—I think I have mentioned most of the factors in the memorandum.

E-3424. The way to get at the cost of living would be to hold an enquiry in any particular area where there are industrial workers whose conditions in regard to minimum wages you wished to discuss?—Yes, for that area.

E-3425. Is it difficult to get information in regard to wages paid or any of the other factors that you have mentioned with regard, for instance, to coal mines?—There would not be much difficulty with regard to some of the items while with regard to others there might be difficulty. An enquiry into wages paid for the purpose of minimum wage machinery does not mean a general census of wages; it means a very detailed census for each individual type of worker, because minimum wage fixing has reference not only to general wage fixing but to the relationship of one grade of wages to another grade of wages in the same industry.

E-3426. It would not be difficult to find out what the rate per tub of coal is, and the next question would be, whether the earnings were adequate or not?—On that I could not give you any opinion. The very use of the word "adequate" raises the question of a subsistence or living wage.

E-3427. If machinery were set up for the purpose of fixing minimum wages, I suppose its object would be to find out whether the wage paid was an adequate wage or not?—That I could not say.

E-3428. What is the system adopted in other parts of the world?—It depends on the Act. Under the British Trade Board system I think the minimum rates are fixed not so much with reference to the cost of living or adequacy of the wage as with reference to the particular industry that is under discussion.

E-3429. And in reference to the surrounding trades?—Yes, and with reference to the other types of workers in the same industry.

E-3430. I suppose you will admit that it is easy to find out what a worker in a particular industry is earning?—I am not at all sure of that; in some industries it would take some considerable time and analysis to find out what the actual wages in the industry were. Of course there would be no difficulty in the case of an individual worker, but there is no point in raising the minimum wage issue in connexion with an individual worker. I myself at one time made an analysis of wages in the coal mines; I had not much difficulty in finding out what I wanted, but the general type of wage I wanted was not necessarily the wage that would be useful from the point of view of setting up minimum wage machinery. Since then the local Government have not made any analysis of wages in coal mines because the necessary figures are given in the Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector of Mines.

E-3431. Would it be a very expensive system if you set up a board consisting of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers with an independent chairman who would be entrusted with the task, let us say, of dealing with minimum wages in the coal industry?—I am not prepared to admit that Government would consent to set up any type of minimum wage machinery for the coal industry alone. I have never tried to work out the cost, I do not suppose it would be so very expensive for the coal industry alone; but if you are going into the coal industry you must be prepared to go into other industries as well.

E-3432. Would the same remark apply to the jute industry?—It would be much more expensive and much more difficult in the jute industry.

E-3433. Am I correct in assuming that there are a quarter of a million workers in the jute industry who are getting less than Rs. 4 a week?—The figures are given in the memorandum.

E-3434. Would there be any difficulty from the financial point of view in setting up a board of that description in the jute industry?—There would be very considerable difficulty as far as the Government of Bengal is concerned because, as I said in reply to a previous question, the Government of Bengal would not consent to spending any money on working minimum wage machinery for jute, coal or any other industry until they had fulfilled other functions in connexion with labour which they regard as more essential and important.

E-3435. Therefore what you are now suggesting is that instead of having Provincial legislation of that type the burden should be shifted on to the Central Legislature?—No, I am not suggesting that at all. I would, however, express my personal opinion that if the time came when it was proved that minimum wage machinery was necessary, it would have to be taken up centrally.

E-3436. So that the difficulty in regard to your Provincial Government not being in a position financially to deal with it because they have other important matters to deal with before they deal with this, would not arise?—The whole argument would then go over to the Government of India and with their views on the subject I am not concerned here.

E-3437. What exactly do you mean by proving the necessity for minimum wage fixing machinery?—Proving that it is necessary to establish a minimum wage.

E-3438. One of the factors in regard to that would be the adequacy of the wage as a living wage?—Yes, that would be one factor, or if you take the British standard, 'sweating'.

E-3439. What would in England be considered sweating in industries which are unorganized would be applicable in this country to comparatively highly organized industries, such as the jute industry?—No, I would not admit that. I have not the adequate material to give an answer on that either officially or un-officially.

E-3440. Do you consider that a wage of less than Rs. 4 a week is an adequate living wage for a worker?—I have just replied that I cannot give an opinion on that subject either officially or un-officially. That question requires very careful analysis with all the necessary materials.

E-3441. Therefore it would be an advantage to have some sort of machinery in order to investigate it?—There is no harm in investigation; that is a matter of funds and staff.

E-3442. If investigation proved that it was not an adequate living wage then the body that investigated could make recommendations fixing a minimum wage?—The body which was investigating could make recommendations; I see no objection to that.

E-3443. If it were proved that workers in the four principal industries of coal, cotton, jute and the tea gardens were not getting an adequate wage, the necessity of providing machinery for fixing minimum wages would be proved?—No, I do not admit that; it would not necessarily prove the necessity for machinery for establishing a minimum wage; the proof might point to other factors not connected with the minimum wage, such as the supply of labour.

E-3444. But surely even under the Trade Boards in England one of the conditions often laid down is whether because of the excessive supply of labour wages have been lowered?—You are taking hypothetical conditions on which it is very difficult to give an answer. I am not going to say that because a body making an investigation reached the conclusion that wages were too low, minimum wage machinery essentially follows; I should have to see the grounds of their recommendations.

E-3445. According to the Government of Bengal what would be the conditions to induce the Government to set up a minimum wage fixing machinery?—That I am not prepared to say; the Government of Bengal have not considered in detail any such conditions and I have not considered them myself.

E-3446. So that I take it the matter is left to the Royal Commission or to some other body set up to investigate this problem as far as the Government of Bengal are concerned?—Anybody might be set up to investigate the problem, find out things and make recommendations, but obviously until one sees how the recommendations are reached and what they are it is impossible to answer questions of a hypothetical character like that.

E-3447. During the last strike this question was raised; what action did the Government of Bengal take when this demand was brought to their notice?—The Government of Bengal took no action at all; they could hardly be expected to take official action on each individual item of a long list of grievances.

E-3448. Do you not think the Government of Bengal should have enquired into the feasibility and possibility of setting up minimum wage fixing machinery?—If the Government of Bengal were to take up that attitude towards every point of that type that was raised they would have to employ masses of officers. One has to have a certain perspective with regard to problems of wages and labour problems generally; one has to consider what it is possible to do in a certain time and over a certain period. While agreeing that in certain circumstances minimum wages may be desirable, I do not think that the minimum wage question is one of any urgency at the present moment in Bengal.

E-3449. What do the Government think would be the circumstances under which it would be desirable?—The circumstances would be possibly general reports of bad examples of sweating or the equivalent of sweating. But we have had no reports to that effect.

E-3450. Have you ever tried to find out whether there is sweating, by which I take it is meant workers working long hours on low and inadequate wages?—No enquiry has been made at all.

E-3451. If it is proved that workers are working long hours in particular industries in Bengal and are not getting adequate wages the Government of Bengal would be quite prepared to consider that circumstances have arisen under which minimum wage fixing machinery should be set up?—If proof of that nature were put before them they would be quite prepared to consider the facts and any recommendations that were put before them; this would not necessarily commit them to the opinion that the cure for such evils, supposing they *are* evils, is the setting up of minimum wage machinery.

E-3452. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Referring to what you say with regard to the "extent of organization of Trade Combinations", surely the power of nomination so far as the Provincial and Central Legislatures are concerned, resides absolutely in the Governor and Viceroy?—Yes.

E-3453. That being so, these bogus organizations could not mislead the Governor or the Viceroy?—That is true.

E-3454. With reference to what you say as to the "nature of activities" and the extent of strikes and lockouts during the period from 1921 to 1928, it would appear that the existence of strikes in Bengal industries is a normal state of things and apparently in one or other industry there is always a strike?—Many of these strikes are very small and insignificant.

E-3455. That may be, but it indicates that the normal friendly relations between employers and employees do not exist?—I would hardly say that; the number looks very large but although it has come to nearly 600 for this period I would not say that industrial disputes have been a very prominent feature in Bengal.

E-3456. It has apparently involved a loss of 13 million days in eight years?—Yes.

E-3457. Therefore these disputes leading to strikes have been highly detrimental both to employers and employees?—Yes, all disputes are.

E-3458. The extent of these strikes is so great that it raises the question of the economic loss which the community sustains in consequence of these trade disputes?—Yes.

E-3459. Has the Government of Bengal considered the question of bringing into existence proper negotiating machinery in order that threatened strikes which have been avoided in some cases may be avoided in as large a number of cases as possible?—They consider that negotiation is a matter for the two sides.

E-3460. But Government are responsible for the general welfare of the whole community?—Yes.

E-3461. That being so, when Government finds the two classes who are engaged in producing wealth are constantly fighting with the result that the community suffers severe economic loss, is it not their duty to consider whether they cannot evolve machinery to prevent this serious loss?—The Government of Bengal for years were the only Government in India that had such machinery.

E-3462. In spite of that machinery the result has been as indicated; does not that necessarily mean that that machinery should be improved so as to meet this growing evil?—I would invite your attention to that part of the memorandum where 42 instances of cases of strikes are given; that is one indication of the impossibility of anticipating a great deal of the industrial trouble in Bengal; the reason is of the extraordinary causes which bring it about. For example, one is: the presence of elephants in the locality supposed to be the vanguard of a Gandhi army. It would be very difficult to anticipate that. If the causes are not ascertainable before the strike breaks out I do not see how machinery can function at all. Practically none of these cases, so far as I can see, could have been referred to any one; the workers simply left their work overnight; there was no question of the manager or any one else being able to talk to them about the causes. If any machinery is to function there must be some organization on each side in order to keep the machinery going.

E-3463. You have reported that so far as employers are concerned they are fully organized; you have given a long list of associations representative of the employers?—Yes.

E-3464. Then has Government done anything to help the constitution of labour organizations of the right kind to meet the admitted evil?—I sent to the Commission a statement of an effort that we made in 1921. As a result of the report of the Industrial Disputes Committee Government sent to all employers copies of model constitutions for works committees.

E-3465. Do you think the setting of works committees would eliminate the causes of these frequent strikes?—As a matter of experience works committees have not been formed because of the ignorance of the employees.

E-3466. Is it possible for the ignorant workmen to be organized under the auspices of the employers?—That is a matter for the employers to decide.

E-3467. But a little incentive from Government is needed. You say that some unions with a more permanent organization have attempted to create definite machinery for negotiation, and in one or two instances threatened strikes have been avoided by negotiation. That is an indication of the machinery which might have the desired result?—Yes, the negotiation in those cases was the result of organized unionism.

E-3468. Has Government done anything to encourage the constitution of organized trade unions in Bengal?—Government has taken no definite action to tell people to organize themselves into trade unions, and they have not told employers to form themselves into associations.

E-3469. Does Government consider that their obligations are restricted to dealing with strikes after they have occurred?—Not necessarily so; under the Trade Disputes Act there is certain machinery which may be utilized for apprehended strikes.

E-3470. *Mr. Clow*: Mr. Weston in his memorandum suggests that legislation should be co-ordinated with the aims of the Factories Act so as to make it obligatory on municipal bodies not to give registration to these small industries unless some reasonable observance of the conditions laid down in the Factories Act is complied with. What do you mean by "registration"?—(*Mr. Weston*) Municipalities register the small bazaar industries which are carried on in their area; in some cases I understand they give a licence to them to carry on these industries.

E-3471. What conditions are you contemplating when you say "the conditions laid down in the Factories Act"?—The consideration there is whether you can get the same discipline imposed upon those industries as the Factories Act imposes upon the larger industries.

E-3472. But registration will be given before the factory is started?—These are cases of small factories which do not come within the scope of the Factories Act.

E-3473. How can a municipality ensure before giving registration that after registration is granted the factory will work reasonable hours and provide reasonable accommodation?—Of course they could not do what the factories staff does, but they could impose such conditions in the construction of the factory, its drainage and its general facilities for industrial purposes which would secure a greater improvement than obtains at present.

E-3474. But you have not power to inspect these factories?—No, I am looking to the future, and considering whether anything in that direction may be possible.

E-3475. Do you believe it is possible to apply in its entirety the system adopted at the Government Ordnance Factories, in the jute mills, for example?—My own opinion is yes.

E-3476. In fact, to eliminate the *sardars* as intermediaries and reduce them to the position of supervisors?—Yes.

E-3477. Have the Government of Bengal any views on the question of Local *versus* Central legislation in labour matters?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) I think it will be gathered from the general tenor of much of the material which has been put before the Commission that the Government of Bengal are generally of opinion that legislation should be Central.

E-3478. Can you give any reason in support of that view?—In the first place the Devolution Rules.

E-3479. I am not talking of the position at present?—So far as the future is concerned, I would say, in the first place that as a general proposition provinces would feel happier about labour legislation were they assured that the same conditions were imposed in the whole of India. Another thing is this, that Local Governments under the present system have come to look on the Government of India as an initiator of labour proposals. I suppose that is largely due to the fact that the Government of India is the competent authority for Geneva purposes, and that all the Geneva proposals, recommendations and conventions are dealt with by the Government of India and come to the Local Governments with the views of the Government of India. Geneva promises within a short time to cover every conceivable item in labour legislation.

E-3480. Could you throw any light on the apparent failure of trade unionism to establish itself in this province?—That is a very big question; but I would refer to the number of unions under the heading of "trade combinations" in this memorandum. There have been many labour bodies of sorts in Bengal, and there still are although a relatively small proportion of them are registered; I suppose the first general answer to your question would be that if there are not many effective trade unions in Bengal as compared with other parts of India, then conditions of employment in Bengal must be better. There may be other causes such as the very mixed population a cause which operated in America for a long time against effective trade unionism.

E-3481. You would not maintain that conditions are satisfactory in printing presses generally in Calcutta?—I am not familiar with all printing presses in Calcutta, but I take it from the reports of Chief Inspector of Factories that some are good, some moderate and some bad.

E-3482. You have a population there which is not immigrant and has a certain degree of literacy, but they do not seem to be very effectively organized?—A union has been registered quite recently, how it will function it is difficult to say.

E-3483. With regard to indebtedness, has the Local Government ever taken up the question of whether any legislative measures would be effective in protecting debtors against the money-lender?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) The Usurious Loans Act was passed some time ago.

E-3484. It does not seem to have been very effective?—No.

E-3485. You have no further measures in contemplation?—Not that I know of. The Usurious Loans Act in its present form was passed ten or twelve years ago; it is a Central Act.

E-3486. Can we take it that the results which you give us of an agricultural wages census are more or less reliable and represent the general level of agricultural wages throughout the province?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) I cannot answer that; I take it they are reliable. They are published by the Agriculture and Industries Department.

E-3487. Could those figures be used to provide a measure as to whether a particular industrial wage was adequate or not?—I could not say, as I am not familiar with the census machinery, I know that for the coming census the machinery has been improved.

E-3488. Has the local Government formed any opinion as to the utility of the Boards provided for under the Mines Act?—Under the Mines Act the local Government has to refer certain matters to Mining Boards; the local Government therefore ask for their opinion of the Bengal Board. The Mining Board is useful in this sense, that Government gets the opinion of the Chief Inspector of Mines, who is usually also consulted individually, and of the district authorities. Most of the opinions are, however, usually expressed through other channels.

E-3489. Apart from the district authorities the opinions of all the other authorities concerned, the employers on the Board and the Chief Inspector of Mines, could be made available otherwise?—They actually are made available otherwise, either through the Indian Mining Association or Federation or direct from the Chief Inspector of Mines. The value of the other opinions depends very much on the experience of the individual officers dealing with the case.

E-3490. In your memorandum, in discussing the very large extent to which your industries are carried on by immigrant labour, you say that of the total number of workers 36,000 were born in the United Provinces?—That applies to unskilled workers in jute. There may be some mistake there.

E-3491. You allude to the very small proportion of Bengalis in industry, and especially in the unskilled branches of industry. Does the diminishing proportion represent an absolute diminution or is it simply that the increasing needs of industry have been provided for by other provinces while the number of Bengalis has remained constant?—As far as I remember the figures for a certain number of jute mills give about 176,000 Hindustanies (the people from Bihar and the United Provinces) and about 76,000 Bengalis. That is a bigger proportion than I expected when we started making the enquiry.

E-3492. That figure of Bengalis would presumably include the descendants of immigrants?—I do not know. No distinction was made in the forms. If those figures are correct it would be 70,000 out of about 3¼ to 3½ lakhs which would be about 20 per cent. That is not far out from the census estimate. These figures were taken from the whole area; but the great majority of Bengalis are employed in the mills south of Calcutta. In the early days of the jute industry that labour was largely *Bengali*, but, as the jute industry developed, labour became scarce and intensive efforts were made by employers to recruit in other areas. That was the origin, as perhaps you know, of the Foley-Fremantle Enquiries in 1906. Then once the stream set in from upcountry it flowed very strongly.

E-3493. Why has the Bengali been unable to secure a larger share; is it that the wages are not sufficiently attractive?—No; perhaps it is the other way round, that he does not want the wages. It may also be that the Bengalis are not able to stand up to the long hours so well as upcountry men, but that is a point upon which I am not in a position to express an authoritative opinion.

E-3494. *Miss Power*: Who prosecutes under the Act for the Factory Inspection Department?—The Factory Inspectors.

E-3495. But who conducts the prosecution?—The Factory Inspector in ordinary cases, but he may brief a lawyer to do it.

E-3496. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does not the Factory Inspector instruct a particular lawyer who is an expert in these matters?—Yes, he instructs a certain lawyer, but not necessarily in all cases.

E-3497. *Miss Power*: Does the prosecutor draw the attention of the Magistrate to the inadequacy of fines?—I suppose the prosecutor asks for the heaviest fine possible, but whether he puts before the Magistrate an actual statement of the delinquencies of Magistrates in the past I could not say.

E-3498. Has that point ever been brought to the attention of Magistrates in Bengal?—I have answered that question in reply to Sir Victor Sassoon.

E-3499. Do Government approve of a special Magistrate to try cases of that kind?—My opinion is that, there are only two methods of overcoming this trouble of inadequate fines; one is to amend the legislation and the other is to appoint special Magistrates.

E-3500. How would you amend the legislation?—By proposing minimum fines for second offences, but a special Magistrate seems to me to be preferable.

E-3501. With regard to hours, you say that "the Government of Bengal have carefully considered the question of whether the hours of adult women should be reduced below those of adult men, that on general grounds of humanity and progress they would prefer to recommend a lower working limit for women, but do not do so because if they did, women might be supplanted by young men workers". Does that mean that the Government of Bengal feels that the ideal to be aimed at is a differentiation between the hours for men and women rather than reasonable hours of work irrespective of sex as embodied in the Washington Convention?—The Washington Convention is hardly applicable in this case because the limit of eight hours is not applicable to India at all.

E-3502. I am referring to the principle of a reasonable working day for the industrial worker irrespective of sex?—The view of the Government of Bengal with regard to the hours of women is that ten hours is possibly too long for women workers, but there is no very definite proof that they cannot continue for ten hours without losing efficiency.

E-3503. Then that sentence really does not mean that the Government advocates differential hours between men and women?—No. It only means that if there were to be difficulty in shortening the day women should have prior consideration.

E-3504. On the question of the desirability of a fair wages clause in public contracts, you say that this has never been raised in Bengal and in the present unorganized state of Indian labour the insertion of such a clause in public contracts would serve no useful purpose; in actual practice employees working under contractors have to be paid at least the rates prevailing in the area in which they are employed. I understand that contractors are used very extensively in this Province. Do you actually know that everywhere where contractors are used the workers employed by the contractor get the same wages as those employed by the main employer?—I have no information on that particular point; I have only got information so far as Government departments employ contract labour.

E-3505. So that your information with regard to that sentence really only applies to Government employees?—I have no information on the major point you have raised.

E-3506. Is not the unorganized state of Indian labour the reason why such a clause would serve a useful purpose?—Not necessarily, if the people are getting the wages which are customary in the area.

E-3507. But such a clause would ensure their getting those wages?—I am afraid that particular item was misunderstood. The Government of Bengal have not considered that point. If it were proved that people supplying articles through public contracts were not reasonable in their treatment of labour there would probably be a case for some sort of stipulation.

E-3508. You consider it is necessary to prove that before you would advocate such a clause to protect labour?—Once the principle is granted there is the necessity of organizing a staff for purposes of inspection; that means expenditure of money and one goes back to the fact that Bengal has no money.

E-3509. *Mr. Cliff*: But there are no inspections in England with regard to the fair wages clause in contracts?—If you inserted that clause here how would you enforce it?

E-3510. The suggestion is that you would have to adopt a standard which would gradually be known to the people and they would begin to raise questions?—I thought Miss Power suggested that a fair wages clause should be put into public contracts as something to be enforced by means of inspection.

E-3511. *Miss Power*: You are very definite in your statement that it would serve no useful purpose?—If it were shown that public contracts were held by firms which did not satisfy the Inspectors of Factories as regards conditions, then the question might be raised.

E-3512. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it not a fact that there are no standardized wages even in the organized industry of the jute mills; that is to say different wages are paid for the same work in different mills. Would not that make it difficult for you to specify what is a fair wage?—It seems to be the same problem as arises with regard to minimum wages.

E-3513. *Miss Power*: Supposing the Government were carrying out a big contract, partly by direct and partly by indirect labour, as is the case at the Sukkur Barrage, do you not think it would be fair that there should be a fair wages clause so that those workmen employed by a contractor on exactly the same work as others employed direct by Government should be protected as regards their wages?—I think personally as a general principle it is perfectly fair.

E-3514. Why should it be necessary to have this elaborate investigation, such as you imply, before you concede that protection?—You are taking the case of the Sukkur Barrage where conditions are easily ascertained and there is direct employment. At present in the Public Works Department and the Irrigation Department there are certain rules as to the health conditions of workers who are employed on big contracts. It is included in the Public Works Code.

E-3515. But not with regard to wages?—No.

E-3516. The Chief Certifying Surgeon has said that it would be in the interests of the child operatives and of the Factory Inspection department if whole-time Certifying Surgeons of Factories were given the powers of an Inspector so far as child labour is concerned. Would you agree with that?—That is a question which is under consideration; I could not give you any definite answer at the moment.

E-3517. With regard to women Factory Inspectors do you feel that the industrial woman and child worker in Bengal would benefit now, in 1930, at least as much as the woman and child worker in England benefited from 1890 onwards from the appointment of women inspectors?—I could not speak as to the comparative position, but the Government of Bengal have considered the question of appointing women Inspectors of Factories and have come to the conclusion that it would be better in the first stage if funds were available to appoint a woman who might be called an inspector, and attach her to the Public Health Department to look after matters of health mainly.

E-3518. But that is not a Factory Inspector, is it?—Her main function would be looking after health and women's welfare and reporting on these things; but she could be empowered as a Factory Inspector just as the present Inspector of Septic Tank Installations is empowered as a Factory Inspector though he works under the Director of Public Health.

E-3519. To whom does he report?—To the Director of Public Health and I think also to the Chief Inspector of Factories.

E-3520. So that this woman inspector would be reporting to two departments?—Yes. That is only as a first stage; it is the old question in Bengal of money again.

E-3521. I see you actually propose to appoint one additional inspector?—We propose to appoint one additional inspector and one additional assistant inspector.

E-3522. Could not one of these be a woman?—The Government of Bengal considered that at the time when these proposals were put up and came to the conclusion that it was necessary first to have a full complement of men inspectors. It is a case of getting the absolute essentials first.

E-3523. Then you do not regard a woman inspector as an absolute essential?—Not in that sense; if you could get a qualified woman engineer you might be able to do something.

E-3524. Has not the value of woman inspectors been proved in practically all the European countries?—Yes, I quite agree with that, but I must refer you to the qualifications of inspectors stated in item 139 of the Memorandum of the Government of Bengal.

E-3525. You have had some assistant inspectors without those engineering qualifications?—Not one.

E-3526. In England they appointed women in the first place without those qualifications in order to enforce other parts of the Act affecting women and children?—The view of the Government of Bengal is that we must first get a full complement of men inspectors with engineering qualifications.

E-3527. *Mr. Tassie*: Do the Government of Bengal take up the attitude that the less interference with industry by Government the better?—That is stated in the memorandum. The Government of Bengal so far as non-public utility industries are concerned have adhered to the policy laid down by the Industrial Disputes Committee.

E-3528. *Mr. Cliff*: That is until the last strike?—Yes, the last strike was a very exceptional case.

E-3529. *Mr. Tassie*: I think Mr. Cliff suggested that when labour has no recognized union or representative, a Government representative might act as an intermediary when a strike was anticipated or had started. If Government did that, would not they be at once accused of taking sides?—That is the view I have expressed. Government's duty has been interpreted as keeping the balance and not entering into the disputes of one side or the other; if a Government officer did go in, his action would probably be interpreted as going in on one side.

E-3530. Have not there been cases in which Government have only gone so far as to preserve law and order but have been accused at once of doing this to help the employer?—Yes, such cases have arisen. I have not been concerned with them.

E-3531. It is quite possible that the same thing might happen again: if they rushed in too soon and before they were asked, they would be at once accused of taking the part of the employer?—There is a distinct danger of their being accused of taking the part of one side or the other; I do not say of the employer necessarily.

E-3532. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You remember my resolution in 1921 to enquire into the industrial disputes and to set up machinery?—Yes.

E-3533. The Government accepted the principle that the setting up of machinery was part of the Government's duty?—Yes.

E-3534. An enquiry committee went into the causes of a good many strikes?—Yes.

E-3535. As the result of that enquiry there were two alternative recommendations: (1) to set up this panel and (2) the creation of works committees?—Yes.

E-3536. Soon after that recommendation although the panel was not then constituted, Government appointed a committee to enquire into the dispute on the Light Railway at Howrah?—Yes. The conciliation panel was constituted on the 29th August 1921; the Light Railway strike ended on the 2nd July 1921, before the constitution of the panel, but after the report came out.

E-3537. That conciliation committee settled that strike amicably?—Yes.

E-3538. Then the Government distributed a book on works committees to almost all of the industrialists?—Yes.

E-3539. None of the employers ever thought of starting works committees?—Some of them did.

E-3540. Can you give me one name?—I do not want to give names, but I know that several employers did try their best to start works committees and completely failed.

E-3541. One of the reasons why the panel was not resorted to by the disputants was because you confined its activities to public utility services?—That is the policy stated in this document.

E-3542. When a strike took place on the Light Railway Workshop at Bankra, which is a public utility service, the workshop employees under Martin & Co. made a request that Government should interfere and appoint a conciliation board to investigate their troubles, but Government refused?—I could not give you off-hand the precise details of this strike.

E-3543. I suggest to you that Government refused because they said the employers were not willing?—I could not tell you. My recollection of these strikes is that they all collapsed after the East Indian Railway strike collapsed, that being the main strike from which they arose.

E-3544. In the memorandum on minimum wages which you have submitted, you have given Sir John Kerr's reply to my resolution, but you have not published my resolution giving the facts and figures of the low wages prevailing in certain industries which were the main points of my argument?—If you like we can forward the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council to the Commission. Doubtless you collected these facts with a great deal of trouble but disconnected facts like those would not justify the imposition of minimum wage machinery in any particular trade.

E-3545. When the conciliation board was being discussed Bombay thought the legislation should be provincial while others thought it should be central?—I could not give you any information on the views of the Government of Bombay.

E-3546. In Australia and the United States most of the industrial legislation is State legislation and not Federal legislation. You have written an important book on industrial legislations of the world and you say that most of the important developments in labour legislation have taken place in States and most of the industrial peace legislations are provincial?—Yes.

E-3547. Why do you think industrial legislation, for example this minimum wages machinery legislation, should be Central?—I have not said I agreed to a Minimum Wage Act.

E-3548. Should the Trade Disputes Act be Central or Provincial?—I think I have answered that question in reply to Mr. Clow.

Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: In the United States and Australia most of the industrial legislation is Provincial.

E-3549. *The Chairman*: It has led to a great deal of trouble in Australia and the United States?—And in Canada also there is a great deal of Provincial legislation which has led to very great difficulty with regard to the ratification of conventions by Canada. I said I preferred Central legislation.

E-3550. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Have you made any serious efforts to see that co-operative credit societies are started in the jute mill area?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Within the last three or four months we have started some societies. Before that we had for years four societies in Serampore, which used to finance jute labourers and other people.

E-3551. It was not confined to mill hands?—No, but several thousands of mill hands are members of that society.

E-3552. In all the big head offices in Calcutta, such as Mackinnon Mackenzie, Jardine Skinner and Bird & Co., the clerks have co-operative societies?—Yes, and on most of the railways.

E-3553. When these co-operative societies were inaugurated the employers advanced large sums of money in order to start them?—Yes.

E-3554. Do you think if the employers in the jute mills supplied money to properly constituted co-operative credit societies it would be a good thing?—That depends on whether the employers would think it a safe investment for their money; but of course if they did so it would be helpful.

E-3555. *The Chairman*: If they made contributions in money would you allow them some power of supervision?—Yes, ordinarily we allow it in the case of these employees' societies.

E-3556. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Do you think co-operative shops for the sale of foodstuffs and clothes would be very useful in the jute mill area?—Yes, they would be very useful; we have some.

E-3557. Has your department ever contemplated helping to start such a shop in the jute mill area?—Yes, we have several co-operative stores. Here we have two co-operative stores exclusively for Corporation employees: municipal scavengers and people of that class. The Corporation has helped these shops a great deal.

E-3558. *Mr. Cliff*: Has Government given direct assistance to these co-operative societies?—They give loans free of interest for the first three years from the date of registration of a society.

E-3559. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Have you ever examined the cost of living of jute workers?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) That is answered in the memorandum. There has been no cost of living enquiry into the jute industry.

E-3560. Do you think the cause of indebtedness among the jute workers is low wages?—That question has already been answered.

E-3561. *Miss Sorabji*: Referring to your answer with regard to a conciliation officer, I suppose you would also say that there must be more understanding of the situation by the workmen before conciliation officer can do for them what a conciliation officer can do for workmen in England?—Or by the workmen's leaders and organizations.

E-3562. We have not yet got as far in India in understanding all the legitimate uses of the strike as they have in England?—No, I think that is pretty evident.

E-3563. Do you not think that trade unionism is slow to grow in this country because the workmen do not understand the situation and do not understand what is secured to them by industrial legislation?—It is due to lack of education; these organizations require a certain amount of education as a basis.

E-3564. I presume you are not referring to education with regard to literacy but you mean education in ideas?—Literacy is usually found to be necessary before people can appreciate the objects of organization.

E-3565. If you wait until they can read and write it will take a long time; in the meantime do you not think they should be educated with regard to the privileges and rights already secured to them?—Any propaganda as to privileges and ideals must depend upon a certain amount of literacy.

E-3566. Do you remember what a great effect propaganda had during the war?—Yes.

E-3567. Do you not think that with regard to industrial questions there might be *viva voce* propaganda similar to the propaganda which was carried on during the war?—I think it would be possible to do a good deal by the utilization of employment officers in big concerns.

E-3568. Who do you think could do that?—It would be a matter for industry itself.

E-3569. Do you not think it is a matter for Government because we want to create a better atmosphere as between Government and the people?—That is a wide question on which I am afraid I cannot give a reply.

E-3570. Would it be possible for a labour officer to undertake such propaganda?—It depends what the propaganda is; for instance, propaganda with regard to safety could be done through the Factories Inspection Department or through a labour officer, while propaganda in other things, such as health, could be done through other officers.

E-3571. Who do you think could do propaganda in relation to the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Clearly the Commissioner could not do it and the mills could not very well do it?—The organizations of the workers might do that. Information regarding compensation however percolates very quickly in big industrial centres, where workmen soon come to know of any accident especially where compensation is paid to the victim.

E-3572. We want something more definite than that. With regard to the appointment of a woman factory inspector—she might not be qualified to inspect machinery, but seeing that there is so much more to be done than inspection of machinery and that many men officers are employed and so many more officers necessary to do that—might it not be possible to have one woman factory inspector who could use her powers under the Act to inspect the premises and the employment registers and in fact oversee the human side of the situation?—It is quite possible. There is no question about the possibility of it.

E-3573. Especially seeing that you have a long list of infractions, 42 in number, referring specifically to women and children apart from other infractions which concern women as well as men?—But the very fact that these infractions are shown in the list now proves that the men inspectors are quite capable of detecting irregularities connected with the employment of women and children.

E-3574. Considering the peculiar circumstances of the country such as the nature of the material available in our mill population, their ignorance and the consequent vigorous persuasion necessary to make them observe the rules, would you not think that there is at least as much if not more use for a factory inspector here than in England?—I am not disputing that at all. I concede the principle; it is merely a question of policy as to when to appoint one, and to which particular department the woman inspector should be attached.

E-3575. I gather you were considering the question of coupling the duties of the woman factory inspector with those of a welfare officer working under the Public Health Department. A welfare officer will probably be paid by philanthrophic societies or by the millowners themselves. Would she not be in an anomalous position as a factory inspector inside a factory which finances her work?—I have no knowledge of any private person being asked to do the work of factory inspection. If a woman factory inspector were appointed she would have to be a full-time officer of Government.

E-3576. At any rate you will admit that a woman would be useful as a factory inspector?—That is conceded.

E-3577. With regard to the men coming up to the mills from the villages we find that many of them leave their families behind in order that their wives may attend to the cultivation of the fields and so on. But there are numbers who have no lands at home for their women to look after but still prefer to leave their wives at home and come single to the mills. Do you think that their reluctance to bring their women with them might be due to the fact of the presence of a large number of unattached women in the mill areas?—I could not say that. Probably it is due to the general surroundings.

E-3578. One reason why these unattached women attach themselves to some man or other is that they want protection in the midst of a community where men preponderate. Do you think that the establishment of separate lines for single women apart from men would help them in any way?—I have not considered that question.

E-3579. With regard to the education of the half-timers do you think it would encourage them to attend school if attendance at school was made a condition precedent to employment at the mill?—(*Khan Bahadur Tasaddak Ahmed*) It is difficult to answer that question.

E-3580. With regard to the Apprentices Act of 1850 is there anything in it against the Reformatory Industrial School Committee for instance asking certain selected industries to train boys for suitable occupations? Why should we not do something to test its fitness to present-day conditions?—(*Mr. Weston*) The Reformatory Industrial Schools Committee desire certain industries to train boys but I do not think it is necessary to do that under the Act. The Act was intended to help employers to get hold of suitable apprentices when apprentices were difficult to obtain, but under our present conditions we have got numerous candidates for apprenticeship but what we want is employment for them. I do not think it would help us.

E-3581. With regard to technical education I gather that you say that it is successful as far as it goes but has not gone far enough because of the ignorance and apathy of the *badralok* classes?—Yes, the Bengali *badralok* does not take advantage very readily of such facilities that we have been able to supply. For example they are not willing to pay fees as a rule for the technical education that they get and it is usual for the employer to pay fees to encourage them to come.

E-3582. Would not one way of getting over the difficulty be to spread widely in schools and colleges full information regarding industrial careers for young men as is done in England?—I have here a pamphlet called "Opportunities for an industrial career for young men of Bengal". We have sent this pamphlet to as many places, libraries, schools, etc., as we have information on record in the Industries or Education departments. If any other places to which it can be usefully sent are suggested we will send it along.

E-3583. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have answered various questions regarding the fixation of a minimum wage. Assuming that a minimum wage was fixed it would be higher than the prevailing rates of wages, because the object of fixing minimum wage is that the present wage is insufficient and should be raised?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) Yes.

E-3584. In that case there would be keen competition from the many unemployed to get employed at higher wages?—Normally there would be a bigger demand for posts carrying higher wages.

E-3585. Would not that lead to greater bribery and corruption about which we have heard so much?—The bigger the number that goes to seek a particular post the greater might be the possibility of corruption and bribery. But it is very difficult to say definitely.

E-3586. How would the minimum wage affect the efficiency of piece-workers?—I have not considered that aspect of the question.

The Chairman: That point has been tackled by the Trade Boards in England.

E-3587. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Dealing with the limitation of hours in factories you say in your document on the subject: "So far as the weekly limit is concerned, the above analysis suggests that, as far as Bengal is concerned, there would be no difficulty in adopting a 55-hour week." In the same document you also say: "The local Government also consider that the time has arrived when the possibility of reducing maximum hours, both weekly and daily, should be taken up." That is your definite opinion that the time is ripe now?—That is the view of the local Government.

E-3588. Have you any suggestion to make as regards the daily limit apart from the fact that you have already stated?—The local Government think that the time is now ripe for a reconsideration of the Washington Convention and a reduction of five hours in the weekly and one hour in the daily limit.

E-3589. Dealing with the existing regulations in docks regarding the safety of workers you say: "The local Government agree with the Calcutta Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the present position, under which regulations are issued under an Act of the local legislature, is unsatisfactory and that regulations should be framed on an all-India basis." Has the Government of Bengal taken any further steps in the matter? Have they suggested any regulations themselves regarding the safety of the dock workers?—I expect that the matter will be taken into consideration in connexion with the recommendations of the Royal Commission and the ratification of the Geneva Convention on the subject.

E-3590. Was the Trade Disputes Act put into force before the last strike in the jute mills?—Yes, just before the strike.

E-3591. Why then was not a Court of Enquiry or a Board of Conciliation appointed under the Act?—I have definitely stated the reasons in the memorandum dealing with the subject.

E-3592. If you will pardon my saying so, it is an indefinite reason definitely stated.

E-3593. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to industrial disputes Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola asked you some questions which showed that he was under the impression that there were always disputes in Bengal and that you were never under normal conditions?—I think I have tried to correct that impression.

E-3594. For instance take the last five years. We find that there was on an average 50 disputes every year?—Yes, these figures have been swelled by the post-war strikes in 1921-22.

E-3595. Do they include the disputes in transport, conservancy and other services?—They include all disputes including those of Railways.

E-3596. During the five years ending 1928 I find that the number of men-days lost on account of these disputes is less than a million and a half. I do not know the total number of workers employed having relation to these figures. But we find that the average number of people employed in factories during this period was 550,000. Assuming that they work five days a week or 260 days a year the percentage of men-days lost by these disputes to the total number of men-days that might have been put in is less than one per cent. It would have been much better therefore if these figures had been given in the form of percentages rather than in the form of such huge figures as so many million men-days lost, which gives a most misleading impression even to people like Sir Ibrahim?—I agree that the percentages should have been worked out, otherwise the table gives a misleading impression.

E-3597. *The Chairman*: Is it not a fact, Mr. Gilchrist, that you have defined a dispute as a thing which affects ten or more persons and lasts for a day or more?—Yes.

E-3598. You include in your statistics a dispute which lasts for one day and affects eleven persons?—Yes. A very large proportion of these disputes was in very small concerns.

The Chairman: That should be stated in explanation of the statistics; otherwise it is likely to lead to wrong impression.

Sir Alexander Murray: Looked at from that point of view there have been only fifty disputes a year or an average of one per week including small disputes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

CALCUTTA

Monday, 17th February 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.,
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Sir CHARLES STUART-WILLIAMS, Kt., Chairman, Mr. W. A. BURNS, Traffic Manager, and Commander NORCOCK, Deputy Conservator, representing the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta.

E-3599. *The Chairman*: Will you explain the scope and responsibility of the Commissioners?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) Our work is roughly divided into two classes: the work which is associated with the landing or shipping of goods, and the work which is associated with the provision of proper facilities for vessels. These two sets of functions are governed by two Acts: the former by the Calcutta Port Act, which is a Government of Bengal Act, and the latter by the Indian Ports Act, which is a Government of India Act. There is, of course, in addition a great deal of ancillary work, a very considerable amount of railway work, a good deal of warehousing as distinct from landing and shipping, a certain amount of what may be called trade development work, the provision of suitable sites and the giving of suitable facilities to various trades; and in addition, the ordinary responsibilites which attach to maintaining a large staff and a large body of plant, material, machinery and so forth.

E-3600. I suppose by far the greater part of the labour employed within your area is employed by Messrs. Bird & Co. as contractors?—Yes.

E-3601. You tell us in your memorandum that light vessels crews were formerly engaged through the medium of a ship-broker, but the Port Commissioners have discontinued this practice and now recruit men direct. When did you make that change?—Last year.

E-3602. For what reason did you make that change?—There was a general agitation against the use of the broker, of which we were cognizant through the press and unofficially, and it was brought to our notice by Government that these crews were still being engaged through brokers while we were at liberty to engage them direct. We asked ourselves whether there was any reason why we should employ an intermediary there when we employed no intermediary in other departments; we found no satisfactory explanation and so we cut him out.

E-3603. You thought it was the wish of the men themselves that they should be employed directly and not through the broker?—We certainly thought their interests would not suffer. We were not cognizant of any definite grievance or malpractice; we simply saw no reason for the continuance of the intermediary and we were certain we could act as suitably and satisfactorily to the men as the intermediary could.

E-3604. Is it too soon to tell us of any result you observed from the change?—There has been no trouble or difficulty.

E-3605. We have been told that under the other system there was an opportunity of certain exactions from the men; I gather from what you say that you were not aware of that evil?—We had no representations from the men; we had no definite knowledge of anything wrong or irregular.

E-3606. Your experiment is on a small scale covering about 2,000 men altogether?—No, that figure includes the whole of the men associated with the handling of vessels; the men who had been previously engaged through brokers were only the light-vessel crews, between 200 and 300 in the course of a year.

E-3607. With regard to 3,000 men in your workshop you are employing the direct departmental method of recruitment?—Yes.

E-3608. Did you make the change there at the same time?—No; there has been no alteration within my knowledge in regard to the workshop staff.

E-3609. The workshop staff have always been directly engaged?—Yes, I think historically for the reason that the workshops have developed from a very small affair to a considerable undertaking; in the first instance there would be no question of employing any intermediaries for the small shops and so it has grown naturally and easily. The use of the intermediary was confined to the light-vessels crews, who are definitely under articles; it did not cover the use of seamen in the port who are not under articles; so that the change-over is a comparatively small one even for us.

E-3610. With regard to the leave which is given to lascars and others, above the grade of lascar apparently you give one month in a year which is cumulative to the extent of three months. Is that leave with or without pay?—With full pay.

E-3611. These people come back to your service at the expiration of their leave?—Yes; they usually put in quite long periods.

E-3612. Referring to what you say as to welfare, is there any limit of wages for people who can join the provident fund?—The provident fund is divided into two separate sections. There is the full fund which is practically identical with that in vogue on all the railways, namely, the payment of one-twelfth out of each month's pay, the doubling of that amount by the employer and the compounding of interest. To that fund there is a monetary limit of Rs. 45, which is practically identical with the minimum clerical wage, and therefore corresponds roughly to the dividing line between the literate and illiterate. In addition to that there is another fund which covers all men, more of the working classes, under which the employee pays 8 annas per month; a similar 8 annas is paid in by the employers and compound interest is given. The man is given the accumulated balance together with a long service gratuity of half a month's pay for each year's work up to 30 years which is given also to the staff in the other sections. A man of the working class, say a Serang, as soon as he gets more than Rs. 45 a month has the option of joining the larger fund; in some cases he exercises that option while in other cases he does not.

E-3613. How are those two funds distinguished?—We have what we call Schedule X.

E-3614. Are the accounts of the two funds kept separately?—No, the main accounts are kept together, but of course there is an individual ledger account for each individual employee.

E-3615. There are two sections in the same fund?—Yes.

E-3616. Does that go right down to any workman?—Schedule X covers anybody of the working class.

E-3617. Is membership voluntary or compulsory?—It is compulsory as from 1924, for the first section. The second section is still optional and will always be optional until it is clear that no working man can misunderstand it. Larger and larger numbers are taking advantage of it.

E-3618. How long has that section 2 applying to the workmen been in operation?—From April 1924.

E-3619. In what way does a workman signify his desire to be a member of that fund?—There are English and Vernacular circulars; these must be explained by a competent officer in the Vernacular to anybody joining; the man can then fill up a form and become a member.

E-3620. A man wishing to become a member of this provident fund agrees to 8 annas a month being deducted from his pay on the condition stated that an equivalent amount is added to his 8 annas and the two accumulate together at compound interest; he fills up a form or gets it filled up for him and thereupon as long as he works for you he remains a member of that provident fund?—Yes.

E-3621. What happens in the case of discharge or resignation?—In that case he will be settled up; he will be given a bonus under certain conditions; that is to say, the addition of the employers' contribution is due under certain conditions.

E-3622. As a matter of fact do you find workmen whose wages are Rs. 18 or Rs. 20 a month coming forward and asking to join that fund?—Yes, in increasing numbers; taking the case of the departmental labour on the jetty, which is our most important body of departmental labour, roughly one-third have already joined.

E-3623. They have asked to join as individuals?—Yes.

E-3624. And that number is growing and is likely to grow?—Yes.

E-3625. That would seem to indicate a degree of intelligence in what is called illiterate labour that you do not always come across in India?—My experience is that that degree of lack of intelligence can easily be overestimated; I think it is entirely a matter of understanding the position. We have always done our utmost to make them understand.

E-3626. From your experience would you say that even with what is called ignorant and illiterate labour, with the proper amount of interest and care from above, people can be introduced to these provident fund methods of providing for their future?—Yes, always provided there is confidence in the administration.

E-3627. *Mr. Cliff*: Is everybody covered?—The Traffic Manager advises me that the answer cannot be given as an unqualified affirmative. The departmental labour at 19 and 20 berths in the coal dock has not advanced so far along that path. They are men of a different type and possibly not so permanent; at all events the fact remains that they have not advanced quite so rapidly.

E-3628. *Mr. Tassie*: What is the position with regard to sweepers?—Most of that class are pretty good; I could not give you the figures.

E-3629. They can come into it?—Yes.

E-3630. *The Chairman*: I take it from what you have said that it is open to every one?—Yes.

E-3631. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: After three years?—The co-operative credit society has a two-year limit for everybody, but the workshop staff have so far been expected to put in three years' continuous work before they join the provident fund.

E-3632. The other people can join at once?—Yes.

E-3633. It is only the workshop staff who cannot join at once?—Yes, those being men who are daily rated and paid monthly.

E-3634. Your sweepers can join at once?—Yes.

E-3635. But your workshop staff cannot?—* Yes, the difference being a daily contract in the one case and a monthly contract in the other.

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* *N.B.*—Sir Charles Stuart-Williams subsequently corrected this statement by saying that the three-year rule had been abrogated and that all the workshop employees were eligible for the provident fund as from the 1st June 1930.

E-3636. *The Chairman*: I am not quite clear why you should have a different rule?—I think it is a matter which is open to argument and discussion and it is a matter we propose to take up. The idea behind it is that the workshop man is a daily contract man and you must have some idea that he is going to settle down with you before you consider these benefits. I think you will find something similar in the case of the railway workshops.

E-3637. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If after three years he wishes to join and is prepared to pay up the arrears for the three years can he join the fund and be regarded as having joined from the beginning?—That has not been done so far.

E-3638. *The Chairman*: I suppose you do not feel justified in making your half contribution until you feel that the workman has more or less settled?—Yes, that is the reason.

E-3639. In your memorandum, you tell us "Leave is taken by the Deputy Conservator's staff to the full extent allowed by the rules." You have told us already that that is leave with pay?—Yes.

E-3640. "On an average the staff must go to their homes at least every other year for about two months." That is definite and recognized leave. Does the workman take any card with him or is he given any paper to present when he returns from his leave?—Yes, he gets a slip sanctioning his leave and he draws his pay on return for that leave period.

E-3641. Have you had that system in operation for some time?—Yes, but it has led to a practice which I do not altogether like, that the man very often on the strength of his sanctioned leave borrows from the money-lender before he goes away and reimburses the money-lender on his return. One does not know how much the money-lender makes out of it. (*Commander Norcock*) It is one anna in the rupee.

E-3642. Do you consider that this custom of returning to their country periodically either once each year or for a longer period every two years contributes to the health and maintains the physique of the workman?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) I would not like to say that they live under any more healthy conditions there than they would here. But looking at it from the humanitarian point of view it is a very natural desire on their part and one to which we have no objection; it makes them more contented. I am not sure whether it is more healthy.

E-3643. Then it is a custom which you readily recognize?—Yes.

E-3644. And you base your labour requirements on that acknowledged system?—Quite.

E-3645. Under 'Wages' you say: "There are individual cases of indebtedness, but the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month or 25 per cent of his income." On what do you base that?—Have you yourselves given your men any facilities with regard to remittances?—No, we do not do that except in one instance, the light vessels men who are away for two months at a time; we remit to their homes on their account.

E-3646. That is an allotment that they make?—Yes.

E-3647. Is that an allotment limited in scope or is it open to them to allot anything they like?—It is open to them to say how much they will send.

E-3648. They are not limited to one-third or one-fourth as we are told the sea-going men are?—No.

E-3649. One of those men can allot, say, even three-fourths of his pay if he so pleases?—Yes. That statement with regard to Rs. 5 is based, I think, on observation and information as to the cost of living in relation to the pay earned; I should think it is a fair approximation.

E-3650. When you say the amount of leave allowed is not sufficient for the average coolie, does that suggest that you are considering a change in that respect?—No, I cannot say that; it is simply that men of that class when they go to their homes, owing doubtless to the cost of the journey and so on, like to stay at home for some longer period than can ordinarily be covered by sanctioned leave.

E-3651. All it means is that the sanctioned leave is sometimes, or perhaps often, outstayed?—That is so.

E-3652. Then if a man outstays his recognized leave I suppose he is struck off?—After he has overstayed his leave for seven days he is struck off. Of course that does not debar him from coming again to be placed on the roster, but he would then have lost his place.

E-3653. He is then treated as a new comer?—Yes.

E-3654. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If a man joins the provident fund and then goes away after working a year or two does he get any benefit?—They get their own money with interest, but they only get the contribution after five years from the time they joined unless invalided or discharged because their posts are abolished. In the case of death the surviving relations are paid irrespective of length of service.

E-3655. With regard to organization of managing staff, you say "The relations between officers and men are good and the personal touch accounts largely for the satisfactory manner in which work is performed." You make a similar statement with regard to Chittagong. What is meant by the words "personal touch"?—It means that the foremen and assistant foremen are moving round during the whole of the day, are always available to help a man, take an interest in the more promising men and so forth. That is so with regard to workshops, jetties and the men afloat. The jetties have a superintendent and a deputy superintendent, in addition to the shed officers and others; these men are moving about all the time.

E-3656. That is to say their immediate superiors are in touch with the men?—Yes.

E-3657. But not the higher class of officers?—Yes, up to the Jetty Superintendent himself, who makes a personal round at least every morning, if not twice a day. I do not want it to be thought that the Jetty Superintendent knows every man individually; I do not think that is possible; but if a man has a very definite grievance he can always speak to the Jetty Superintendent. There is no hiatus between the Jetty Superintendent, the Harbour Master and the Works Manager and the men working under them.

E-3658. Are complaints frequently received?—I do not think there are many cases where a man feels he has a definite personal grievance; I do not hear of many.

E-3659. Do you think the foremen who are the immediate superiors of the men restrain men by threats from going to the superior officers and making their complaints?—I have no evidence so far of anything of that kind.

E-3660. Do you think that would account for the fact that no grievances are brought by the men to the superior officers?—No, I should not think that at all; I rather think the feeling is the same right through the supervising staff and there is no sort of cloaking or humbug as between the subordinate and supervising officers. From the headman downwards personal attendance in the workshops, on the ships or on the jetties is a necessary concomitant of their work. The officers all watch the work done during a portion of each day, they see how it is being done; they are available if there is any reason for complaint. (*Mr. Burns*) There may be 150 labourers working in a shed under a shed master. I would expect that shed master to know most of those men. If the men have any complaint as to any trouble in their lines, not getting leave or wanting to stay away, they would refer to their shed master. Over and above that the Deputy Jetty Superintendent visits the sheds twice a day; the shed master would either bring the men to the Deputy Jetty Superintendent on his rounds or else he would send the man with a note to the Deputy Jetty Superintendent telling him what the trouble was. I have known of a Deputy Jetty Superintendent who had been a long time on the jetties and he was regarded by the jetty staff, as being, to use an Indian phrase, their father and mother. He knew all their wants, and they would come to him if they had any trouble whatever.

E-3661. Are the shed masters on the same footing as *sardars* employed in jute factories?—I do not know what is the position of *sardars* employed in jute factories. The shed masters are mainly ex-soldiers or Anglo-Indians who have risen from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 a month up to Rs. 300 or Rs. 600; they are highly competent and experienced men, as they must be to run a shed; they have a very intimate knowledge of labour.

E-3662. *Mr. Clow*: Who makes enquiries into the causes of accidents?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) Serious accidents are governed by a set of rules somewhat resembling those in force on railways; that is to say a departmental court of enquiry is held, on which there would probably be an engineer, a traffic man and possibly a representative of the Marine Department. Their report comes to my office; an important case I see myself. Suitable action is taken on the basis of their recommendations.

E-3663. Would it not be desirable that accidents happening to your employees should be investigated by an authority independent of you?—My personal answer is that I do not think there would be any gain, but I would like to know what you mean by a serious accident.

E-3664. I mean any accident causing serious injury. I am not talking of workshops?—A railway accident is dealt with under the Railway Board's rules by the Government Officer, and workshop cases come under the Factories Act; that only leaves the work on the jetty. If there appears to be criminal negligence, the police take action through the public prosecutor. I do not see who else you would introduce unless you had Board of Trade Inspectors.

E-3665. I was thinking of the British system when an officer under the Chief Inspector of Factories would be brought in?—As far as we are concerned there would be no objection whatever; it would simply mean that instead of sending our railway accidents to the railway man and marine accidents to the Principal Port Officer and so on, you would have another section with a corresponding officer who would consider the report of our committee and whether further investigation was necessary.

E-3666. Does the departmental enquiry system cover an accident on a ship?—No, not so far as we are concerned, unless our crane man is involved. That would come under the Principal Port Officer acting in another section of his department and not concerning us.

E-3667. With regard to workmen's compensation, you say "Compensation has been paid in the cases of five jetty coolies since the Act was passed." Does that refer to the Act of 1923 which came into force in 1924?—Yes.

E-3668. That seems to be an extraordinarily small number, particularly as you append one of your orders which says "accidents resulting in injuries to coolies are becoming far too frequent at the jetties"?—That refers mainly to accidents of a minor kind which are dealt with by giving a coolie full pay and sending him to hospital. That figure is, I think, correct. I will verify it, but I do not see any reason to suppose it is incorrect because I hear of all the cases and I do not think there is a large number.

E-3669. Under "workmen's compensation" when you speak of section 31 (i) (h) what are you referring to?—That is our own Act, the Calcutta Port Act of 1890, under which we have always had powers to give compensation.

E-3670. *Mr. Cliff*: Perhaps the explanation is that there are five cases which are absolutely payable under the Workmen's Compensation Act, but you have paid compensation apart from that?—Yes.

E-3671. That does not give the number of accidents that have actually occurred?—No. If liability for compensation has been equitably incurred it has been paid under our own Act. But, speaking without having verified the facts, I can say that all cases other than those coming under the Workmen's Compensation Act would be cases of temporary injury which were treated in a hospital, the men getting full pay and treatment during that period and then coming back to work; that is to say they would not be cases involving permanent loss or partial loss of capacity.

E-3672. Have you any statistics of fatal accidents in the port? The port is a well defined area?—Yes.

E-3673. I would like the number of accidents happening to all those engaged other than as seamen?—Yes. (*Sir Alexander Murray*) The Workmen's Compensation Act covers dock labourers employed in a dock where mechanical or electrical power is used but it does not cover accidents in the stream?

Mr. Clow: I think that has been covered by notification.

E-3674. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I should like an assurance that it covers all the workmen not only in your docks but engaged in connexion with port work in the stream?—I cannot give you figures of accidents happening on vessels at moorings in the stream; although it is within our jurisdiction I should not necessarily be informed of such accidents.

E-3675. Do you accept responsibility for workmen's compensation to all your work—people whether employed in the docks or outside the docks?—We have taken a liberal view in any doubtful cases; we have interpreted the law as liberally as possible. In Bombay a man was injured while unloading a railway wagon; it was considered doubtful whether he came under the Act; I think they refused to pay but an award was made against them. In a case of that kind we should always pay because we always take the liberal view.

E-3676. *Mr. Clow*: Who employs persons engaged in work such as scaling in the dry dock and that sort of thing?—Work in dry dock is controlled by a limited number of firms to whom we give facilities in providing small godowns and that sort of thing; they bring their staff and do the work themselves.

E-3677. Supposing a man working on the side of a ship in dry dock fell and was killed on the floor of the dock, who would make the investigation?—We should get a report as to the accident which would be supplied to the police. The police would hold an enquiry in which our staff might be represented and would certainly be called as witnesses; but responsibility for investigating such an accident would not lie with us.

E-3678. Who is responsible for preventing accidents of that kind?—I should think we are responsible in a general way; that is to say, we are responsible for providing reasonable safeguards.

E-3679. But you are not responsible for slings and things of that kind?—No, I do not think that would be our responsibility with regard to a man actually working on a ship in dry dock.

E-3680. Have you considered the provisions of the draft Convention adopted last year at Geneva with regard to the loading and unloading of ships?—I have seen it.

E-3681. Have the Port Commissioners considered what, if any, action they should take under it?—No; I do not think we have had an official reference on that matter. In any case it is so vague that it is of very little practical value.

E-3682. I think one of your senior officers assisted in framing it?—(*Mr. Burns*) I do not think we have definitely considered it.

E-3683. With regard to hours, you say "Probably the coolie himself would be the first to resent any enforced stoppage on Sundays and holidays". That is hardly a valid reason for not compelling him to take a weekly holiday?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) The coolie can stay away if he does not want to work.

E-3684. How many days' work a week does he get ordinarily?—Ordinarily six days work. The number of vessels working on Sunday is certainly less than half. (*Mr. Burns*) He would never have to work more than two Sundays a month. If he does not want to work he can stay away. He would then be marked absent for that day and would lose one day's pay.

E-3685. Is this labour employed with complete regularity?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) Absolute complete regularity; it is not casual at all; if a man is employed he stays on until by his own act or owing to ill-health he leaves us.

E-3686. With regard to Chittagong you say: "Payment is made during the first week of the month to all except the daily paid staff at the workshops, whose wages for the month are paid on the 15th of the following month". What would be the difficulty in paying them at the beginning of the month?—We could not pay everybody on the same day or even within the first two or three days of the month without maintaining a staff of pay clerks who would have no work to do during three-fourths of the month.

E-3687. This is described as the daily paid staff?—I think that means that is daily rated staff paid monthly; for instance, fitters are daily rated men getting Rs. 1-8-0 a day and they are paid at the end of the month; if they work 24 days they are paid Rs. 36.

E-3688. Would it be very difficult to pay them by the day?—It would be almost impossible and I should think most objectionable from his point of view ; he would merely fritter the money from day to day ; I do not see any advantage in it.

E-3689. At present Bird & Co. seem to be paying a lot of their coolies every day. We saw them actually being paid by the basket?—(*Mr. Burns*) That is casual labour.

E-3690. I am suggesting that 15 days is rather a long time to keep back the wages of people who are on daily rates?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) It is only felt on the first occasion, on which they receive pay.

E-3691. Would it not be possible to divide up the workmen into batches who would be paid on different days of the month?—I am afraid that cannot be done ; you must start with the end of the month. If a man starts on the 1st January he receives his pay on the 15th February. Admittedly six weeks is a long time to wait, but when he has once got over that first period he is then paid regularly each month. The staff have to be paid on pay sheets which must be prepared with great care at the end of the month by a limited number of clerks in the individual office where they are employed. Those clerks start work on the last day of the month or the first day of the following month. All the pay sheets are got out in about two days; they then have to go to head office to be audited and then payment begins.

E-3692. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How long after the end of the month can you get your pay sheets made out, scrutinized, audited and returned for payment?—It depends a good deal on the pay sheet. In the case of the regular staff I think it would be done in three to four days; in the case of some of the other staff it would be more difficult.

E-3693. *The Chairman*: We have actually come across cases where much more rapid payment has been effected by dealing with the people in sections so that work both of making up the pay rolls, checking accounts and making payment is more or less spread over the month instead of accumulating at the end of the month ; do you not think it would be possible for you to follow that system?—I should like to consult the Chief Accountant about a matter of that kind ; it is difficult to say because it is quite possible that the men who are occupied in doing pay list work at the end of the month are doing other work during the other parts of the month.

E-3694. We have been impressed by a certain number of cases where we have seen it done with obvious economy in staff requiring no addition to the pay clerks or accounting department and with considerable convenience to all parties?—I think a good deal would depend upon the size of the undertaking and other things of that kind. Ours is a small undertaking compared to the railways in regard to the number of staff ; and they could do economically what we could not do economically. But one point I wish to make it clear and that is that when a man gets his one month's pay it makes very little difference to him whether he is paid on the 1st or on the 15th. That is the basis of the whole argument.

E-3695. That is an argument that we have heard everywhere, but we have actually seen in practice a more modern system, more corresponding with the European system, which has certainly not cost an anna more to the employer and which is of greater benefit to the worker?—We are quite prepared to investigate that and see whether it could be worked.

E-3696. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would you say that your supervision of your men is similar to that exercised by Messrs. Bird & Co.?—I think our supervision is possibly more expensive, and therefore possibly more efficient.

E-3697. You think it is more efficient because it is more expensive?—I think so.

E-3698. Do you have the same relationship between your supervising staff and the men or you have better relationships than they claim to have?—I think we can claim that we have better relationships because our staff are more permanent and take a bigger interest in the undertaking.

E-3699. Would you say that there is any chance of bribery going on between the leading ratings and the actual labour?—That is a question that is extremely difficult to answer by yes or no. I am not quite clear what you mean by bribery and corruption in this connexion. For instance, if a man pays for nomination to a job, is that bribery?

E-3700. Yes. I suppose we can call it an illicit commission?—I should not like to say that that does not happen.

E-3701. It might be that one might be paying a little amount every week to the man who got him the job. Although you would naturally like to discourage it, you do not say that it has been completely stamped out?—I would say that there is nothing like that as regards the higher supervising staff, and I would also say that it is extremely improbable as regards the subordinate supervising staff. But when you come to a little lower rank I would not like to say that it is impossible.

E-3702. You have no actual knowledge of the extent to which it does exist?—We have had no complaints. The only evidence we have on that point is this: When we had a strike of the lascars seamen about two or three years ago I called to my room about a dozen of the representatives of the men chiefly concerned to ask what their grievances were. They told me that their grievance was with regard to pay. I said to them "Before we go further I want to know exactly whether you have any other grievance in regard to the conditions of service, whether you have any grievance in regard to *dasturi* or *zoolum* and that sort of thing", and the answer that they gave was a definite no. How much value you can attach to that negative it is for the Commission to decide. I naturally attached a limited significance to it, but that is what they definitely stated at that time.

E-3703. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Regarding your provident fund, do I understand that it is open to any employee of the trust to join the fund?—The actual rule reads as follows: "All employees on pay less than Rs. 45 a month who joined the Commissioner's service on or after the 1st April 1924 can, with certain exceptions, become members of the provident fund on the following terms . . ."

E-3704. What are the exceptions?—(*Mr. Burns*) It is not properly used. The exceptions refer to purely temporary men who are engaged for a definite period; otherwise, there is no class of staff which cannot join the fund.

E-3705. Can your daily-rated men join the fund?—They come under workshop establishment. There is a limitation of three years.

E-3706. We have been discussing this question during the course of our tour, and we have been told by people who employ labour, such as you do, that where there is frequent coming and going of labour the trouble of keeping accounts is so enormous that they did not think it advisable to allow workers of that description to join the provident fund. Do you make your contribution of 8 annas from the very beginning of a man joining the fund, and if he goes away, say, at the end of 5 months or a year, do you pay him the contribution?—The difficulty you indicated is really one of the reasons for the existence of the 8 annas fund arrangement. As soon as the man is competent to become a member and wants to become a member, the thing comes into force; 8 annas is deducted and 8 annas is added; his account is opened in that way.

E-3707. How many years has he to serve before he could get the full contribution?—For five years.

E-3708. Could you please send a copy of the constitution of your provident fund and of the co-operative credit society and also a copy of your latest accounts?—Yes.

E-3709. Under the head "unskilled labour" you give us a figure of 1,745. Does that cover all your unskilled labour?—(*Mr. Burns*) No. It does not include the labour at the 20-coal berths, nor does it include the tea warehouse labour.

E-3710. Will you kindly give us the total number of workers that you have in the docks under the head, seamen, workshop labour and unskilled labour?—Yes.

E-3711. What are the hours of work for the labour employed by you?—7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 5 a.m.; we have two periods of ten hours each.

E-3712. How do you ensure that the men who work during the day do not also work during the night?—(*Mr. Burns*) Messrs. Bird & Co. supply the night labour; in the day time it is supplied by ourselves.

E-3713. Let us take the loading hands, the transit shed porters and the warehouse porters. Do none of these work at night?—No, unless they get smuggled into the Bird & Co's. *tirca* labour.

E-3714. Do you not employ labour at night?—No, not at the jetties.

E-3715. Anywhere else?—At the coal berths the men work on 8-hour shift.

E-3716. How do you know that a man works only for 8 hours and does not work for 16 hours, or for that matter 24 hours, out of 24 hours?—If he were working more than 8 hours I should have expected that man to make a complaint immediately.

E-3717. Do you keep any registers?—Yes; there is a record kept of men that work. The men are divided into three different groups, and the names are all kept by the labour supervisor; they are summoned according to their turns if there is work.

E-3718. Apart from the fact that the man will make a complaint if he is being worked for 16 or 24 hours out of the 24, how do the port authorities know that a man is not being worked for more than his 8 hours in the 24?—The labour supervisor who is in charge of the labour knows almost all the men individually.

E-3719. *The Chairman*: I take it that no man could do two shifts, to say nothing of doing three shifts; it is physically impossible?—I have already said that the man himself would complain.

E-3720. *Sir Alexander Murray*: As a matter of fact, we know that in Bombay some men work for 24 hours, and the next day they are laid-off.

E-3721. *Mr. Tassie*: In your case the men would not get paid if they work more than one shift?—That is so.

E-3722. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Your men are daily-rated men?—No; they are all monthly coolies. There is nothing casual about their employment whatsoever. Mr. Cliff and you saw a number of them in the lines, when you visited the other day, doing nothing although they are paid for that day.

E-3723. I see, for instance, that your warehouse porters get Rs. 17 or Rs. 18 a month. Messrs. Bird & Co. evidently pay their men at a higher rate. Do you find any complaints coming along?—Our men are more regular and they have, in a way, more privileges; they get free housing and overtime.

E-3724. Under the head 'Safety', you say that there were only 25 injury leave cases in September 1928. Does that indicate that you expect more than 25 in a month?—The 25 cases in September are in relation to the total head of labour.

E-3725. Out of 1,745 workers, I take it?—(*Mr. Burns*) 1,500 at least at the jetties. The figure of 1,745 that we have shown is the maximum figure budgeted for. At the busy time the figure would be about 1,500.

E-3726. You might have in September 25 injury cases out of 1,500?—Something like that. Of these some might be slight injury cases. For instance, if a man has cut his feet or finger very slightly, that would be classed as an accident.

E-3727. Naturally, because evidently you pay the man his full pay?—Yes.

E-3728. Could you give us a tabulated list of accidents at the jetties since the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force?—These are the figures for the year 1929: There were 278 slight accidents, 12 serious accidents and two fatal accidents.

E-3729. Could you send us a tabulated statement from 1921 up-to-date?—Yes.

E-3730. You say: "As compensation, the Port Approaches' men receive provisions or provision allowance . . . " What will be the percentage of his pay that you give him as provision allowance?—(*Commander Norcock*) When we are unable to supply provisions ourselves we give Rs. 8-8-0 a month as provision allowance.

E-3731. What will be the pay of the man who draws this Rs. 8-8-0 allowance?—He may be a *manjee* or a lascar.

E-3732. His pay would be Rs. 17 or Rs. 18?—More than that; it might go up to Rs. 32.

E-3733. When you pay Rs. 18 and upwards as pay, then they get an allowance of Rs. 8-8-0 over and above that; the allowance has nothing to do with the amount of pay drawn?—It has nothing to do with the pay at all.

E-3734. Dealing with the question of housing, you say: " . . . accommodation is provided for 342 men, but the actual number now in occupation is 284." It is rather exceptional to find houses available but not occupied. Has that any relation to the allowance to which you refer by saying " House allowance is paid at Rs. 1-8-0 a month for porters and Rs. 2 a month for other classes, when men do not care to live in Commissioners' quarters." Why do you keep empty houses and pay house allowance?—It may seem a strange arrangement but it is a very difficult thing to stop it. On the whole, it is better to have such an arrangement when some men prefer to live outside.

E-3735. You think that the man should have the freedom to choose whether to live in the house built by the trust which we found to be a very nice lodging, or to live outside and get an allowance of Rs. 1-8-0 or Rs. 2 a month?—There is a reason for that that may not have occurred to you. Our housing is a long distance from the jetties where they work. They are taken down by a special passenger train. It naturally takes a little time for them to get down to work, and they therefore prefer to have housing accommodation nearer their work if possible.

E-3736. Dealing with the rules regarding granting of leave and holiday allowances to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department, you say that you give your labour leave provided no additional expense is incurred by the appointment of substitutes. Does that mean that a menial labourer does not get his holiday?—No; he gets his holiday all right. One of the other men carry on his work while he is away because he does the same thing for him in turn.

E-3737. You say that these leave rules apply both to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department. That covers not merely the menials but all the labour in the traffic department?—(*Mr. Burns*) Yes. I have got a complete list of staff to which that applies.

E-3738. You might send it in?—Yes.

E-3739. Do you give your men full pay when they are off during sickness?—If the sickness is in any way due to their work, of course we do.

E-3740. Messrs. Bird & Co. gave us to understand that they give their monthly hands full pay during sickness. I wondered whether you had anything of that description?—To which particular section of the staff are you referring now?

E-3741. I am not speaking of the skilled workers. Take, for instance, your loading hands, transit shed porters and the warehouse porters?—(*Mr. Burns*) In our memorandum you will see the details given under 'Leave on full pay.' That includes the full leave to which they are entitled unless the men have been actually injured in the execution of their duties. Beyond that there is no leave on pay.

E-3742. *Mr. Ahmed*: How many ferry-boats belonging to the Port Commissioners are now lying on the river Hooghly?—There are nine in all; three are usually on the north of the bridge working regularly and the balance on the south of the bridge.

E-3743. The crews who work in those ferry-boats work from 6 o'clock in the morning till 8-30 in the evening, is it not?—They are nominally on duty during this period.

E-3744. Do they not actually work during this period?—They are actually on duty during that time, but their work, as you know, is intermittent. In the early part of the day up to 10 o'clock or thereabouts the vessel is working without intermission and again about the time that clerks leave their office the traffic becomes brisk. But during the middle of the day there are periods when the vessel is lying aside the pontoon, and they have periods of rest then. This does not apply to the serangs, because there are two of them supplied for each vessel and they divide the period during which the vessel is actually running between them.

E-3745. *Mr. Tassie*: These men live on board?—Yes.

E-3746. *Mr. Ahmed*: Both day and night?—They have no residence on the shore at all.

E-3747. They sleep on board the steamer?—That is so.

E-3748. In open space of exposure of cold wind?—There is accommodation down below; they do not have to sleep on the deck.

E-3749, From 6 in the morning till 8-30 in the evening they cannot leave the steamer?—(*Commander Norcock*) In actual fact, there are always one or two coming to the shore; there are sufficient numbers to allow that; they make arrangements amongst themselves to go out in turns.

E-3750. If they are to be on duty from 6 in the morning till 8-30 in the evening, how can they leave the steamer?—They are not on duty all the time, because the vessel is not running.

E-3751. *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Ahmed's point, I think, is whether they can leave the boat altogether between those hours?—(*Mr. Burns*) They can leave within those hours with the permission of the ferry superintendent. I understand that the men suffer no hardship from any refusal on his part to give them reasonable facilities to go to the shore. I have never had a complaint on that point.

E-3752. *Mr. Ahmed*: If they take leave their pay will be deducted?—Certainly not; there is no deduction of pay. They are paid for the whole period.

E-3753. Can they leave the steamer, say, for five minutes?—Not without getting definite permission from the ferry superintendent.

E-3754. In your memorandum you make a statement that the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month. Can you tell us what is the cost of living for a man, his wife and two children?—I cannot tell you.

E-3755. You say that Rs. 5 represents 25 per cent of his earnings. Do you mean to say that a man, his wife and two children can live on Rs. 15 a month?—I am afraid I cannot add to what I have already said in this connexion.

E-3756. *Mr. Cliff*: Dealing with the question of saving of Rs. 5, do a considerable proportion of your men have their families in upcountry?—I think most of them have their families in upcountry.

E-3757. When you say they can or do save Rs. 5 is that after they have made provision for their family in the upcountry?—I do not take it to mean that. It means that after allowing a reasonable provision for his whole cost of living he must have Rs. 5 saving at least; I think possibly a little more.

E-3758. On the question of safety, dealing with regulations in docks, I see that this matter has been under review by the local Government, and they state: "The local Government agree with the Calcutta Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the present position, under which regulations are issued under an Act of the local legislature, is unsatisfactory, and that regulations should be framed on an all-India basis." They go on to say that there is a difference of opinion between the local Government and the Port Commissioners. The local Government apparently are in favour, and support the British precedent, whereby regulations for the safety of dock workers are framed under the Factory and Workshop Acts. "Both the Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce are opposed to this on grounds which are not made clear in their letters." Can you tell us the reason for your opposition to that?—I am afraid I cannot answer without looking up the papers again. It is probably a matter of machinery rather than anything more vital.

E-3759. The Government are pointing out to us that your suggestion apparently would mean the creation of a new department or new departments, and their point is that they want to keep it under the factory regulation, under the same inspectors?—I think perhaps it is a matter of practicability rather than anything else. We have always taken a liberal view and tried to bring possibly as much under the Act as we reasonably could be expected to; it is not a question of, so to speak, economy or anything of that kind.

E-3760. I believe in other places I have heard a contention that it should be under a Ports Act. That would mean a separate machinery. I am wondering whether that is the ground that you are traversing?—We should have no objection whatever to accepting the principle of liability within our own limits.

E-3761. Government are for extending the scope of the Factories Act and having the inspection and the enforcement under regulations framed under the Act itself. Have you got any opposition to that?—The difficulty is probably to say what is a factory. Are you going to call it a factory if there are none of the factory conditions attached to it? For instance, if you are loading a bullock-cart, which is as safe an operation as one can well imagine, is that a thing which could or should be brought under factory regulations.

E-3762. The claim made is that all menial labour engaged on the dock should be brought within the safety regulations?—We agree in principle.

E-3763. Will you send us a copy of your letter written to Government in this connexion?—Yes.

E-3764. The Chief Inspector of Factories in his memorandum says: "During the construction of the King George's Dock many serious and fatal accidents occurred, and generally the dependants of the deceased and the injured workers received compensation; but a dispute over a particular fatal accident in which the Port Commissioners sought to establish their right to refuse compensation, brought to light the helpless position of a large number of workers on account of their being outside the protection of the Indian Fastories Act." Government propose that all menial labour in docks irrespective of their employment should be brought within the provisions of the Act. Is there any opposition from the Port Commissioners to all classes of menial labour being brought under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No. I think we specifically said we had no objection, to a later reference. I should like to make one point clear. If a case occurred of death or serious injury which did not come under the Workmen's Compensation Act, it must not be assumed that we did not pay compensation; we always pay compensation at least as liberally as we should have done under the Act.

E-3765. With regard to the 80 per cent of the labour which is employed under contractors, do you exercise any control over the rates of wages, the hours of labour and the conditions of service, and is there any clause governing that in your contract?—No.

E-3766. Does it mean that a dispute can occur with the contractor and the work on the dock may be stopped and you have no power to intervene?—Probably you are thinking of strikes. When the work begins to suffer we should begin to take an interest in the matter, and we should be in constant touch with the contractor.

E-3767. I am wondering what interest you take before the work begins to suffer, that is, before the trouble actually arises?—We should not take action until the work begins to suffer.

E-3768. May I apply that in another way? I see your memorandum says that you had a strike and that later two officers of the Port Trust were appointed to investigate into the matter and they made recommendations which were subsequently adopted by the Port Commissioner. I see that these two officers of the Port Trust put forward reasoned arguments in respect of certain increases. I want to know whether any reasoned argument was put before the strike occurred by any officers of the Trust?—One of the two officers to whom you referred was the then Deputy Harbour Master, a man with long service here; and the other was the senior assistant accountant whose speciality was the establishment work. They were given full powers to report and investigate in the fullest degree. They went round to every section of the staff concerned and heard them practically in every case directly. One of these two officers was speaking the language very well indeed; he was an Anglo-Indian; and as far as my information goes, I should say that every section of the staff concerned had an opportunity of stating their case before these two officers.

E-3769. That is not my point. What you say happened after the strike occurred; I am concerned with the happening before the strike. It appears that a couple of months before the strike occurred a union was formed,

Apparently the men were discontented. Dealing with the point of contact that Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola put to you, was there any consideration given or any recommendations made by any of the supervisors in the Port to the Port Trust itself with regard to increasing the rates of wages of the particular people whose wages have now been increased?—There was one set of recommendations put up which was accepted and embodied in the final settlement.

E-3770. Were they put up before the strike?—The officer in charge of the department, that is, the Harbour Master, made certain recommendations which I accepted and got sanction for; these were not accepted by the men, and they demanded much larger concessions.

E-3771. What date was that?—That was before the strike.

E-3772. How long was it before the strike?—A short time before the strike. I was unable to accept the whole of their demands.

E-3773. Is it a matter of weeks or months?—Weeks.

E-3774. Is there any objection on the part of the Port Trust to establish a permanent machinery to help men to make representations on matters arising out of their employment?—We have always taken up the attitude that we would recognize any registered trade union if we were satisfied that it was thoroughly representative of the body which it presumed to represent and had a reasonable proportion of actual workers on the executive committee of the union. But so far that has not led to any real effective work. Personally I would prefer an internal organization, a small representative body of the workers which would work directly under the head of the department to an outside agency composed of a good proportion of lawyers for instance.

E-3775. Have you got any internal machinery?—No.

E-3776. The union that was in front of us the other day said that you asked for their rules and constitution as a condition precedent to recognition?—Yes, that is correct.

E-3777. Do you as a Port Trust go any further than the Indian Trade Unions Act?—I do not quite know how far the Act goes, but certainly we want to be satisfied that the union is thoroughly representative.

E-3778. Before I come to the point of the representative character of a union, I believe surely the Port Trust does know the terms of the Indian Trade Unions Act and the conditions on which registration can be obtained?—Yes.

E-3779. Is the Port Trust prepared to accept that as a basis of recognition?—I think before you deal with a body that claims to be representative you must be sure that it is representative.

E-3780. Let me deal with the question of representation. As I understand it the Port have no objection to a combination of their workpeople?—No.

E-3781. Do the Port Trust take the line that until a considerable measure of success has attended the organizing effort of the workers there can be no recognition?—I do not think we have attempted to maintain any limitation of that kind.

E-3782. Can it be taken that when a trade union organization is started amongst your employees, provided the organization is on the general basis of the Indian Trade Unions Act, the question of numbers will not be a bar to recognition by the Port Trust seeing that there must be a beginning to any new organization?—The trouble is that you might have competing parties quarrelling with each other among the same body of workmen concerned. We have that as a matter of fact now.

E-3783. You may have that in a new field, I agree. But that is a matter for the trade unions to co-ordinate amongst themselves. Is not the Port Trust prepared to recognize a union which observes the Trade Unions Act?—But where are we to draw a line? Are we to recognize a union which represents only 10 per cent of the members which it claims to represent?

E-3784. What percentage would you put it at?—It should be more than 50 per cent. But that is my own personal view.

E-3785. Has the Port Trust got any policy at all?—Not in terms of percentages. Speaking from memory I can say that the Port Trust has agreed to recognize a union provided it is registered and is reasonbly representative of the staff concerned.

E-3786. Is that the declaration of policy that is extant now?—There is nothing in writing. That is my understanding of the position any way.

E-3787. What is the attitude of the Port Trust in regard to the weekly rest day?—We favour it subject to the limitations of certain services which will have to be carried out in the same way as on railways. There are certain kinds of work which must go on. I have no reason to suppose that any body of workmen are worked so continuously as to be definitely detrimental to their health.

E-3788. Would you specify one or two exceptions which you say would necessarily have to be made?—For instance there is the ferry service which has to go on according to time table.

E-3789. That could be done surely by relief crews?—Most of our serangs and others are not at all overworked; in fact they are underworked. There are two sets of crews for a total period of 14 hours.

E-3790. Can it be taken that the Port Trust generally favours the weekly rest day—one rest day in seven days?—We have that in the workshop already.

E-3791. But regarding all classes of labour?—The Railwaymen for instance are on 8-hour shifts.

E-3792. I am asking whether with regard to all classes of labour generally speaking the Port Trust is in favour of a weekly rest day?—We never had that problem before us in a definite form.

E-3793. Have the Port Trust considered the question of a reduction of weekly hours?—(*Mr. Burns*) The daily hours were formerly from 6 to 6 but now it has been changed to 7 to 5. That is quite a recent change made since the War about the year 1920 or 1921.

E-3794. That was ten years ago. Is it likely that the Port Commissioners would favourably consider the reduction of weekly hours?—I would not like to commit myself. It strikes me as a very difficult matter to effect. (*Mr. Burns*) Take the Railway staff for example. They have eight hours' turns of duty. They have themselves worked out an arrangement whereby one set of men work 48 hours a week, another set 58 hours a week and a third set 62 hours a week. One set has every third Sunday off and so on. They have different periods of work and rest arranged among themselves and if we were to interfere with their arrangement and lay down another rule the men themselves would be the first to protest.

E-3795. If you simply lowered the basis on which that arrangement was made from its present figure to 48 what would be the difficulty?—At present it is an 8-hour day and even taking it for seven days in the week it works out to less than 60 hours.

E-3796. The same arrangement could be worked at 48 hours a week?—If you shortened the daily hours.

E-3797. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many hours does the lowest class do?—48 hours. The others work 58 and 62 hours making a total of 168 hours.

E-3798. So that if you reduced the maximum to 48 there would be people working less than that, for example, 42, and 40 and so on?—Yes, and we would have to employ more staff obviously.

E-3799. *Miss Sorabji*: As employers of labour would you have any objection to deducting a certain portion of your workers' wages and crediting it to a trade union fund if your workers so desired?—We have no objection to our workers contributing to a fund of that kind but we are not prepared to act as a collecting agent for the trade union.

E-3800. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of the reduction of hours if you reduced your hours of work your port would become more costly to shipping?—Undoubtedly.

E-3801. At present there is a complaint that Calcutta is an expensive port?—Yes, not a cheap port, certainly.

E-3802. *The Chairman*: I think your point is that you should not be handicapped with competing ports?—Yes.

E-3803. On the other hand we were gratified to learn when we visited the port the other day that your trade was steadily increasing for the last five or six years?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. H. F. DARVELL, Shipping Master, Calcutta.

E-3804. *The Chairman*: What is your experience?—I have had 21 years' experience afloat, including seven years in command of all types of vessels with lascar crews, and I received my present appointment in December 1924.

E-3805. So that you came to your office with a wide general knowledge of the lascars, their circumstances and needs?—I think so.

E-3806. When you came to your present office had the Government of India decided as to its action following what is generally known as the Clow Committee's Report?—Nothing came to me to lead me to believe that they had.

E-3807. You were appointed subsequently to that report?—Yes.

E-3808. And presumably with a view to carrying into effect such parts of that report as Government might decide to adopt?—That is so.

E-3809. Under the first alternative method of recruitment I understand the broker was to be abolished?—There was no question of abolishing the broker; that was never agreed to by the agents, ship-owners or masters. I had no instructions whatever to proceed directly towards the elimination of brokers. My instructions appeared to me to be requiring an endeavour to clear up matters in connexion with the bribery and corruption that was said to exist and to do my best with the other problems in connexion with recruitment. It appeared to me from the outset that I had a very heavy task before me. I went into the figures of the number of men available. My first discovery was that from 1914 to 1924, the date of my appointment, we had enrolled at the Branch Shipping Office, Kidderpore, 74,282 new seamen. Since the Seamen's Recruitment Committee sat in July 1922 until December 1924, 23,602 new ratings had been enrolled and given certificates to proceed to sea. I went further into this question and found from my records that only 11,700 of those men got to sea. In ten years the number of seamen available had been increased by 74,282.

E-3810. Of the total number of seamen that were previously available what was the total number sailing the seas at any one time?—We cannot get that figure exactly. We have at the present date on our registers 243,000 names, but I must point out that these registers have been in existence since 1887. I estimate that out of that total number there are about 140,000 effective seamen, that is, seamen available for employment.

E-3811. Does that include the 74,000?—Yes. The total number of registered seamen up to November of this year is 233,742 including a few Goanese. They are registered in my registers at Kidderpore. I estimate that of this number 25 per cent are now dead, i.e., 58,435 should be deducted from that figure. Then there are men who are alive, but have given up sea service voluntarily, such as aged men, men who have given up the sea after the first voyage, and men who are invalided permanently. I estimate them at 15 per cent or 35,062. I estimate, therefore, that 93,497 should be deducted from the original 233,742, which leaves approximately 1½ lakhs of effective seamen available for employment. These are my figures arrived at after a careful analysis of the question.

E-3812. The position up till 1924 was that you were constantly adding new names every year to the register with the result that annually you were decreasing the opportunity of any one person on the register to get employment?—Yes, we were adding 6,000 to 10,000 men a year; during the ten years from 1914 to 1924 we enrolled 74,000 men. New men were being given certificates whether they were hale or not, and whatever their age. I considered this was a very serious position, and I therefore began to reduce the number of recruits. Before and during the War men could go to sea without *nullis*. My senior clerks tell me that a third of the crews consisted of men

without *nullis* and there was no means of knowing whether they had ever been to sea before. In 1925 I gradually reduced the number of new recruits to 25 per day, three months later to 20 a day, until I brought the figure down to about 15 a day. In 1926 I stopped open recruitment altogether, and from that date we enrolled no new men for sea service unless I had a letter requesting me to do so from the Commander or officers of ships signing on crews. That request would be worded somewhat in this way:—

"To the Shipping Master,

Calcutta.

I wish you to issue a continuous discharge certificate to the following seamen" (giving their names and their fathers' names) "for the purpose of signing on this vessel's articles."

All new recruits in Calcutta are now enrolled in that way, and all of them went to sea except those who were eliminated by the Port Health Officer at the last moment as being unfit. Now in Bengal all the new recruits are medically examined and certified fit for sea service before they are allowed to sign the agreement. We enrol in this way about 5,500 a year; they are all first ratings, that is to say, of the lowest grades carried at sea.

E-3813. Has that number of 5,500 continued pretty steadily since 1926?—Yes; it is 5,500 instead of 10,000. Previously men had to hunt round for employment, but now the men get away to sea.

E-3814. What is the actual wastage which you would set against that figure owing to old age, voluntary retirement, not wishing to go to sea again?—It is very difficult to arrive at figures of that kind; many men leave the sea, go to their own country and disappear, never going to sea again. The majority probably consists of older men who find it is better to give up searching for employment. I think the present recruitment is about equal to the wastage of effectives. These new recruits are mostly coal trimmers and lascars, and I think we are probably enrolling too many even now.

E-3815. Have you any further proposals to make for reducing the number?—I am working at that problem almost daily in endeavouring to encourage ships' masters and engineers not to allow the head ratings to recruit too many of these men; for instance, if a serang says that he wants 12 coal trimmers, and that 10 of them should be new men, I tell the Chief Engineer that I consider that an excessive number of new men, and suggest that he should wait a day or two and try to recruit men who already have *nullis*. I always find the ships' officers endeavour to meet my wishes.

E-3816. Is the allotment of a seaman's wages to his family restricted to one-third of his wages?—Yes, in the Act it says "not exceeding one-third."

E-3817. Do you think there is any justification for such a restriction?—I should say there is not. I have never known an Indian seaman to ask for such an allotment. It is always considered that the allotment of seamen's wages for their families is a matter entirely in the hands of the master and owners. Even in the United Kingdom they will not give every man an allotment. In the United Kingdom the steady married men have a part of their wages allotted to their families monthly, and the money is collected by the man's wife or relatives from the offices of the owners or agents.

E-3818. Do you mean that the masters of ships discourage it?—They do not exactly discourage it, but there are cases in which the master may not consider it advisable to let a particular seaman have an allotment, because he might desert and the master might not be able immediately to communicate with the owners and get the allotment stopped. Masters of ships say that the allotment of seamen's wages is entirely at the master's option.

E-3819. What is your view about that?—My view is that they are wrong, that if a seaman claims an allotment of a certain portion of his wages he should have it.

E-3820. You think as a matter of right he should have it?—Yes.

E-3821. Would you put the proportion as high as 75?—I think that is excessive.

E-3822. Section 53 (ii) of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act says that a seaman may require that a stipulation shall be inserted in the agreement

that an allotment not exceeding one-third of his wages shall be made. What is your experience?—To my knowledge we have never issued an allotment note in Calcutta to any Indian seaman; they never ask for it.

E-3823. The Seamen's Union, in the memorandum they have submitted to us, stated that as one of their grievances?—Yes, they probably would.

E-3824. How do you account for that?—I cannot say; possibly they think that would be beneficial to the seamen; there is no doubt that a seaman under the Act can claim an allotment of his wages if he wishes it.

E-3825. Are the seamen informed that they can claim that right?—It is not in the agreement, but I think you will find that every seaman would know that, particularly if the union has mentioned it. I should say every seaman is aware that he can have a portion of his wages collected in Calcutta by his relatives while he is away on service. May I refer you to section 55. I have gone into the matter in the Shipping Office records, and I am told that we have never, on any occasion, had a request from a lascar seaman for an allotment of his pay.

E-3826. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Is it possible that the seaman is afraid that if he tries to insist on his right he may lose his job?—I do not think so. I have never had a case here in India where a master has said that he would refuse an allotment; the masters merely state that the allotment arrangement at the start of the voyage gives them a lot of trouble; they must keep in touch with the owners at home. If a man is ill in hospital his allotment immediately ceases, and the master has to cable home to stop the allotment because there is no means of recovering the money once it has been paid.

E-3827. *Mr. Ahmed*: Then why do they not take the benefit of the section?—That we cannot find out.

E-3828. *The Chairman*: It clearly means more trouble to the masters?—Possibly it does, and the agents would have to set up separate departments to handle these allotments. It would be a very big thing, and it might mean that the relatives would have to be brought from upcountry to Calcutta in order to be paid the money, or else the money would have to be remitted by money order to the seaman's relatives.

E-3829. You know how allotments were made to the wives of soldiers during the War?—I was with lascar seamen all through the War, and there was no allotment for them.

E-3830. *Mr. Tassie*: During the War the only people that got it were the wives of men who were prisoners in Germany; a lot of them got it. The only way in which you could be sure of the relatives getting the money was by sending the money to the Magistrate upcountry and asking him to see that it was paid to the right people. Until that system was instituted it was found that money was sent but never got to the relatives. The soldiers were in a different position because they had their Army regulations?—I have never had a single case of a lascar seaman asking me to institute an allotment for him or endeavour to get a master to permit him to take out an allotment. Although the section of the Act provides for it, the first information we have had in connection with allotments is the information you give me now that the Indian Seamen's Union has asked for allotment for seamen.

E-3831. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you think the lascar is not sure that the money will get to his family, and that may be the reason why he does not ask for it?—We have the local address of every seaman who enters into an agreement, and the address can always be furnished to the local agents.

E-3832. But it does not necessarily follow that the relatives get the money?—No, we can only go by the address that the seaman gives, and we can furnish that address to the ship's agents.

E-3833. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you not think that probably for generations the Indian seaman has been in the habit of making other arrangements for his family?—Yes.

E-3834. *The Chairman*: Does he send money by money order?—Yes, he sends money by money order from ports abroad. During the voyage he receives advances from the master and in ports abroad one can frequently see half a dozen seamen lined up at the post office sending money orders to India.

E-3835. Then do you think that possibly he prefers that less regular method?—I am of the opinion that he does, that he would rather draw the money himself abroad and remit it as required.

E-3836. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Then he can remit it if he does not need it himself?—Yes, and that is, therefore, frequently done.

E-3837. *The Chairman*: But I suppose the temptations open to lascars in ports of call are numerous?—Yes, they certainly are.

E-3838. And the wife may be the person who suffers?—I should hardly agree to that; in ports of call abroad, when the seamen draw money, they spend it on themselves and may remit a portion home; they very often send money to their relatives.

E-3839. Where does the information come from on which you base the serious statement in your memorandum as to the indebtedness of Calcutta seamen?—I cannot tell you; that is the Government memorandum. It is a matter on which we can merely go by hearsay. I myself have questioned numbers of seamen during the last four years, and it appears to me it is principally the head ratings who obtain loans; I fancy that the debts of the lower ratings are very small. I can understand the head ratings borrowing money because there are so many of them seeking employment. This morning about 60 serangs lined up for one appointment.

E-3840. If the indebtedness is as serious as is stated in the Government memorandum, do you think something might be done to encourage thrift and to avoid indebtedness?—I cannot myself see what can be done to prevent these people borrowing money if they wish to do so.

E-3841. We are told that these people are essentially agriculturists and have their country homes to which they return; it looks as if they go to sea not so much to save money as to get away from debt?—That may be so, but I have always concluded that the lascar goes to sea because he is fond of the sea and takes to the sea naturally; it also possibly helps him with his family affairs and his holdings in the country. The men tell me that it enables them to acquire additional plots of land. We know that they go to their homes from this port with considerable sums of money. Sometimes a lower rating will draw as much as Rs. 250 which is quite a large sum for a lascar to have in his hands at one time. Seamen will go home with large sums of money and remain at home for six or eight months.

E-3842. Do you find sharks waiting outside your door?—We watch that; if any individual seaman requires police protection we send him out with a Police Sergeant. Although we handle large sums of money in the Shipping Office we have had no cases of theft to my own knowledge. What occurs outside we cannot know. If these men suffer from crimps and sharks it is nowhere near the Shipping Office, but happens where they live, at Kidderpore, Howrah and other places. I myself have had many complaints during the last four years from seamen that people are waiting to molest them, and I have sent them with the police to see them off the premises. We can do no more than that. They say that *goondas* are waiting for them, but such cases are very rare. There have been probably five or six cases during the last year.

E-3843. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there a post office?—The General Post Office is within 100 yards of the Shipping Office, and the seamen can go there.

E-3844. *Mr. Ahmed*: I suppose the Kabuli money-lender waits outside the shipping office?—I do not think we have any money-lenders in the vicinity of the shipping office; I think the money-lenders are in the vicinity of the boarding houses in which the seamen live; but our seamen, when they are paid off, do not remain in Calcutta long; they disappear. After two or three ships have been paid off you will find the trains at Sealdah and Howrah in the evening loaded with seamen going back to Sylhet and other places.

E-3845. *The Chairman*: Then is it your opinion that on the whole the seaman goes home with a considerable sum of money saved?—Yes, I think he does. The term of employment varies; some men are paid off with two months wages while others will draw 18 months wages. A coal trimmer's wages for 18 months will be 18 times Rs. 18.

E-3846. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does that mean that he did not want to draw it before?—During the currency of that agreement he has probably drawn small sums abroad which the master gives at his option. Very few British ship-masters refuse these advances.

E-3847. Is not he entitled to his money until he gets back?—Legally he is not, although he signs on for so much a month; I do not think he can claim the money until he returns from the voyage and the agreement has expired.

E-3848. *The Chairman*: In the United Kingdom not only do the married men make allotments to their wives, but young sailors make allotments to their parents during the time of their absence at sea?—Yes; it would be a very excellent thing if Indian seamen would do the same, but it would mean establishing departments in the offices of the companies to handle these allotments. Fifty-six thousand seamen leave this port every year.

E-3849. Do you not think it would substantially add to the happiness of a seaman's life?—Possibly it would. There is no reason why they should not have the allotment system if they wish it.

E-3850. And that some body should take an active interest in seeing that they get it?—Yes.

E-3851. Would that fall within your province at all?—According to this section of the Act it is clear that it does; it would mean that I shall have to have an increased staff for a special cash department; I think I should require another four or five clerks.

E-3852. If it would substantially improve the status of 150,000 seamen that would not seem to be an unduly large establishment?—No, it would not, but I must state that we should need that staff. We should need an experienced accountant with several assistants at the shipping office if the allotment system for Indian seamen is to be put into force in the Port of Calcutta.

E-3853. *Mr. Clow*: It would not be for you to pay the allotment?—I should have to recover the money from the agents or owners locally on behalf of the claimant if agents or owners neglected to pay it.

E-3854. Have you an allotment note?—We have no special allotment note here; we use the English allotment note occasionally for English seamen.

E-3855. *The Chairman*: It really looks as if no thought had been given to the effective operation of that section?—Possibly not, because there has never been any request for allotments of wages. Men ask me all sorts of things, but I have never had a request made to me either by a high or low rating for an allotment of his pay to his relatives while he is at sea.

E-3856. What proportion of the total recruitment in the Port of Calcutta now goes through your office?—Seventy-five per cent of the new men pass before me personally while my deputy deals with the other 25 per cent. I should say that we deal with about a quarter of the work in our office under what is described as "Method No. 2" while about three-quarters is done in the agents' office, i.e., by "Method No. 1."

E-3857. Is there any tendency for these proportions to change?—I do not think so; I think it will remain just where it is. The firms which have decided to adopt Method No. 2 have in many cases no fixed local agency here.

E-3858. I understand you really got to work on this problem in 1926?—No, I did a considerable amount of work prior to that which I should like to describe to you. If the master will sanction it every lascar seaman can have, and invariably does have, a month's advance of his wages at the time he enters into the agreement. Prior to 1929 this was done by means of advance notes for about half the shipping at the port, the British India Steam Navigation Company have never used advance notes, but have always paid cash advances to their seamen. The remaining half of the seamen who sign on in Calcutta received advance notes. It was said that the seaman lost a considerable amount of the face value of the notes when they cashed them. Of course that is common all over the world, but there were certain people who said it fell very heavily on the lascar because the people who cashed the notes could do what they liked with him; they might keep the man waiting until the eleventh hour and then accept the note at a very great discount. In 1926 I instituted what I called the "half cash-note"

or the "half advance note" system. That meant that the man took a part advance note for his month's wages, the advance note being made out for just half that amount, the remaining half in cash being paid at the local address that the man gave to the broker's clerk, that being usually a boarding house. The clerks would proceed to the address to see if it was correct, and then pay over to the man the other half in cash. I have had no complaints that that money was ever retained. We carried on under that system for a year or two when I considered it necessary and safe to go a step further and we instituted a system by which half the amounts of the month's advance was paid in cash on the vessel before the Shipping Master so that the seaman, instead of having a paper note to negotiate, had half the cash paid him at the time of signing on, and took the other half in the form of a note which he negotiated through a money-lender or in his boarding house. We have recently improved on that system. The note has been abolished altogether, and the lascar seamen receives in cash the full advance of a month's wages at the time of signing on. The seaman may not be required to join the vessel for four or five days after that. They are the only seamen who obtain a month's wages in full in cash before they join the ship. Of course the advances are made conditionally on the man going to sea, so that it is a method by which the seaman is trusted. These advances made to seamen are in the hands of the brokers, and I believe the brokers are complaining. However, the brokers very willingly fell in with my suggestion some few months ago. We shall probably never again see an advance note in connexion with lascar seamen.

E-3859. Is the advance made direct to the seamen?—Yes, in my presence; i.e., either I or my deputy see that a full month's wages are in the hands of each individual seaman at the time of signing the agreement.

E-3860. Does the lascar, like some other sailors in the world, like to have a jollification the night before he goes on board?—Possibly a few of them do, but I do not think they do that to any great extent; they are very good men; they usually spend the money in purchasing a few necessities for the voyage such as clothing and boots, and they probably send some away to the country.

E-3861. You are satisfied that that change has been greatly to the advantage of the seamen?—I think so; the seamen in Bengal very much appreciate it.

E-3862. *Mr. Tassie*: If the seaman does not sail, who loses the money?—The broker loses it.

E-3863. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have the unions not tried to get advances made through them?—I have had no direct suggestion in that direction.

E-3864. *Mr. Ahmed*: How much profit does the broker make out of it?—Five per cent on the total amount. He has to stand the loss in respect of the seamen who desert at the last moment. A ship very seldom leaves Calcutta without having three or four men missing. At the time of sailing the broker has to find substitutes to fill those places and has to pay them another month's wages which he cannot recover from the ship's agent.

E-3865. *The Chairman*: That is not a large wastage?—It is not.

E-3866. *Mr. Clow*: That 5 per cent is paid by the company?—Yes.

E-3867. You have said that the registers have been in existence since 1887?—Yes.

E-3868. Are those the registers which you are now preparing?—No; those are the old registers containing the records of the seamen. We must keep the records of seamen as closely up to date as possible. Very often when a ship is turned round hurriedly we have no time to register the last voyage of the seamen. There are 982 registers.

E-3869. Do they serve any useful purpose?—Yes, they keep the seamen's record of service up to date. We are considerably behind with the card index system. We have been trying for the last 12 months to get that card index system up to date, but we are still over a lakh of cards in arrears. The Government have promised from the 1st March of this year that we shall have extra hands at the branch shipping office in order to make an effort to get that card index system up to date.

E-3870. You have no systematic means of striking men off the register?—No; we probably only get intimation of the deaths of about 30 or 40 local men a year though the number of Bengal seamen afloat reported "died during the currency of the agreement" would probably average about 200 a year. In those cases where we receive intimation of the death the *nullis* are returned to us and we erase the men's names from the register. We can only estimate how many men died in the districts.

E-3871. What purpose are the registers of serangs which you are now preparing intended to serve?—I have yet to find out. I was told to start those serangs' registers four months ago. I keep a general register of all the serangs, the serang being considered to be the key-man of the crew. The Commerce Department of the Government of India decided that it would be a very good thing if we started these two methods of recruitment for the leading ratings, and I was instructed to commence what are called general registers. We enter in these registers full particulars of leading ratings, serangs and butlers, with the purpose, I suppose later on, of taking men from these registers for employment. It will take me another 15 months to complete those registers; they contain 500 names each, and are very heavy tomes. Up to the present I have registered 540 engine room serangs alone. I obtained the following figures this morning: I have registered 10 or 12 serangs this morning. In four and a half months I have registered 478 engine room serangs, 309 deck serangs and 151 butlers. The rule is that a Gazetted officer must attend to this registration himself.

E-3872. What are the difficulties in the way of adopting the proposal made by the committee that the ship's officer should have a free choice in the case of serangs who had left not more than three months before?—I do not remember the exact wording of that recommendation. This morning in the Shipping Office we had a selection of serangs by the captain of a Dutch steamer. There were 65 men rostered up. What the captain did, and we could not stop him, was to sort out about 12 men who appeared to be the most likely men, put them on one side and select the men he required from those 12 men.

E-3873. The report says that as regards serangs and butlers it is proposed that the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer should be at liberty to nominate any serang or butler who has been discharged from a ship of the same line not more than three months before?—That is done. The master or officer who wishes to re-employ a serang or butler who has previously served in his vessel in the voyage preceding the one that is contemplated is at liberty to do so. Many masters object to walking round and scrutinizing the records of 65 men, which will take about two hours, so they, therefore, cast their eye along the line and pick men out.

E-3874. The committee proposed that the free choice of the officer should be restricted in certain cases; that is to say, when he wants to choose a man who has not been on a ship of the same line less than three months before?—Yes, that is not done.

E-3875. What difficulty is there in restricting his choice to two classes of men: (*a*) men who have been on the same line not more than three months before, or (*b*) a certain number selected by you from your register?—There can be no objection to that if the officers and engineers agreed. The masters and officers endeavour to take the men who have been longest out of employment provided they are satisfactory men; that is the utmost we can get them to do.

E-3876. Surely it is an undesirable system to select the men who have been longest out of employment?—It is in a way.

E-3877. It would be better to select the men who have been the shortest time out of employment?—Yes, but it was said that there was so much unemployment among these head ratings that employment should be given to the serang who had been longest out of employment, other things being equal. I believe that is the method the British India Steam Navigation Company adopt.

E-3878. This system which is proposed as far as serangs are concerned has been rejected presumably because it is in some way impracticable. What are the difficulties in following the method stated in paragraph 7 of the main report?—Paragraph 7 says it is considered that the power of selecting of seamen, including serangs, should be restricted to two classes of employees.

As a matter of fact the masters of ships leave it to their Chief Officers and Chief or Second Engineers. It says that they should have the power to select serangs or butlers subject to the approval of the master. That is done. It says that it is proposed as regards serangs and butlers that they should be at liberty to nominate any serang or butler who has been discharged from a ship of the same line not more than three months before. That is really what is done now; they have the option of doing that. The whole point is the three months.

E-3879. *The Chairman*: You do not muster the men with any regard to the length of time they have been out of employment?—No. Under the latest scheme my instructions are to enter any one on the general register, but I pointed out that I had men coming along who had been 15 or 16 years out of service, many of them being old men and some of them probably partially blind. Government instructions are that I must roster and register these men. It is quite possible we shall have trouble about this. In that muster of 65 serangs that we had this morning, it is quite possible there were 20 or 30 men who were too old for employment. I have on my general registers now the names of numbers of men who have been out of employment for eight or nine years. When I asked these men where they had been during the last eight or nine years they said they had been at home. They had gone home because they felt they could not get a job, but they say that now they understand we are commencing these registers, and so they think they will possibly get employment.

E-3880. *Mr. Clow*: I suggest the registers were designed for a particular purpose, and the purpose has been forgotten?—The registers were designed to be worked, if possible, in conjunction with the roster system; that means that employment is to be given to men in order of rotation.

E-3881. But there was to be a choice in both cases?—Yes, a limited choice in both cases.

E-3882. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If a man is obviously too old has the Shipping Master any right to take his name off the roster?—Apparently not. I am told to put them all in and they must take their chance with the others. I have no right to remove a man's name.

E-3883. *Mr. Clow*: Do you not think it would be a good thing to exclude from the roster men who have not been to sea for a long time?—Yes.

E-3884. Do you think that would be a practical proposition and would greatly relieve the stipulation?—*It* probably would. I think if a serang has not been to sea for four years we may conclude he has left the sea and does not want to return.

E-3885. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You would qualify that by saying "unless the master wants that particular man"?—Yes. In one or two cases I have known a master to pick out an old man who had sailed with him before although he may not have been at sea for two years.

E-3886. *The Chairman*: You would recommend a four years' limit with certain powers of elasticity?—Yes.

E-3887. *Mr. Clow*: What would be the effect of stopping the recruitment of new seamen for a year?—These new recruits are all first voyage ratings; they are in the main coal trimmers, that is to say, the lowest paid men. When a coal trimmer has made one or two voyages he does not want to go to sea again unless he can go as a fireman. The result is that one must continually recruit these lower ratings, otherwise ships would be held up for want of coal trimmers. There is not the same amount of recruitment in the deck department. Yesterday I signed on a vessel's crew of 65 men; I had to recruit 2 new lascars and about 11 new coal trimmers on that steamer because men were not available. The men who have sailed before will not go as coal trimmers because they want to become firemen.

E-3888. Is not there the same surplus with regard to deck crew?—No, there is not. The engine crew is considerably larger in number; the coal trimmers are all paid the same wage. The wages of the deck lascars graduate from Rs. 25 down to Rs. 18 for the lower ratings.

E-3889. As regards the question of payment to obtain jobs do you think that there has been an improvement since you took over charge?—There is a tremendous improvement. In 1925 I remember I had at least ten complaints a week; it appeared to be the idea of the seamen when they

came along and made complaints that I should investigate them very fully and send off the men concerned and get somebody else in their place. The complaints were usually against serangs; I do not think I have had complaints against other people in a crew. In 1926 we found that these complaints were getting less and less in number. In 1927 they were still less. In fact, last year I had very few; it was about 12 for the whole year. I account for that in this way. I inserted a clause in the articles of agreement that no money was to be advanced to a seaman abroad unless the master of the vessel obtained the thumb-print of the seaman and saw that the money was directly put into the hands of the seaman. I found that for many years it was the practice to pass these advances into the hands of the serangs to be handed over to the seamen. What the seaman got nobody knew; he probably got half of it.

E-3890. You are referring mostly to the engine crew?—Yes.

E-3891. But even in the days when the system was at its worst in Calcutta the money was paid to the seaman himself. In 1921 we were satisfied that the money was being paid to the seaman himself?—That may be, but 15 or 20 years ago we knew ourselves as young officers that money was being paid to the serang for passing it on to his men.

E-3892. The mere payment into the hands of the seaman is not in itself a guarantee against some of it finding its way later on elsewhere?—We see that the seaman has his legitimate dues according to his accounts paid into his hands separately. What we do is to muster the men together and put this question to each one of them: "Are you satisfied that you have got your dues? Do you understand this account?" And he says, yes. Fifty per cent of them are illiterate and they do not understand the accounts. They merely retain in their minds the number of months they were at sea, the wages they have earned during those months and the advance they have taken; they make their own calculation and say that their dues are so and so. We see our accounts and see that they get their legitimate dues.

E-3893. Can you assure us that the diminishing number of complaints is due to the diminution in extortion and not to diminishing lack of faith in the shipping office's powers?—Possibly I cannot. We will never cure it altogether. As shipping officers that is the utmost that we can do.

E-3894. Have you ever heard of summary proceedings under section 63 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—No, not in Calcutta.

E-3895. Where and how are the articles of agreement signed?—It is signed in the ship or at the shipping office. It is signed first by the master, then by myself and then by every member of the crew. Up to two months ago the seaman was only making a cross in the agreement; but now I have instituted a system whereby he puts his thumb-print.

E-3896. Is there any official of the union present in the ship at the time?—Very often they are present.

E-3897. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has any one the right to stop them from coming on board ship?—The master has the right, but I do not think he would exercise that right so long as they gave no trouble.

E-3898. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that crews could not be made up if fresh recruitment was stopped altogether?—I am afraid we should have a difficulty in completing the lower ratings—not the higher ratings—that is, from the serang down to the tindal; it is what we call the tail-end of the crew.

E-3899. We have heard several times that the number of men present in Calcutta is very large indeed?—Not of the first voyagers.

E-3900. But why do you want first voyagers?—I have tried to explain that the first voyagers merely replace the men who are not willing to sign on again at that grade which is the Rs. 18 grade; they are mostly coal trimmers.

E-3901. So it is quite clear that these first voyagers have become necessary because the lowest rate of wages is very small?—I would not say that, but because the men who are earning the lowest rate consider that they should be promoted to one grade above.

E-3902. You cannot get men on the lowest rate unless you get the first voyagers?—You cannot keep the seamen on the lowest rate for ever when there was a grade above to which they can be advanced.

E-3903. What it comes to is that you really create unemployment for the senior men simply by keeping the lowest rate a very small rate?—I would not say that. I still contend that this freshening up of the lower ratings will always be necessary as the grades of pay vary. The British seaman signs on as a fireman, and a trimmer while the Indian seaman enters, first of all, as a coal trimmer. After a voyage he expects to jump up to be a fireman. If he cannot jump up to be a fireman he will remain at home until he finds an opportunity of getting somebody to promote him.

E-3904. *The Chairman*: Is there anything against the adoption of the British system here?—I am afraid we should never get an Indian fireman to fire and trim alternately.

E-3905. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that new men are taken only on the request of the ships' officers; is that true?—There have been a few exceptions in cases of passenger crews that have been put together in the port of Calcutta by the agents. When no master, engineer or officer is present, a broker may come along to the shipping office and state that the serang requires two or three new coal trimmers. We have had only two or three such cases during the last two or three years. In all other cases the master, or the officer or the engineer of the ship must give us a certificate stating his requirements of the new ratings.

E-3906. I have got here a slip from a broker asking you to issue certificates to some three people. Is that a rare thing?—That is one incident that I am referring to; that occurred about four months ago. The agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company were engaging a crew to send down to the steamer "Staffordshire" at Rangoon.

E-3907. They do not employ brokers; this is a broker's note. Do the brokers also help the British India Steam Navigation Company?—No; but the Bibby Company employ a broker here. Will you let me see the note?

(The note was handed to the witness.)

This is a case of a passenger crew that I was referring to. In this case, as nobody was available the broker gave a chit of this description. I see my deputy shipping master passed it. This is a request for nullis to be issued to these men. I have seen this before; it was brought to me by the union officials about two months ago.

E-3908. May I ask you whether the necessity for engaging new men is not due to the fact that the ships' officers only select the serangs, or what you call the higher ratings, and not the lower ratings. But suppose you begin to register the lower ratings also and they are directly recruited?—What will be the idea of registering lower ratings?

E-3909. To recruit them direct instead of recruiting them through the serangs?—The recruitment is not really done by the serangs; they are made responsible only in bringing the men together; a lot of the power of the serang is disappearing.

E-3910. They are made responsible in bringing the crew together, but the crew is not directly selected either by the ships' officers or by anybody else?—That is so. But when a crew is selected, and before the articles of agreement are signed, a certificate is given to us by the ships' officer stating that he has personally selected the crew.

E-3911. He only selects out of the men brought in by the serang?—Yes.

E-3912. That really necessitates first voyage certificates being issued again and again because the serang chooses the men and he is not willing to take the men who are already available?—The serangs will of course say that it is no good going to sea with men that they do not know. A suggestion was made some time ago that the lower ratings for the crews should be selected entirely apart from the influence of the serangs. We have always given the union a fair play in these suggestions. I thought the best thing to do was to put this information before 10 or 20 of the leading British ship masters, and we have received their opinions; they are certainly very emphatic.

E-3913. *Mr. Clow*: Who made that suggestion?—I do not know. Mr. Joshi is making it now. It was a suggestion made by the union which is endeavouring to enforce it during the last four or five years.

E-3914. *Mr. Joshi*: You think that this system of indirect recruitment must always continue?—I do not agree that it is indirect recruitment. There are a number of men brought before the officers and engineers of the ships, quite enough for them to select probably a crew and a half. The officers reject any men whom they do not want.

E-3915. On the question of indebtedness, you replied to the Chairman that there is less amount of indebtedness in the lower ratings?—I have no information whatsoever in connexion with that.

E-3916. You said that the higher ratings are more indebted?—I think that some of the higher ratings are indebted in large sums of money.

E-3917. Is it due to the fact that a man belonging to the higher rating is himself a money-lender?—I do not think so.

E-3918. I may tell you my experience in Bombay. There are serangs who keep men with them and feed them till they get a job. Thus they are really the money-lenders of the crew. In Bombay there are clubs maintained by the serangs, and the serangs are indebted to some money-lender, while the men are indebted to the serangs. Did you enquire whether such a thing exists in Calcutta?—I have gone into the question and have enquired of many serangs whether they lend money to the men, and in many cases they informed me that they lend the men money when they commence the voyage or sign on; others lend them money for buying clothing or other outfit; in some cases they themselves buy it and give it to the men. But what the serang recovers at the termination of the voyage I do not know.

E-3919. If the men are indebted to the serang they are under his control on account of this indebtedness?—I have not heard any complaints so far from the seamen in regard to this.

E-3920. You do not receive complaints because the men are fed by the serang. I know of cases in Bombay where the serang feeds a whole lot of men?—That is the family system in Bombay.

E-3921. It has nothing to do with the family system. He feeds the men because the men cannot live in Bombay without employment. He borrows from the money-lender and goes on feeding them?—But then he recovers that money from them afterwards, for if he feeds the men, say, for about 14 days why should he not recover the money?

E-3922. I do not say that he should not recover. The question is whether this system by which the men have to be under a serang in order to get a job does not create in them the idea of slavery? The man knows that he cannot get a job unless he gets hold of a serang and becomes indebted to him?—I do not think so. We have scores of men who will only sail with a particular serang.

E-3923. You have not heard any complaint because the men are indebted to the serang?—I have never heard from a lower rating lascar seaman or a fireman that he has borrowed money from his serang.

E-3924. On the question of removing a man's name after a period of 3 or 5 years, you took it for granted that when a man did not get a job for 5 years he was out of Calcutta. It is quite possible that a man may be in Calcutta and may not get a job; that is not very unlikely on account of this system. But you still want to remove his name?—It is quite possible that the man may have been down to Calcutta on several occasions to try again and again and he may be one of the unfortunate men.

E-3925. You want to penalize him for doing that?—I think four years is a reasonable period. We have an unwieldy number amongst the senior ratings; we have 3,000 men for 700 ships. As I have already said, we had 65 applicants for one job in one vessel. This unwieldy number is due to the fact that in the past promotions were made very freely. But I have stopped that now. I have no real power to say to a master, or an officer or an engineer that he should not promote any of his men but they have realized the advisability of not promoting any more men until we get this unwieldy number worked off; the British India Company are not promoting any men as also the officers of other ships are not promoting any men. I have already informed the committee that about 500 serangs are on our engine serang register, and I shall go on registering these serangs for probably another ten months.

E-3926. May I know whether you are working towards a scheme like the one proposed by Clow Committee?—No; I have no instruction in that direction from Government.

E-3927. May I ask you whether you were not specially appointed to carry out at least a part of the work which was recommended by that Committee?—My first instructions from Government were to examine the question thoroughly. We have met at different times during the last 4 or 5 years and we have discussed the modes of finding employment for this tremendous number of men that are available. We have gone into the serang question, and this latter movement was decided upon in March of last year, and all the local agents were circularized in connexion with this scheme by the local Government; it was consented to put this scheme in operation in July this year.

E-3928. Did the local Government not announce in August 1924, after your appointment, that a labour bureau would soon be established for doing work in that direction? May I ask whether the object with which your appointment was made was given up soon after your appointment?—That I cannot say. I have merely carried out my instructions received from time to time in connection with recruitment. The last note of Government was to establish these registers for recruitment of crews; this was instituted in September of last year.

E-3929. Leave aside the recruitment of lower ratings. Even the registers for higher ratings were undertaken only five years after your appointment?—That is quite possible.

E-3930. May I ask you what came in the way of keeping a register of serangs soon after your appointment; why should five years be necessary merely to start work on the lines of registering serangs?—From the facts and figures placed before the Government, I think they thought that they required additional time to consider the question. In the meantime—I think it is recognized by all—I was working personally to eliminate bribery and corruption. No definite instructions were ever given to me to commence registers until September.

E-3931. The union in its memorandum makes a statement about the new club, that is the seamen's institute, and they apprehend that this institute will only be reserved for European seamen. Is that apprehension correct?—The Marine Club really emanates from the old sailors' home, and the old sailors' home, I believe, was erected from the money that was subscribed by European residents of Calcutta for the benefit of British seamen. In the days when there were probably 100 or 200 sailing ships lying on the shore, many of these seamen had to be provided with accommodation. I understand that the European residents of Calcutta subscribed very liberally for the erection of that home.

E-3932. But I learn from the Government of India memoradum that this new home does not have any reservation for Europeans?—At present it has only reservations for Europeans. I have never heard that it was ever intended to accommodate Indian seamen there.

E-3933. *The Chairman*: Is it not the position that there is nothing in the rules that excludes Indian seamen in this Marine club, but that there is a proposition for putting up a separate institute for Indian seamen?—We have discussed in a tentative fashion the possibility of having to do something for the Indian seamen later on, something probably connected with the present Marine club. It is of course a matter of funds. We are not at present self-supporting; I myself am a member of the committee of the club.

E-3934. *Mr. Joshi*: This is what the Government of India say: "Under the Memoranda and Articles of Association of the new (Marine) Club, Indian seamen are not excluded from the possible future benefits arising from the club?—You should know that they say 'possible future benefits'.

E-3935. I want to know whether any steps are being taken in that connection?—Not at present.

E-3936. Are they likely to be taken soon?—I cannot say.

E-3937. So the Government of India's statement that in future it should be done is correct?—I do not follow you.

E-3938. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What Mr. Joshi wants to know, I think, is whether the future will be near or distant?—I am afraid it will be distant. We shall require funds. We shall have to find money somewhere before we can do anything in connexion with welfare work in the club. At present we have hardly sufficient money to carry on.

E-3939. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that the money raised for the home was from the European residents of Calcutta. Did the money not come also from European companies who employ lascars?—I have not sufficient information at my disposal to give you any definite answer, but it was generally understood by the committee members that the money was subscribed by the European residents of Calcutta.

E-3940. Am I correct in saying that the major portion of the money came either from Government or from the shipping companies?—That I cannot say.

E-3941. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: With regard to the indebtedness of the men I want to know whether it has something to do with their average employment. For what period, in five years' time, does a seaman remain unemployed?—A month ago I took out from our tables in the shipping office particulars of employment obtained by 20 ratings; and if you glance through this you will find that for about two-thirds of their time they are occupied.

E-3942. You took 20 men haphazard?—Yes. For instance, you will find that one man in the list was in employment for three years and seven days during four years and ten months.

E-3943. And you say that on an average they are employed for two-thirds of the time?—I have not worked out the average but I think you will find that this is a correct estimate.

E-3944. We have been told that in a number of cases they are only employed 20 per cent of the time or one year in five years?—I do not think so.

E-3945. What will be the proportion of the number of men wanting employment to the number getting employment every year, which you said was about 50,000 a year?—I think there must be three times as many waiting for jobs.

E-3946. So that instead of one-fifth you make it one-fourth, the proportion of men getting employment to the total number of men wanting employment?—Yes, about one-fourth.

E-3947. If you had only one-quarter of them employed or in other words a seaman got employment only for one year in four, would he not get into debt during the remaining three years because he could not be expected to earn enough in one year to keep himself and his family for four years?—Yes, he could not.

E-3948. Would that account for the indebtedness of the higher ratings among whom there is a great deal of unemployment?—Out of 3,000 higher ratings some of them have been out of employment for 8 or 9 years. But unlike the British seamen they will never revert to a lower employment; a serang will never agree to work as a tindal. He will probably raise a certain amount of money from somebody in the hope of paying it back when he gets a job.

E-3949. Would that not account for the indebtedness of a large percentage of these men?—You have put it at 75 per cent?—Have I put it at 75 per cent?

E-3950. Anyhow considering the facts which you have just now stated it would not be surprising if that was so?—No, it would not be surprising.

E-3951. You said that a serang would refuse to have men whose work he did not know?—Yes, he will refuse to have men with whom he thinks there will be a possibility of trouble.

E-3952. Still he somtimes asks you for first voyage men of whom he could not obviously know anything?—The first voyagers signed on vessels are usually the friends of some one on board.

E-3953. Supposing you had some men who were not first voyagers but who were probably coal trimmers?—If they were certificated I would request the engineers to sign them in. There would be no necessity to take first voyagers.

E-3954. Any man who has been at the bottom for one or two voyages will want to be promoted and surely there ought to be some system by which you get vacancies at the top?—It is time that many of these head ratings were eliminated.

E-3955. Have you any suggestion for the elimination of these head ratings?—We can only suggest that a serang who has been out four years should be taken off the register and shipping agents must be told not to keep on their register men who have been out four years.

E-3956. Would you object to the shipping agent employing any man if he wanted to, as you gave the case of somebody whom the shipping agent knew and wanted to employ?—That was only a two-year case.

E-3957. Even supposing it was a four-year case?—We could not object if the shipping master or agent wanted the man.

E-3958. You might put out of your roster any man who has been out of employment for more than four years. That would not prevent him from going direct to the line where he had been employed and get to work?—No, we register everybody.

E-3959. If you arranged in such a way that you would not put up men who had been out four years unless they had been definitely asked for, and you would give preference to men who have been longest out of employment, would not that keep away the whole lot of them who had no chance of being put up?—It might be considered.

E-3960. Otherwise as far as I can see your unemployment is going to keep on getting more and more?—It is quite possible, but it remains to be seen. Our figures are that we have about 75,000 men in the districts who come down to Calcutta whenever they feel inclined to take a job. Out of these 75,000 there are many who will not return to Calcutta.

E-3961. Would it help you if the union kept in touch with these men and put up list of men willing to come to Calcutta if there was any chance of employment?—I am afraid it will not.

E-3962. I am suggesting this in order that men may not stay in Calcutta if they have no chance of getting employment?—I do not think at present we have an unwieldy number here in Calcutta. There may be 12,000 men here at any one time.

E-3963. How many new men do you take in a month?—About 4,800 to 5,000.

E-3964. Do you not think that three to one is an undue margin?—I have reduced the recruiting figures. Had we gone on as we were going prior to my arrival here in 1924 we should have ten times the number.

E-3965. Could not the union help to keep some of them out of Calcutta?—I hardly think that is a practical suggestion. Many of the men are rejected at the medical examination of the crews which has come to be a very strict thing nowadays. The medical officers go very thoroughly into the fitness of the crews to proceed on the voyage.

E-3966. Suppose it appeared to the medical officer that a man was permanently unfit, would he be rejected and taken off the register?—He can do that now only for a period. But in my opinion he should be taken off the register permanently.

E-3967. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Speaking of sickness you say that only 8 per cent fail to pass the doctor owing to venereal and other diseases. Is the percentage so low as that?—Yes, only about 8 per cent of the men are rejected at the time of signing on of the crew. That includes cases of venereal and other diseases.

E-3968. Do you ever consult the shipping master in Bombay or Rangoon as to any common policy?—No, I do not.

E-3969. As regards serangs the only reason given why they should have no voice in the selection of the crew is that the control should be taken out of their hands. What percentage of the crew should a serang put together?—The serangs will be able to put together at least 50 per cent of the crew.

E-3970. Have you had experience of rostors in other countries?—No. I only knew that the roster system was tried in the United Kingdom and proved a failure.

E-3971. Was it because it led to inharmonious crews?—No, I could not say that. The reason was that the men available for a particular crew did not answer when the roster was called, because that particular ship did not suit them. That applies to lascars also. You cannot get lascars to sign on for any ship. He will not sign on with any crew. So also a serang; he would not sign on for any ship. I have a case with me at present where a shipping office sent down a serang for the vessel at an outport but the men refused to serve with him, and he had to be sent back to Calcutta. That is the situation with the lascars.

E-3972. Have you any Indian seamen signing on European articles?—During the War we had a few cases of such men. When once they have signed on an European agreement they could not sign on Indian agreement. I have one or two cases who have not been to sea since the War. They say they have acquired other habits and that they are unsuitable men to sail with the lascar crew.

E-3973. You say you have stopped the promotion of younger men to higher ranks. Do you think it is fair?—It is not fair, certainly. But there has been so much of distress among the older men the serangs—100 to 150 of them wait in the shipping office every day—that we thought it advisable to stop promotions for a certain period. We may have to open it up again.

E-3974. Do you get many complaints of crews from Bombay being brought over here?—Very few, just one or two.

E-3975. We had complaints in Bombay that Calcutta crews were sent over to Bombay and signed on from there. For what is this done?—I suppose the shipping companies consider that the Calcutta crews are more suitable than the crews on that side. The British India engine room crews are almost always recruited in Calcutta and sent over to Bombay to join the ship there.

E-3976. We have had it suggested that the wages of the Bengal seamen are lower than the wages of the Bombay seamen. Would that be a sufficient reason?—I do not think really that is a sufficient reason. My own experience is that the Bombay engine room crews are very difficult to put together with the exception of the few *Punjabis* which the P. & O. Co. have.

E-3977. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What do you mean by "very difficult to put together"?—They do not make good crews. Invariably the Bombay engine room crews want to break off their agreement when the vessel reaches home ports; that is possibly a reason why shipowners prefer Calcutta crews to sign on.

E-3978. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you had any complaints about the *Punjabi* crews?—Very little. The P. & O. Co. report that they have had very little trouble.

E-3979. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you get many complaints of overtime and overwork from seamen?—Very few in the port of Calcutta. During the past few years I had one or two complaints of excessive work by men. Possibly during the time of transport of vessels at home ports these men have been on duty more than 12 hours, most of it standing about. When I went to the European officers and mentioned it to them they told me that the circumstances necessitated such work and that after two days or so when convenient the men would have a day off. That was the way in which they were compensated.

E-3980. Do you get many complaints from the unions in Calcutta regarding the grievances of the men? Do the unions come to you freely?—Very freely indeed. My correspondence in the office has gone up by 5 to 10 per cent owing to correspondence with the unions. They always take up every little bit of grievance. They appear to stand by and pick them up. We always go into the cases thoroughly; a union official attends and we do our best to satisfy them.

E-3981. Do the unions simply pass on the grievances to you without sifting them up and seeing whether they are genuine or not?—No; they just bring them in; they bring the men along and we go into the case and satisfy them.

E-3982. You never refuse any communication?—I have never closed my doors to seamen. I give 40 to 50 interviews a day to them.

E-3983. When the seamen are paid off in Calcutta to whom are the wages actually paid?—There are two officials of the shipping office who see to it that the wages are paid into the hands of the seamen themselves.

E-3984. *Mr. Ahmed*: The memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union says that the people of the sea-coast towns like Chittagong, Coomilla, Noakhali, Barisal and Sylhet on the Surma river and Dacca historically were sea-faring people and these places have been all along the recruiting ground for supplying crews to the ships. Therefore they were originally and primarily seamen and not agriculturists?—They probably were.

E-3985. Only some of them when they found it difficult to get sufficient employment at sea they took to agriculture as a secondary occupation?—I have always thought that it was the other way about.

E-3986. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do not agree that there is a type of seamen who are primarily seamen and secondarily only agriculturists?—No.

E-3987. *Mr. Ahmed*: How is it that people living in the interior like higher Assam, North Bengal and West Bengal do not make good seamen?—I can only say that there is a population living near the sea and the rivers who are more inclined to take to sea than people living in the hinterland.

E-3988. During the time of the East India Company and thereafter did not these people from those places stated above come down to Calcutta in large numbers and get engaged as seamen?—I have no information about that.

E-3989. You know about the conditions of seamen working in the Royal Indian Marine Transport Department of Calcutta?—I do not really know what their conditions are; I have nothing whatever to do with them.

E-3990. In December 1924 the Government of India published in the papers their decision to start a seamen's recruitment bureau and appointed the Shipping Master, Calcutta, as officer in charge of the bureau as recruitment officer?—I have not seen that letter myself. I have the letter in connexion with my appointment as Shipping Master and officer-in-charge, seamen's recruitment bureau.

E-3991. Since your appointment have you done any direct recruiting yourself?—No, I have never done any direct recruiting myself. In the first place I have never thought it was the intention of the Government of India to establish a recruitment bureau.

E-3992. If you have been appointed as a recruitment officer why have you not done any direct recruiting yourself?—*Simply because we have been proceeding in other directions. All the time I have been in close collaboration with the Government of India through the local Government when we were under the local Government. Now we are directly under the Government of India. Our bureau can go only up to a point in the matter* of recruitment of seamen. Beyond that the Shipping Masters and shipping agents who have to employ the crew and work them should have their choice.

E-3993. Have you had any further instructions from the Government of India directing you not to recruit directly?—No such order came from the Government of India.

E-3994. In spite of that, instead of discharging your duty as recruitment officer and recruiting seamen directly why have you been recruiting through serangs and *ghat* serangs and other agency? Is it not in contravention of the terms of your appointment as recruitment officer?—My instructions were that I was appointed Shipping Master and officer-in-charge, seamen's recruitment bureau. Since my appointment I have been

in close collaboration with the Government of India in whatever I have been doing. In consultation with the local shipping agents we have now devised two methods of recruiting, and the Government of India have permitted the adoption of these two methods.

E-3995. If that is so, the Government of India have virtually withdrawn their original order?—I could not say that.

E-3996. You know that the Clow Committee recommended direct recruitment to check bribery and corruption. In view of the fact that bribery and corruption is still prevalent in connexion with recruitment why have you not taken any steps to check them?—You have still allowed the old system to continue.

E-3997. *Mr. Cliff*: Has there been any direction following the order of appointment in 1924 up till now?—I do not think there has been any. It was left to me entirely to do what I liked. At times I met the officers of the local Government and explained the situation to them. I have had no instructions from the Government of India in any matter until the methods I have described were evolved at a meeting of the shipping agents and an official of the Commerce Department, Government of India, last July. The representatives of the shipping companies in Calcutta have consented to adopt this scheme.

E-3998. You have done this of your own volition?—Not this, but everything previously.

E-3999. *Mr. Cliff*: The union suggest a State employment bureau, consisting of a Government officer with a sufficient staff, and with two representatives of the Indian Seamen's Union and two representatives of the shipping companies as an advisory committee. What practical objections are there to that?—The union have always been very keen on having this advisory committee, because, I suppose, it would enable them to do far more than they can do at present. What use the advisory committee could be I do not know.

E-4000. What practical objections are there to recruiting a crew in the shipping office?—Very many. We have not the staff or space. We should be working day and night. At present the master and officers of the ship personally supervise the recruitment of their crew, and can only give the matter their personal attention on the vessel itself in the early hours of the morning. They would object strongly to being taken from their vessels in order to attend the shipping office.

E-4001. Are those the only practical objections?—That is all I can see at present.

E-4002. With regard to unemployment, what percentage reduction would there be in the unemployment of seamen if your suggestion of a four-year limit were carried out?—How many men would be wiped out?—About 1,000. What I object to is this: men are coming down to Calcutta merely because they have heard that these books have been started. I registered one man who had been 18 years away from the sea. I have registered many men who have been seven or eight years away from the sea.

E-4003. *The Chairman*: Under Government instructions you are bound to put them all down?—Yes.

E-4004. Government could themselves issue instructions as to a time-limit?—Yes.

E-4005. *Mr. Cliff*: Under the law you cannot eliminate those men?—No. If I comply with the instructions of Government I cannot take the names of these men from those books.

E-4006. What is the purpose of the register?—Merely to endeavour to afford to the serangs a better distribution and fairer selection of labour.

E-4007. Is it going to have any real practical effect?—I do not think so.

E-4008. *The Chairman*: Would it be a good thing if the existing register could be thoroughly weeded out?—Yes. Serangs who have been four years without obtaining a post should be strongly discouraged from coming here and swelling the ranks of the present unemployed efficient seamen.

E-4009. *Mr. Cliff*: Are there any records anywhere from which you could give us the numbers of the different ratings?—No; we merely register the men's names as they come. They are all mixed up.

E-4010. You have referred to a complaint made to you some time ago about the shortage in the lowest rating. Is there ever a shortage of labour apart from that?—There is no shortage in the medium and upper ratings. At sowing times of the year it is difficult to get a crew together. At those times we find taking a large steamer carrying a crew of about 85 men for instance, that there may be 15 to 20 men short, and the crew cannot be completed for four or five days. Then again, if out of a crew of 85 the medical officer discards 10 or 15 it is probable that another 20 will leave as they say they will not sail without their friends.

E-4011. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I suppose those men are fairly sure of another job, or they would not do that?—Probably they are.

E-4012. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you ever had a case of a ship not being able to sail for want of a crew in sowing times?—Never.

E-4013. Taking seamen generally, have you any further suggestion to put before the Commission as regards dealing with the problem of unemployment?—No. We must see how this works. The leading ratings are looked upon by the masters of the ships as being the key men of the crew. The masters emphatically state that unless the serang has the power given him of getting the crew together and being responsible for them, the crew falls to pieces in a few days.

E-4014. *The Chairman*: The Government gave you time to study the situation here but apparently with no more instructions than to try to provide those remedies which you found most effective into an admittedly unsatisfactory condition of affairs. Will you take the Clow Committee Report away with you, and, at a later stage, let us have a supplementary note of your experience as to what difficulties, if any, you yourself see in the carrying out of those recommendations? It is clear that the Government of India decided so much as this on the first and second method; but what we are not yet clear about is why it was found impracticable or inadvisable to adopt the other recommendations of the Clow Committee. Will you send us a supplementary note in regard to these matters?—Yes.

E-4015. *Mr. Cliff*: When we were in Bombay we found that there were not only Indians who had signed on under British articles, but men from Malay and other foreign countries who were stranded in Bombay. Are there any such men stranded in Calcutta?—No. We find that, sooner or later, we can always find them jobs on board ship. A good number of tramp steamers come to Calcutta which carry crews under European articles and which have to leave one or two men behind on account of sickness, and these Malays can be made to fit in on those ships.

E-4016. *Mr. Tassie*: The union have suggested that the signing on board ship should be abolished. Would not that be a very serious matter for the master and officers?—Yes. It would mean stripping the ship of possibly every man on board, including officers and engineers. If the signing on had to be done at the shipping office it would mean half a day there, whereas it only takes 2½ hours in the morning before breakfast on board ship.

E-4017. The union make the statement that the seamen themselves cannot give up their job until the contract is over. Is it not the case that a ship's crew, as soon as the ship comes back to an Indian port, insists on being paid off whether their time is up or not?—Yes. All ships' crews on Calcutta 12 months foreign articles can claim to be discharged on the ship's first return to Calcutta.

E-4018. Or even Bombay—at any Indian port?—Not at any Indian port.

E-4019. But that happens, does it not?—Yes.

E-4020. *Mr. Cliff*: It has been suggested that if the company wants to discharge a crew it can do so without giving any reason and without paying the wages for the unexpired period?—No, that is not so. They cannot discharge the crew until the vessel returns to the port of first engagement. There are cases of crews entering into a 12-month foreign agreement who

undertake at the outset to serve for a further period of three months after the expiration of the first twelve months, provided the ship is bound back to a port in India or Burma.

E-4021. *Mr. Tassie*: Was not there a case recently where the crew insisted on a 100 per cent rise in wages because the ship was not bound back directly to an Indian port?—Yes. The crew got their 100 per cent increase, but that vessel was not bound back direct to India. Their twelve months' agreement had not expired. They had another eight weeks to go. The men had engaged to continue for another period of three months if the vessel was bound back direct to India or Burma. The vessel was not, and so the men could claim to be sent back to Calcutta within the first twelve months. They refused to proceed unless it was made worth their while, and they claimed 100 per cent additional wages, which the master had to give them. There was another case of almost brigandage on the high seas, where the master could not get another crew. It was somewhere in the Pacific. The crew went to the master and said "We refuse to proceed any further. We want to go back. Unless you make it worth our while, we shall refuse to go on in the vessel". As the master could not get another crew, he had to give way.

E-4022. There have been complaints made about the accommodation of Indian crews on board-ship. How does it compare with the accommodation of Europeans?—It is situated in the same part of the ship. The accommodation figures are somewhat lower for Indians than for Europeans, but they are deemed to be sufficient for the size of the crew.

E-4023. You say you have had cases where attempts have been made to make up crews without serangs?—I have many cases on record, which show that it is impossible to make up crews without serangs.

E-4024. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Was not one of the main reasons why, as recruitment officer, you could not accept the recommendations of the Clow Committee that the Liners' Conference was opposed to them?—The Liners' Conference was certainly opposed to the original scheme, but I myself had no connexion with or communication with that Conference.

E-4025. You state that the Government has no intention of doing away with the licensed brokers?—That is so.

E-4026. Is it not a fact that the British India Company, which recruits practically 50 per cent of the seamen, has no such system of licensed brokers?—That is so.

E-4027. That is due to the fact that that company make advances and take the risk of any loss which may occur through desertions?—That is news to me.

E-4028. I put it to you that licensed brokers are being used at present simply for the purpose of giving advances and taking the risk of desertions. You remember that sometime ago there was a prosecution of a licensed broker for extortion and bribery, and that some other officers were also implicated?—Yes.

E-4029. And although Mr. Roxburgh discharged the accused he made some very strong observations?—Yes.

E-4030. You said that on the recommendation of the officers of a vessel you were obliged to issue *nullis* to over 5,000 men every year. Have you any knowledge as to whether or not those officers are in close touch with the licensed brokers, and whether friendship has anything to do with those recommendations?—No.

E-4031. Do you remember the union bringing to your notice a case of extortion last year from three boys by a licensed broker?—Yes.

E-4032. Are you satisfied that the complaint was *bona fide*?—Yes.

E-4033. Why did you not take any action under the Merchant Shipping Act?—It was not necessary because we considered there was no truth in the statements made.

E-4034. You said just now that the complaint of the union in connexion with the extortion of Rs. 24 from these boys was *bona fide*?—I did not say that.

E-4035. *The Chairman*: Will you make the point clear?—The union officials brought forward three boys, and stated that a licensed broker had taken from them Rs. 3, Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 respectively. The broker denied the charge and stated it was all false. The principal officer and myself held an enquiry in the shipping office, calling before us these boys and the union officials and other witnesses, and we decided there was nothing in it. There were other accusations at this time being made against this broker.

E-4036. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Why was this broker boycotted two or three months ago?—We have never been able to fathom that. The union's activities appear to us to have been always directed against this one particular broker.

E-4037. Can you throw any light on it at all?—I can only say that his manner has been referred to as overbearing and troublesome.

E-4038. Was there a case reported to you about the throwing overboard of some seamen?—Yes.

E-4039. What was the reason?—The reasons stated were that the men were being harassed by the serang, and refused to pay him money.

E-4040. Two or three men during the course of that voyage jumped over the side because of these exactions?—Yes. This case was very fully investigated both at the shipping office and in the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court, and the evidence was quite sufficient for Mr. Roxburgh to dismiss the case.

E-4041. You have a reasonable suspicion that bribery was at the root of it?—No. I have no suspicions at all. The investigation elicited nothing. The original complaint was that a serang had been trying to extort money from the men, and they were very worried, and jumped over the side; but there were witnesses to prove that one of the men jumped over deliberately. The statement made by certain members of the crew was that the serang had thrown them over.

E-4042. *The Chairman*: A great deal of your time, and that of your office since you were appointed, would appear to have been taken up in compiling an enormous register which is not of much use?—It has taken an hour or two a day for the last four and a half months to keep the serangs and butlers registers up to date.

E-4043. Is that register, containing I understand 233,000 names, supposed to be a register of live seamen available for employment?—No. These are the total number of seamen registered since 1887.

E-4044. It is not a live register?—No. We estimate that of that number 140,000 men are effective for employment.

E-4045. Do I understand that you had Government instructions to take every one who applied?—I have Government instructions to enter the name on the serangs and butlers register of any man who applies.

E-4046. When you were conscious that that meant putting on the register a number of men who had been seven or more years away from the sea and were not likely ever to be employed again, did you make any protest to the Government against that order?—Yes. I communicated with Government and pointed out that we should probably be entering the names of men who had been 15 or 16 years out of employment, but I was told to do nothing but continue and enter the names, and give the men an opportunity.

E-4047. What was intended as a means perhaps of reducing unemployment has really had the opposite effect?—Yes.

E-4048. Will you let us have your opinion as to the desirability of a time limit for that register—whether 4, 5 or 6 years?—Yes.

E-4049. I take it your general view is that it would be for the real benefit of the whole community of seamen not to have so large a register that the chances of employment are really infinitesimal?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

CALCUTTA.

Tuesday, 18th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*	Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E. I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.,
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. E. C. BENTHALL, Mr. W. GOW, Mr. D. K. CUNNISON, Secretary, representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

E-4050. *The Chairman*: What is the scope of the activities of the Chamber of Commerce?—(*Mr. Benthall*) The Bengal Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1833; it now consists of 240 members, mostly European, and is representative of the trade, commerce and industry of the Province of Bengal. It is managed by a president, a vice-president and a committee of seven. The committee are elected annually by the members of the Chamber and carry on its business in accordance with the provisions of the articles of association. In addition to the work of the Chamber as represented by the committee there are 22 commercial associations recognized by the Chamber. The association with the Chamber is a loose one; they are not even affiliated. The business of these associations is carried out by the secretarial staff of the Chamber under the direction of the committees of the various associations. These associations represent practically every branch of the commerce of the port, and include the tea association, the jute mills association, and the other associations. Firms or individuals who are not members of the Chamber may be members of the various associations.

E-4051. What are the objects of the Chamber?—The first object for which the Chamber is established is to promote and direct the trade, commerce and manufacturers of India ; and in particular the trade, commerce and manufactures of Calcutta ; that is the primary object, and there are nineteen other objects which elaborate that primary object.

E-4052. Has your Chamber any view as to the desirability in future of maintaing the contact of the industrial labour with the land?—I do not think the subject has ever been discussed.

E-4053. I assume from what you say in your memorandum that the custom of the Indian industrial worker of returning to his land from time to time is in your opinion a custom which contributes to his physical well being and his happiness?—The question has never been discussed, but I think that is a true statement of fact.

E-4054. I take it that your Chamber does not discuss questions of general industrial policy with regard to industrial labour but leaves all those matters to its constituent bodies?—It does discuss them, but it does not trench on the ground which is rightly covered by the various associations; its functions are more to co-ordinate the views of the various associations.

E-4055. It does not advise its constituent members on questions of general policy which would cover the whole of the industries?—I believe the opinion of the Committee of the Chamber carries great weight with these associations.

E-4056. Let me take a single instance: the question of whether this custom of returning to the country at intervals should be universally recognized and all industries should make arrangements for a recognized leave to meet the desires of the workers in that direction?—That question has never come up and we have never had occasion to express any views.

E-4057. What are the views of your Chamber on the question of the acquisition of land for housing labour?—The views go back to the Indian Industrial Commission of 1918. At that time there were two view points under discussion: firstly, the acquisition of land for starting new industries, and secondly, the acquisition of land for housing of labour. Both these questions were discussed at that time with Government. As regards the question of land for starting new industries the Industrial Commission thought that before Government could take any action in the matter the industry should satisfy Government that the acquisition of land would be in the interests of the general public. There was some difficulty in settling what would be in the interests of the general public and considerable discussion took place. Out of that discussion arose the suggestion, which the Committee of the Chamber supported, that a Board should be formed of selected persons to be appointed by the local Government. The Board would be empowered to hold public enquiries and to call and hear witnesses ; they would be expected to examine any scheme carefully, having regard to the statistics of the industry examined and their report would be submitted to the local Government by whom it would be published to enable persons to raise objections. That is a policy which might apply to the acquisition of land for new industries and might also apply I think to the acquisition of land for the housing of labour.

E-4058. You are now referring to 1918?—It was last discussed in 1922 when it was suggested that Government should take powers on the application of the employer concerned to acquire at the public cost sufficient land in the vicinity of the mill, etc., for the establishment of dwellings, and should lease such land at a rent equal to the cost at current rates. With a view to the provision of accommodation the Chamber endorsed the proposal in respect of the acquisition of land and were of opinion that the idea was thoroughly sound. I think Government raised objections and nothing further has been done since.

E-4059. Your Chamber since 1922 has taken no further action?—No.

E-4060. I think you also dealt with the question of the employment of women underground in the mines ; was that prior to the passing of the recent Act?—The only time it was referred to the Committee of the Chamber was October 1928 ; the Chamber had no comment to make except that they thought that if the employment of women underground in mines was to be prohibited it should also be prohibited in open quarry working where the conditions were liable to be equally dangerous.

E-4061. On the question of the shift system in jute mills, I anticipate that you will be non-committal?—We have expressed our views. The history of the matter is rather long. The matter was referred by the Government of Bengal to the Chamber of Commerce and we were asked to obtain the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association. The matter was referred to that association, who issued a questionnaire to their various members, I think in the form of four questions. The various members of the association answered that questionnaire and the answers were forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce considered the matter entirely as a matter of principle; they pointed out first of all that the Act *, namely, the Factories Act (amended) of 1922, had only been in force for two years. They said: " It is therefore on the short experience of less than two years and on the ground of administrative difficulties

* Witness subsequently pointed out that the reference should have been not to the Act but to the form of Employment Register.

that it is proposed to forbid to a great industry a system of working to which both the industry and the labour connected with it have been accustomed for many years and the dislocation of which might cause serious consequences . . . " " As far as they were aware there was no country in the world where the shift system was illegal . . . " " The Committee cannot agree that it is right that Government should dictate to an industry that it shall restrict the hours of working its machinery to 11 per day, thus handicapping it against its competitors in other countries by withholding from it the right to expand its production when the conditions of industry are favourable." They finished by saying that "in their opinion it is more reasonable that Government should so organize their system of inspection as to make it efficient to deal with the old established conditions of an industry than that those conditions should be pruned and shaped to meet administrative difficulties."

E-4062. What was the policy of your Chamber with regard to maternity benefits?—First of all the Committee put up a memorandum on that question. They said: "with its object they have every sympathy, for it is only right that Government should take measures to counteract those evils which in other countries have been shown to be incidental to industrialism; but these measures must be of a practical and businesslike character, and there is no reason why they should press unduly on industry."

E-4063. That is to say, you did not think that a charge for maternity benefit would be a serious charge on industry?—They approved of it provided it did not press unduly on the industry.

E-4064. You think it would not, provided it was practical. I take that to mean: provided it was a practical and businesslike scheme it would not press unduly on industry?—I take it to mean that it must be a practical and businesslike scheme and there is no reason that legislation should press unduly on industry; in other words it is not right that legislation should press unduly on industry.

E-4065. I read it the other way. Your Chamber did not go further and recommend to its constituents a standard form of maternity benefits?—They had before them a draft Bill, which I think was introduced by Mr. Joshi, and what they wrote was mainly detailed criticism; they said: "it is the opinion of the Committee of the Chamber that a Bill with defects such as these ought not to be passed into law; the Bill approaches the problem from a wrong standpoint."

E-4066. But you did not take the further step of saying what in your view would be a practical and businesslike scheme?—They said: "the Committee of the Chamber have considered the various forms of assistance which are already given by employers and they think the baby clinic is likely to be the most satisfactory in practice."

E-4067. *Mr. Cliff*: The Government say your Committee recommended that Mr. Joshi's Bill should be recast so as to provide for compulsory clinics in industrial concerns or in groups of concerns, financed by Government with or without a compulsory levy on employers; and then later that legislation on such a subject, if taken, should be Central and not Provincial. I see there is a difference of opinion between you and the Bengal Government on the question of its being Central or Provincial?—Yes; what we said was that "proceeding on these lines the central idea of the Bill might be that every factory, mine or estate employing women, or every group of such factories, mines or estates employing women, should be required to establish and maintain a suitable baby clinic for the women workers."

E-4068. All these observations were in 1925; have any observations been made later than that?—Not by the Committee of the Chamber. That last sentence was qualified in this way: "If the principle of taxing industry is to be admitted."

E-4069. *The Chairman*: Like all other Chambers yours is essentially cautious?—We have to be very cautious.

E-4070. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In view of the fact that Bengal has such a huge population why is it that such a large proportion of the industrial labour comes from outside the province?—That is a problem which has excited a good deal of interest for many years. I take it it must be because the population of Bengal does not take so kindly to industry as the populations of other provinces.

E-4071. Would it be due to the fact that in Bengal the income of an agriculturist is larger than the income of agriculturists in those parts from which labour migrates to Calcutta?—That is quite possible.

E-4072. Has any change taken place in the degree of superstition of the workers ; for instance, has there been any change with regard to their appreciation of the sanitary measures adopted by the State and industries for their betterment?—Yes, there is some appreciation. For instance, many years ago the Madrasi labour that first came to the jute mills would not under any consideration go into *pucca* coolie lines, but now they are generally to be found in such lines. On the other hand the Bilaspuri labour still does not take kindly to *pucca* buildings.

E-4073. *Mr. Cliff*: Referring to what you say on this matter in your memorandum, when were these two stories first told?—I am not in a position to say.

E-4074. And I do not think any one else is?—With regard to doors being used for firewood I can give you chapter and verse for that because it is quite recent ; and there have been recent instances in which *charpoys*, which are string beds, were provided for certain coolies both at the jute mills and in tea gardens and in each case they were used for firewood.

E-4075. *Miss Power*: Are not these stories on a level with the story which is told in England of the bath being used for storing coal?—I have no experience of that.

E-4076. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Do you think the difference in the mentality of labour in the two different places to which you refer may be due to the extent to which primary education has advanced in the different provinces?—I am not in a position to comment on that.

E-4077. There must be some reason why their mentality has improved in some provinces while it has not improved in other provinces?—I think the real history of that is that the Madrasis came to the mill areas first. The Bilaspuris when they first came only took up outdoor work, such as earth work and that sort of thing and have only in more recent times taken to jute mill work ; so that there is reason to hope that the Bilaspuris will ultimately take to living in *pucca* coolie lines.

E-4078. What remedies would your Chamber suggest to prevent strikes being brought about by the selfish activities of speculators, the intimidation of workers and generally by pressure other than that due to economic causes? —First of all there are the hard lessons of experience ; I believe the labour in the jute mills has profited by its experience and has learnt that these political agitators have not benefited them during the last strike. I think the political agitators have to a large extent lost their influence over labour.

E-4079. That is in Calcutta?—Yes.

E-4080. Where the large majority of the workers wish to work but are coerced by the threats of the minority, what would you suggest with a view to protecting the majority who are willing to work?—That is a question of picketing and protection by the police authority, particularly round about the home where it is particularly difficult to deal with this problem. It is going to be very difficult to prevent any one passing money to any other body. May I give you two instances of what happened from my own personal experience during the last strike. I am not now speaking as representing the Chamber. In one mill the men, as I believe in most cases, wished to work. The strike leaders went down to the mill to create trouble and pull the workers out. The workers were not frightened, the *sardars* collected forces and told the strike leaders that if they came there they would get hurt; the strike leaders went away and that mill worked solidly throughout the strike without an hour's cessation.

E-4081. *The Chairman*: Sir Ibrahim's point is that you have made a statement here without suggesting a remedy?—I think it must be a matter of police protection. In another mill the workers went on working solidly until the strikers from a mill a mile away came flooding across the fields, charged through the mill and carried away with them the labourers who were peacefully working; they later stayed out for a day or two but immediately police protection was given they went back to work. It comes down to the question of picketing round the mill and the mill quarters.

E-4082. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What are the views of the Chamber with regard to picketing?—I think the last time the matter came up for discussion the Committee summed up the position in this way: "the Committee accordingly very strongly recommend that the view taken by the Government of India in 1921 should prevail, and that a definite responsibility should be laid on the unions or their executives for the prevention of

the issuing of any orders authorizing picketing in any form by the members of the union, and further that should the unions authorize, or through their members or executives take part in picketing, they should be held responsible for their actions and their funds should be made liable accordingly." That was 1925; that is the last time it came under the notice of the committee.

E-4083. Is it the view of the chamber that if labour continues to work for a prolonged period in an industry, it looses gradually its agricultural tendency and becomes stabilized industrial labour?—I think so. That is borne out by some of the lives of the industrial workers given in the evidence of the jute mills.

E-4084. Has the chamber noticed a distinct tendency in that direction?—There is a distinct tendency, but it is slow.

E-4085. *Mr. Clow*: In the industries which you represent I take it the managing agency system is practically universal?—It is not universal but it largely predominates.

E-4086. What are the important exceptions?—The Bengal telephone system, the Gas Company and electric supply.

E-4087. What is the ordinary system of remuneration of managing agents?—It may be by a commission on sales, but that is not usual; it is usually an office allowance to cover out-of-pocket expenses and a commission on the profits.

E-4088. What is the general system in the tea and coal industries?—I have no experience of tea; as to coal, I should say it is a commission on profits.

E-4089. Would you be prepared to agree that the effect of the managing agency system is to some extent to increase the distance between the employer and labour by introducing another authority between the company and its employees?—No, I would not say so; it tends to closer working.

E-4090. In the case of big concerns, from the commercial point of view, what are the advantages of the managing agency system over those of the system of more direct management?—I think the system originally grew up through Europeans coming to India, a European goes Home and then his partner carries on his work, both partners being experts. If you have a single authority controlling a business, when that man goes Home it is difficult to find a capable successor. The managing agency system also makes for continuity.

E-4091. But the system has now been copied by purely Indian firms and presumably they find some advantages in it which the other system does not offer?—I do not think it is for the chamber to pass any comment on that.

E-4092. *Mr. Tassie*: Is not the managing agency system a great help with regard to finance?—Yes, of course it is; a strong managing agency will often see a company through which would otherwise collapse.

E-4093. *Mr. Clow*: What is the view of the chamber on the general question of whether labour legislation should be central or Provincial?—I do not think that has ever been discussed; I think it is a matter on which different views have been taken at different times on different questions.

E-4094. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the Maternity Benefits Bill, who suggested Central legislation?—We did then, but in other cases we have suggested the local Government taking action.

E-4095. *Mr. Joshi*: In your memorandum you say: "The labourer in this country in many cases lives practically rent free in a house provided for him" by the employer. Can you tell us what proportion of workers are housed by employers rent free?—I think evidence on that point has been given by the various associations; the chamber has no information covering all the industries in which it is concerned.

E-4096. When you say "in many cases" what proportion do you mean; does it mean 500 or 200?—I think the jute mill industry stated in evidence that it housed 30 per cent of its labour.

E-4097. You have not any information as to the proportion?—Not covering all the industries in which we are interested.

E-4098. You say "In the large majority of cases the labourer still owns land in his own village". Have you any definite information as to what proportion of workers own land?—I have no percentage figures, but I think if you look at the lives of industrial workers as given by the Jute Mills

Association, you will find instance after instance in which the worker states that his father had a small piece of land which was perhaps not big enough for the family and that was why he came away, but that he hopes to go back to that land. I do not think the chamber could give you any statistics.

E-4099. You say "he gets free water and light in the urban districts". I suppose you mean towns?—Yes.

E-4100. In towns the water is supplied by the Municipality and if the worker pays rent presumably he pays municipal taxes?—It is frequently supplied by the concerns themselves in urban areas.

E-4101. *The Chairman*: When you say "urban areas" I take it you are referring to what we may call jute municipalities?—Yes.

E-4102. *Mr. Joshi*: The statement in your memorandum is a general statement, but I take it you desire to confine that statement to the jute areas?—Yes.

E-4103. It appears from your memorandum that you do not like trade unions which are not controlled by workers; perhaps your feeling is that they are being exploited?—That is so; I think at one stage we suggested that there should be a 75 per cent majority of workers.

E-4104. If it is, as you say, undesirable that the union should be controlled very largely by people other than workers, is it not also undesirable that the workers should be employed by classes who are not themselves workers; is there no chance of exploitation of workers when they are employed by people who are not workers? For instance, is the manager of a jute mill a non-worker?—I do not think he would agree to that.

E-4105. Are the members of your chamber, who are the real owners of these factories, workers?—They work very hard.

E-4106. Have you any ground to suppose that the man who manages the union does not work very hard?—None at all.

E-4107. If you are a worker, is he not also a worker?—That is quite possible, but it depends on the direction in which he works.

E-4108. May I therefore take it that as long as the secretary of a union is a hardworking man you do not mind whether he is a politician or not a politician?—It depends on the direction in which he works and it depends on his responsibility.

E-4109. You want a responsible secretary of a union but you are not against a non-worker?—Not at all.

E-4110. So that *this statement* requires *modification*?—The expression "workers" refers to the workers in an industry, not to a man who works. This is what we said at one time: "Definite provision should be made to secure that at least a majority of the members of the executive of each union should be persons actually employed as workers in the particular industry to which the union relates."

E-4111. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any more objection to the union having a paid secretary than you have to the Chamber of Commerce having a paid secretary?—Not at all, provided he is responsible.

E-4112. Are you prepared to accept the Indian Trade Unions Act as to the constitution of trade unions, or do you want more than the law of the country has provided?—I think not.

E-4113. Do you think that your Chamber of Commerce would accept the Indian Trade Unions Act with regard to the constitution of unions?—We have made various comments at various times and some quite recently. We have to accept it if it is the law of the country.

E-4114. Therefore if a union is registered under that Act, does your Chamber of Commerce say that that union is a suitable organization for recognition and dealing with?—We have to recognize it; but the attitude of the employers towards such a union would depend upon the constitution and actions of the union.

E-4115. So that your Chamber of Commerce would be prepared to accept registered trade unions which conform to the Indian Trade Unions Act?—It has to, but it still holds to its views as to the representation of workers in that union. We do not mind outside persons taking an interest in the union provided they take a responsible interest; but our experience is that

unions in the past have been very largely merely strike committees and you cannot expect employers to be sympathetic to such bodies.

E-4116. *Mr. Joshi*: You do not now adhere to your view that it is only the worker who should be an officer in a trade union?—Our attitude is that 75 per cent of the executive committee should be workers in the industry concerned.

E-4117. With regard to what you say as to sickness insurance, if a scheme of contributory insurance is imposed by law, do you think the industrial worker will throw up his job and go back to agriculture?—It is our opinion that he would probably go on strike.

E-4118. But in Bengal he does not remain on strike very long ; he comes back to his work?—Yes, in most cases.

E-4119. So that the only difficulty in the way of sickness insurance is that you will have to go through a short strike?—It may possibly be a long one.

E-4120. Have you had previous experience of this kind that when Government passes some measure giving benefit to the workers, the workers have gone on strike?—Yes. When Government passed an Act that there should be an interval of one hour in the engineering workshops. (*Mr. Gow*) Instructions came from Government in accordance with the Factories Act that there should be a one hour rest period during the day.

E-4121. But that gave the workers no benefit?—(*Mr. Gow*) Yes, it gave them a benefit in so far as it gave them an enforced rest.

E-4122. Do you not think that was a disadvantage to the workers because it meant they got home late?—The Government evidently did not think so.

E-4123. The worker used to work in the engineering shops for 8½ hours, but under this provision he had to remain half an hour longer?—Yes, but that was put through according to Government for his benefit.

E-4124. Can you give me a clear instance in which though the worker stood to gain he went on strike?—(*Mr. Benthall*) The point is, are you to do what the labour wishes or what the Labour Commission or Government think is best for labour.

E-4125. If the worker would give up industry in case sickness insurance is introduced, and would go back to agriculture, we shall have to consider whether a sickness insurance scheme should be recommended or not?—I think you should find that out from the labour and not from the employer ; the employer has given his opinion.

E-4126. I want to know whether your opinion is based on facts?—It is based on experience in the one case and on general knowledge so far as the rest is concerned.

E-4127. Has any scheme proposed by Government for the benefit of labour been supported by your Chamber?—The first instance which I have before me here is the Committee's complete agreement with the Government of India that the principle of the 60 hours week should be adopted in the provisions of the Indian Factories Act following on the Washington Conference. Our attitude has been sympathetic in every case.

Mr. Joshi: That unfortunately came after the 60 hours was established in many large industries so that it was a question of competition for you and you recommended that in your own interests.

E-4128. *Miss Power*: In reference to what you say as to workers being controlled by anti-social forces, you imply the remedy is the better education of the worker. What is the attitude of the Chamber towards education in industrial wards?—Education in industrial areas has, I think, never come before us ; I do not know why ; but the Bengal Rural Primary Education Bill came before us two years ago and we strongly supported primary education. Our concluding sentence was this: " there can be no question that the cause of primary education in Bengal has received inadequate attention."

E-4129. But the Chamber as a Chamber has never dealt with the question of education by the employer?—No; it considers education to be the duty of Government.

E-4130. Is the Bengal Rural Primary Education Bill of 1927 to which you have referred, the same Bill as is now before the Council?—Yes, but considerably altered.

E-4131. As a Chamber you have really never taken the matter up actively? —No.

E-4132. Referring to what you say with regard to welfare work has your Chamber any policy as a Chamber on this matter, or does it merely express an opinion on individual measures submitted to it either by Government or by its constituent members?—On individual measures.

E-4133. You have expressed your opinion on a particular Maternity Benefit Bill and on matters of that kind ; has the Chamber as a Chamber any policy with regard to general welfare work?—No, because the conditions in which it is a necessity are so very diverse, varying, as they do, from conditions in Assam to conditions in the coal mines. We regard that as being more the function of each Association.

E-4134. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it not a fact with regard to most companies that when they are first forming any industry in India there is no working capital supplied as capital of the company and finance has to be obtained through the guarantee of the managing agents?—That has been the case in many instances.

E-4135. That is to say, until a company has built up sufficient reserves it is dependent on the counter-signature of the managing agents to get the working capital necessary for its expenses?—Very often.

E-4136. That therefore is probably one of the reasons why the managing agency system has continued?—Yes.

E-4137. The Chamber says that it objects to unions run by people other than workers whose interests are frequently not those of the labourer. That may still occur with regard to a registered trade union, may it not?—Yes.

E-4138. A union may carry out all the sections of the Trade Unions Act but still be an undesirable union from that point of view?—Yes.

E-4139. I gather that there is no section in the Trade Unions Act which insists that an employer should recognize or treat with any particular union? —There is not.

E-4140. So that when in reply to Mr. Cliff you said you would carry out any provisions of an Act, such provisions of this Act do not say that you must recognize any union that is registered ; you are still at liberty to insist on the higher conditions, that the union should be run by a majority of workers in the industry?—I would not like to commit the Chamber to any opinion in regard to that, but it is obvious that if the trade union is not being properly run, the attitude of the members of the Chamber towards such a union is likely to differ from its attitude to a body which is responsibly run.

E-4141. Although both bodies may have carried out the provisions of the Trade Union Act in the form of being registered?—Yes. Great stress has been laid on the secretary of the union, but of course a secretary merely takes his orders from the Committee.

E-4142. If compulsory sickness insurance led to a strike, would such a strike be due not to labour objecting to the benefits but labour objecting to pay its share for those benefits?—That is the main point.

E-4143. Labour would be perfectly prepared to receive any benefits for nothing but they might go on strike or suggest strongly that their wages should be raised to enable them to pay any statutory contribution?—Yes. It may appear that the attitude of the Chamber is not very sympathetic to the Sickness Insurance Bill, but the attitude which the Chamber actually took up was that what is much more suited to the present conditions in India is the extension of general health work in the direction of a Government free health service.

E-4144. And your people would not strike against that as they would get it for nothing?—I think not.

E-4145. Would your Chamber go so far as to say that all picketing, whether peaceful or otherwise, should be made illegal?—In 1922 we said: "The Committee agree with the Government of India that in the present stage of the labour movement it would be most undesirable to countenance picketing in any form. They further agree that apart from the provisions of the Indian Penal Code dealing with picketing, a definite responsibility should be laid on unions or their executives for the prevention of the issue of any orders authorizing picketing in any form by members of a union."

E-4146. What is your view of it?—My personal view point is that it is very difficult to control picketing ; I cannot commit the Chamber on a point on which they have not definitely committed themselves.

E-4147. Your personal view point is that you would like all picketing to be made illegal?—I should have no objection to peaceful picketing, if assurance were given that it would be peaceful. But our experience has been that it is apt to be violent.

E-4148. Then your objection to picketing is not *qua* picketing but because it is not peaceful?—That is so.

E-4149. Then you would be in favour of legislation making intimidation a cognizable offence?—Personally yes.

E-4150. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are your views with regard to recognition of registered and unregistered unions?—That is a question which was brought up before the Associated Chambers of Commerce and thoroughly discussed in Bombay. I suggest the simplest thing would be to put that discussion in as evidence.

E-4151. *Mr. Tassie*: Did we not recommend that all unions should be compulsorily registered?—We have expressed our opinions in this memorandum. The view of the Chamber was that all unions should be compulsorily registered.

E-4152. *Sir Alexander Murray*: And you ought not to be forced, therefore, to treat with unregistered unions?—That is so.

E-4153. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that include all trade combinations?—No, it is with particular reference to trade unions, based on our experience of recent years.

E-4154. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the constitution of the union, would I be putting it fairly if I said that provided the people in charge of the affairs of the union knew the conditions of the workers who were members of the union, your objections would not have the same force that they would have if the people did not know the conditions of the workers?—That is so, but in order to have that experience it is much better that they should be workers.

E-4155. What do you mean when you say in your memorandum that the improvement of conditions for the industrial employee must be a slow matter and will not be accomplished by the application of any universal panacea?—I will take an instance ; I believe the establishment of clinics would be better done by slow methods rather than by methods such as were adopted at the time of the Hookworm Enquiry; when hookworm stations were started, I believe, in all the mills and buildings were put up, but there is no trace of those buildings to-day, the whole of that effort having apparently been wasted. There is no objection to the spending of money provided it is not wasted.

E-4156. How would you encourage the slow moving employer to keep abreast of his more advanced neighbour with regard to improved conditions for labour?—Public opinion.

E-4157. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Not legislation?—In some cases ; I think the attitude would have to depend entirely on the question under discussion.

E-4158. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What had you in mind when you wrote: "In many cases, however, they have found that what seems to the European eye suggestive of poverty and distress is only the result of natural adaptation to the necessities of the climate and the country"?—I think it refers to housing and clothing.

E-4159. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I hope you do not refer to the *bustis* at Howrah?—No.

E-4160. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You do not suggest that what we saw in the insanitary *bustis* of Howrah, Titaghur and Kankinarah is suggestive of anything but poverty and distress?—No, this refers to the general conditions of India.

E-4161. What had you in view when you wrote: "Without going gently and taking infinite pains to show full consideration for the habits and customs of many generations, more harm than good may be done by antagonising where their anxiety is to help"?—For instance, a jute mill employer wished to improve the living conditions of his workers ; finding four workers living in one room he said "This is too small for you ; I will break down the partition and give you four men two rooms". However, when he went back a week later he found eight men in the enlarged room.

E-4162. Can you give instances in which we have unnecessarily followed western conditions without making allowances for the independence of Indian labour and his easy conditions?—As regards the easy conditions I think interesting information is given in the memorandum submitted by the Indian Mining Association which is before you and which therefore I need not stress. Also at the time of the Muhammadan *Roza* one must not press Muhammadan workers too hard because the fast which they have to maintain is a strain on the body. You have to be particularly considerate at the time of the *Roza* and particularly when it occurs in hot weather. They have to work easily.

E-4163. I take it the Chamber has in view that you cannot always shorten the hours of labour and expect intensive work, the labour preferring rather longer hours and easier working?—Yes.

E-4164. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any legislation providing rest during the fasting month and would not that be suitable to Indian conditions?—It is very difficult to arrange where you have such a mixed labour force. Very easy conditions are allowed by custom but not by law. Perhaps it is better to leave it to custom.

E-4165. *Mr. Ahmed*: With reference to the questions Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola put to you as to why the large proportion of your labour comes from outside the Province of Bengal, what is the income per month of an industrial labourer at present in this Province?—The evidence has been given by the various associations.

E-4166. But I am asking you as representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce: what is the average income of an industrial worker?—I have no figures of the average income.

E-4167. Have you any idea?—No. I have no figures of the industrial income other than those supplied by the associations.

E-4168. If I say that the income of the industrial labourer in the jute mills is not more than Rs. 25 per month, should I be correct?—I think you are referring to the evidence of the Indian Jute Mills Association ; I have not got that evidence at the tip of my tongue.

E-4169. Are you aware that the average income of the Indian seaman is Rs. 20?—No, I have no information on that subject.

E-4170. If the average income of the agriculturist is not more than Rs. 20, how is it and why is it that the Indian seaman prefers to seek sea employment, though the majority of such men are unable to get work at sea?—I cannot answer that question ; perhaps the seamen would be able to answer it.

E-4171. Why are Indian seamen agriculturists in origin you say? Are you aware that the people of Lower Assam and Eastern Bengal were seafaring people before the advent of the British to this country?—I believe so.

E-4172. These seamen or their predecessors were seafaring folk before they were agriculturists ; they have become agriculturists since the time when the jute mills were started in Bengal?—I am afraid I have no information on that point.

E-4173. Therefore the cry of Statesmen, the Englishman and your Chamber of Commerce is no answer to the argument?—I do not know what the cry of the Statesmen and the Englishman is.

E-4174. I ask you as representative of the Chamber of Commerce what was the demand of the strikers in the Kankinarah strike of August 1929 and how was that strike settled?—I am giving evidence as the representative of the Chamber of Commerce and I will give you evidence of the attitude of the Chamber of Commerce at that time.

E-4175. The difference between the workers and the employers was with regard to an increment of wages, was it not?—The Chamber of Commerce was not concerned with that.

E-4176. But you know that the employees struck for higher wages?—In some cases only.

E-4177. And then as soon as they got their demand satisfied the strike was ended?—In some cases only. In many cases they formulated no demand and in many cases they went on strike as soon as their demand was satisfied.

E-4178. The strike ended all the same?—Yes.

E-4179. Were not all the strikes ended by the payment of an increment of wages?—In some cases.

E-4180. In other cases how was the strike ended?—By the workers going back to work.

E-4181. You compelled them to go to work owing to their starvation?—We did not compel them ; they came back voluntarily.

E-4182. Why did they strike?—For a variety of reasons, evidence of which I think has been given by the Jute Mills Association.

E-4183. *Mr. Cliff*: Does your Chamber of Commerce affiliate the associations or the individual firms, or both?—There is no actual affiliation ; the point is covered by one of the objects of the Chamber of Commerce, which is as follows: " the Committee have power to enter into arrangements upon such terms and subject to such conditions as the Committee may deem desirable for working in connexion with any association organized for the protection of trade or better development of any branch of trade, commerce or manufacture in Bengal or with like objects that may apply to be allowed to work in connexion with the Chamber. "

E-4184. Does the Indian Tea Association become a member or do the firms composing that association become members?—The firms.

E-4185. Have you any knowledge as to why the Liners' Conference have not given evidence to the Commission?—No.

E-4186. Is there no representative body of shipping here?—There is a Shipping Sub-Committee of the Chamber which deals with all shipping questions.

E-4187. Can you tell me why they have not given evidence as a sub-committee?—No, I have no recent information. The original attitude of the Chamber in this matter was that for ocean and coasting shipping the Shipping Sub-Committee of the Chamber should undertake the evidence. I am sure they would be glad to give evidence. The note was approved by the Shipping Sub-Committee, which represents the shipping interests of the Chamber.

E-4188. You said that the Chamber co-ordinates the views of the different associations; does the Chamber advise the different associations?—When any matter which concerns a number of associations is referred to the Chamber the question is referred to the committees of the various associations who give their views to the Chamber and the Chamber tried to co-ordinate those views.

E-4189. I notice that the Government addressed a communication to your Chamber. I want to know whether your Chamber as a Chamber can advise the members of the Association. Can you differ from them on any point. Has it got a separate existence?—It has a separate existence. For instance it took a different line over the question of multiple shifts.

E-4190. Has it taken a different line on any other question?—We have questions coming before the Chamber which are not referred to the Association and *vice versa*. There are members of the committee of the Association who are also members of the committee of the Chamber.

E-4191. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When any question is referred to your Chamber for opinion you send out circulars to the various Associations and get their views. You then draft a reply and send it out to the members again asking for their approval and remarks. Is that not the procedure you adopt?—That very frequently happens, not always.

E-4192. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the Chamber's definition of an agriculturist?—The Chamber has never tried to define the term. Speaking off-hand and without ever having tried to define that term before I should say that it is " a man who retains his connexion with the soil." I may go further and say that many of these so-called agriculturists who come to work in industry in Bengal are not primarily what were originally called agricultural castes. They are the lower castes such as the *Chamars* (leather workers) and the *telis* (oil workers) who possibly possessed less land in the villages and therefore on account of the heavy pressure on land were driven to industry as an alternative outlet. I think that is borne out by the census of 1921.

E-4193. Has any of your constituent associations taken a census of the workers as to whether they had any land?—No census that I am aware of.

E-4194. I am trying to get proof of the statement that the Indian industrial worker is primarily an agriculturist and I have not succeeded in getting it?—I think the life histories of jute mill workers—about 80 of them—put up by the Indian Jute Mills Association give very interesting information on the point.

E-4195. I was wondering whether you have yourself ever taken a census of your workers in order to test the truth of the statement?—No, I am not aware of any census having been taken.

E-4196. In your memorandum you refer to the efforts of reformers to improve the condition of the workers and go on to say and say rightly:

> "These reformers have realized that, without going gently and taking infinite pains to show full consideration for the habits and customs of many generations, more harm than good may be done by antagonising where their anxiety is to help."

We had the Associations before the Commission and we have asked them what their programme for the amelioration of the condition of the industrial workers is for the next ten years. Can your Chamber give us any definite programme in respect of that?—There is no definite programme that I am aware of. I would like to say in the first place that the mere advent of the Royal Commission has had an extraordinary educative effect and I think that the Industrial Legislation Sub-Committee of the Chamber will consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

E-4197. I am concerned because I fail to find any concerted policy on the part of the industrialists. I do find that in so many cases the action proposed is considered to be premature. Some of your observations in your reply to the Government were written as long as five, six or seven years ago and I am wondering whether during that period the attitude of the industrialists represented in your Chamber has changed and whether you would give a different answer to-day to the questions which have been submitted for your consideration?—I may say this that where the Chamber has made any such statement it has always given its reasons and those reasons have in practice proved reasonably sound.

E-4198. That was probably because they were not put to the arbitrament of a body representative of the workers and the industrialists?—Practical experience has proved those reasons to be sound.

E-4199. In your memorandum you say:

> "It is a curious anomaly that, conservative as he is in many ways, the Indian worker is easily impressionable; his conservatism relates to his habits and prejudices, but he is easily impressed. . ."

Will you forgive me if I say that there is a great deal of conservatism with regard to your Association? Take the case of the Workmen's Compensation Act. When you are dealing with sickness insurance you say that you really require more time to examine the effects upon the worker of the Workmen's Compensation Act. And Government on the other hand say that with regard to Workmen's Compensation Act they are satisfied that it has not borne heavily upon industry. How much longer time would you require to see the effects of the Workmen's Compensation Act upon the worker?—I do not think I can give any definite period. With regard to sickness insurance we have stated that what is best suited to the present conditions in India would be an expansion of the general health work in the direction of free Government health service. We are not fundamentally opposed to sickness insurance. We have dealt with the difficulties and mentioned two of them. One is the migratory character of labour and the other is the objection of the worker to pay a levy.

E-4200. The communication of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Government does not stress the point of the migration of the worker apart from the men employed in the mining industry. That Chamber says in their letter to the Government of Bengal, dated 30th August 1929:

> ". . . The subject in this way may be found to narrow down considerably, making it easier to comprehend the nature of the fundamental problems involved in it. For, obviously among the industries referred to the consideration of difficulties arising from the paucity of medical men, etc., may be dispensed with as offering no insurmountable obstacle to the operation of any scheme. It is only in connexion with the coal industry that the difficulty concerning migration may appear to be of some importance."

Does your Chamber consider that the migratory character of labour is such a serious matter?—I do not say that it could not be overcome. But it is an obstacle.

E-4201. Dealing with the last general strike in the jute industry you say that "it is notorious that the strike was largely instigated by, and kept going by, political agitators. . ." Have you any evidence? We have had advice that the speculators were at the bottom of the strike. Have you any evidence to show that any political leader was responsible for this strike, because this is the first time that I have heard that some political leaders were at the bottom of the last strike?—Here is a speech of one of the political leaders reported in a newspaper.

> "The labour movement was very closely connected with the Swaraj movement. What is needed at the present moment is a co-ordination of the two in order to force the hands of an unsympathetic Government."

I can put in evidence if necessary.

E-4202. The evidence put before the Commission was that the strike was largely instigated, if not entirely by the speculators. I wonder if you are controverting that view?—I should say partly the speculators were interested; partly the political agitators were interested and partly labour also was interested.

E-4203. With regard to trade unionism you answered Sir Alexander Murray, as many other people have done and said: "If trade unions are properly run . . ." Are you willing as a Chamber to allow trade unions to say whether your Chamber is properly run?—I suppose they are entitled to say that in evidence before you if you are asking that question.

E-4204. Will you refuse to have dealings with any body which you judge is not properly run? Who decides whether your Chamber is properly run?—If it was not properly run it would cease to exist as most unions do after a short time.

E-4205. Who decides it, the members?—I presume so.

E-4206. Would you not give the same right to the trade union people?—No one would listen to the Chamber's opinion if it was not properly run.

E-4207. Take the question of combination of workmen. Have the employers here in Calcutta encouraged combinations amongst work-people?—We support the Kankinarah Labour Union of Mr. Chaudhuri.

E-4208. Is that the only instance?—Speaking from personal experience entirely it is the only union with which I have had any dealings which could be considered to speak with a sense of responsibility.

E-4209. I will come to the Kankinarah Labour Union in a second. Take the question of collective action by work-people. Is there any definite machinery in Bengal whereby the workers can make joint representations?—There is none because it has not been the custom of the country in the past.

E-4210. Is that not conservatism on the part of the employer?—Also on the part of the employee.

E-4211. Let us come back to the question of the Kankinarah Labour Union. In connexion with the last strike the union passed certain resolutions and sent them to the managing agents of certain mills and to the Chamber of Commerce. The president of the union gave evidence before the Commission and said that he received no replies at all to his letters. What I want to get at is the sincerity of the industrialists in dealing with trade unions. I want to take the particular case which you have mentioned as an instance and ask the Chamber what they have to say as a Chamber on that point?—The Secretary says that the question did not come before the Chamber.

E-4212. Dealing with the question of trade unions your Chamber has made no observations on this question as a Chamber?—Yes.

E-4213. As a Chamber which is concerned with the development of the interests of the trades represented, surely you will agree that orderly negotiations are better than the present position?—We have always had a system of orderly negotiations.

E-4214. With trade unions?—Not with trade unions.

E-4215. If you want to develop trade in this country orderly negotiations with trade unions will help?—Yes, but I am not prepared to commit my Chamber to any view as to whether trade unions or works committees which

are a possible alternative would be a better solution. The last time when the question came before the Associated Chambers in Bombay it was left pending the views to be expressed by the Royal Commission.

E-4216. At the moment your Chamber has no views on the question?—The Chamber has no views.

E-4217. *Miss Sorabji*: You say that the ordinary worker is ignorant and easily misled by interested people and you propose that something should be done to educate him. Would you agree that propaganda about the legitimate aims and objects of trade unionism on right lines would be helpful to him?—Propaganda by employers will always be looked upon with suspicion. It has been tried and not found effective.

E-4218. If it were undertaken by philanthropic societies and responsible persons?—Yes, it might be useful.

E-4219. With regard to sickness insurance and such other welfare benefit schemes if some attempt were made to help the worker to understand what the authorities mean by benefit would it not happen as a consequence that you might get his co-operation in any scheme undertaken for his benefit?—Yes, education will be useful. But the Chamber as a whole has no definite policy in this matter; individually my firm is directing its attention to forming welfare committees and works councils with a view to training up workers in welfare so that they might be leaders in this movement in the future.

E-4220. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Do you think that generally speaking the workers are satisfied with their rates of wages?—Covering the whole of the interests represented in the Chamber I should say yes, for this reason that in 1920 or thereabouts there was an increase of 50 to 60 per cent in wages. At that time the index figure of the cost of living was round about 270 and has now fallen to 160 or thereabouts to-day. Therefore the benefit of the increase in real wages has been considerable. Generally speaking, they are contented with their wages to-day.

E-4221. Do the mill managers keep in close touch with the workers in order to remove their legitimate grievances and prevent them from falling into the hands of unscrupulous exploiters of labour?—Speaking as an employer I may say that the mill managers do their best to keep themselves in the closest possible touch with their labour and every one knows that the surest way for a man to get the sack is to quarrel with his labour.

E-4222. The Kankinarah Labour Union approached the mill managers with the legitimate grievances of the workers before the last strike. Did the managers make any efforts to settle the matter?—It applies to a particular industry and I have nothing to say.

E-4223. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Dealing with strikes you say:

> "Indeed a large majority usually express the desire to return to work, but confess that they are afraid to do so because of the threats that have been made as to what will happen to their houses and families while they are away at their employment."

In answer to Sir Ibrahim you said that the only way to get over the difficulty was to have extra police protection?—Not the only way.

E-4224. Have you got any other way?—For instance closer contact between the employer and the workers will lead to improvements.

E-4225. During the last jute mill strike was sufficient police protection given to the people concerned?—In certain areas, yes. There were no serious riots; there was a great deal of intimidation in the *bustis* and the mills.

E-4226. What is the best method by which this intimidation could be stopped?—I have no universal remedy to suggest.

E-4227. Have you any evidence to prove that speculators were at the bottom of the last strike in the jute mills?—These things are so notoriously difficult to prove. But I think we have had sufficient circumstantial evidence to justify the making of that statement.

E-4228. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With regard to the formation of works committees the Bengal Government addressed a letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1922; has any action been taken since then?—The Secretary says that he cannot say without reference to the files.

E-4229. Employers generally complain that workers go on lightning strikes without formulating their grievances and demands and they are not in a position to know the minds of the workers till long after they have struck. Would it not help you to know their minds if you had works committees on the lines of the village *panchayats*?—The Chamber's attitude as explained to you in a letter, dated 10th June, is that no useful purpose will be served by undertaking any new movement in any industry till the Whitley Commission has reported. My own personal view is that welfare committees or works committees will be very advantageous and individually we propose to start them.

E-4230. *The Chairman*: Your Chamber is of course aware of the terms on which the recent strike in the jute mills was settled. Have you any information whether those terms have been fully implemented by the employers in the jute industry?—I believe so. I have personally addressed a demi-official letter to a Government official stating that I thought that the terms were fulfilled.

E-4231. On what ground? Have you enquired from the various jute mills as to whether that has been done?—Not as a Chamber.

E-4232. You would agree, would you not, that the credit of industry generally in Bengal would be involved if there was any failure fully to implement the terms of a negotiated settlement like that?—Certainly.

E-4233. Therefore it would be a matter concerning the whole of the industry as represented in your Association not merely the particular jute industry?—Yes.

E-4234. I take it from what you say that your Chamber has not taken any steps to satisfy itself that the terms of that agreement have been in all cases carried out?—So far as I am aware the Chamber has not heard of any case in which it has not been carried out. Therefore no occasion has arisen to institute an enquiry as to whether it has been carried out.

E-4235. How would the Chamber know of a case where the terms have not been carried out? One item in the settlement was the giving of maternity benefits. It was left vague in the document. Has there been any endeavour to see that a minimum standard was applied to the performance of that part of the terms?—Not as a Chamber. So far as I am aware the members of the Jute Mills Association have consulted among themselves and decided what the minimum rate should be. In matters like this they consult among themselves area by area, for instance the Titaghur area, the Budge Budge area, the Bhatpara area and so on. I believe that is the way they discuss these matters in the Jute Mills Association.

E-4236. Would you not agree that if there was diversity area by area in the interpretation of the terms of an agreement which was signed as I understood by the Chairman of the Jute Mills Association, that it might lead to trouble?—I understand when the Chairman of the Jute Mills Association signed the agreement he signed it as an undertaking to place the matter before the members of the Jute Mills Association and that was done.

E-4237. It is true that he disclaimed any power other than to recommend. No doubt that is the correct reading of the situation. But still as a Bengal Chamber of Commerce you have agreed, I think, that it is a matter of substantial importance to industry outside the jute mills and that there should be no question as to the full implementing of the terms of the agreement?—I still maintain that there is no question about it.

E-4238. It is a little difficult to know where the information in the negative would come from if there were not some means of collecting information from those concerned as to how the several heads of the agreement had been implemented?—Yes, the Chamber has no such machinery. As a matter of fact the Chamber did not interfere with the conduct of the negotiations which resulted in the settlement of the strike. It was left entirely to the Jute Mills Association and the Chamber interested itself in other aspects.

E-4239. I understood it perfectly. I only put this point to you as you appear to be such a representative body of the industry and commerce of Calcutta and Bengal that it would seem a matter of over-riding interest to you although none of you may be actually concerned in jute that there should be no failure to completely fulfil the conditions of an agreement which has

been signed?—The position is that individual members of the Committee have satisfied themselves from their knowledge of the jute mills that the terms are being carried out.

E-4240. I am not suggesting that any one has failed to do that. But the Chamber might serve a useful purpose if it was able to assure the public in general and in some detail as to how exactly the terms of the agreement had been implemented?—I think that the matter should be left to the Indian Jute Mills Association.

E-4241. You do not think that your Chamber—I do not say is responsible—has a substantial interest in the matter?—If any question arose that the terms were not implemented I have no doubt that the Committee of the Chamber will discuss the question. But the matter of making a public pronouncement on the question would be left to the Indian Jute Mills Association. I will draw the attention of the Committee to the point. May I add that five out of the nine members of our committee are interested in jute mills.

E-4242. That again would seem to show the relation of this great single industry with the general commerce and industry of the Province as a whole?—Yes, I have made that point to illustrate that if there was any doubt whether the terms were carried out or not we would be sure to hear of it.

E-4243. *Sir Alexander Murray*: As regards this question of the origin of labour, after all organized industries in India are a matter of comparatively recent growth. If the labour is not essentially agricultural in origin and character what else is it? Where has it come from?—I presume there was a stage in every country when the industrial worker was primarily an agriculturist.

E-4244. Especially in India at the present moment. In your memorandum you say that "industrial labour in India is agricultural in its origin and subject to the qualification stated at the beginning of this paragraph to a large extent remains so in its character". Further on you say that "these figures afford convincing proof of the statement that industrial labour is essentially agricultural in its origin and character". You do not seem to have two minds on this question?—I think not.

E-4245. Have you any returns given to the Chamber, quarterly, half-yearly or annually, that keep its members posted as regards wages ruling in the agricultural areas from which labour is ordinarily drawn?—Yes, we have extremely interesting returns from various districts, mostly in Bihar and Orissa, which have been going on, I think, since 1896 or even before that.

E-4246. So for about 35 years you have been getting from the District Magistrates and district commissioners, in particular agricultural areas, the ruling rates of wages there and the conditions obtaining as far as crops are concerned, to indicate whether recruiting might be successfully done?—Yes; it also gives the reason why there is unemployment in certain areas.

E-4247. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you get these returns quarterly, half-yearly or annually?—Half-yearly.

E-4248. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Could you send us copies of the half-yearly returns for the last two or three years that you have been getting from the districts and that have been circulated by the Chamber to its members?—Yes.

Mr. Cliff: If possible, I should like to know what methods are adopted in compiling those returns.

E-4249. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: We have received a memorandum from two of your members regarding the jute pressing industry in Calcutta. May we know whether your Chamber or its committee have approved of this document?—The Chamber have not officially approved of it. These two gentlemen were nominated by the Chamber, but this memorandum has not come before the Committee.

E-4250. This is really a report of these two gentlemen?—Yes.

E-4251. I would like to draw your attention to the statement made therein with regard to works committees, and should like to know if there is any justification for making that statement. It is said: "We have no works committees and *from experience* of these committees in similar circumstances we consider they would be a hindrance to the welfare of our

labour through consequent agitation and the moral surety of bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head." Has your Committee or you personally got any knowledge of experience of these works committees that have led to this situation?—No, I have not.

E-4252. You have no personal knowledge of works committees in Bengal or in Calcutta which have led to bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head?—No.

E-4253. We have heard generally that the workers do not take any interest in works committees, but this is the first time, I think, that we hear that works committees have led to bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head. I do not know if there is any evidence in justification of this statement?—I do not know. You might examine the authors.

E-4254. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Gow, have you any experience of these works committees?—(*Mr. Gow*) No, I have no experience.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Captain R. LIDDELL, Marine Superintendent, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited.

E-4255. *The Chairman*: The memorandum which we have in front of us bears your name, but if I am correctly informed it represents the views not only of your company, but of the shipping community in Calcutta?—Yes, as represented by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

E-4256. Will you tell us in your own words exactly the procedure which resulted in the preparation of this memorandum and its approval by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?—I was asked by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to draw up a memorandum in conjunction with other superintendents of shipping companies in India or who were represented in India. That memorandum was approved by the other superintendents and was then submitted to the Chamber and I was afterwards asked to give oral evidence in support of it.

E-4257. By that method we may take it that this memorandum represents the views of the whole of the shipping community in this port?—Yes, particularly of those in the coastal trade.

E-4258. And after it had been prepared it received the unanimous approval of the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

E-4259. You have recited to us the fact of the appointment of Captain Darvell as Shipping Master and Officer-in-charge of the Seamen's Recruiting Bureau, and you say that in 1924 there was a very large number of persons granted continuous discharge certificates owing to the idea that they would get regular employment once they were on the register. Can you give us your estimate of the number of potential seamen available and the number who "circulate in employment." You put the total of lascar seamen available at 100,000?—That figure is an underestimate. I understand from the Shipping Master that he quotes the figure of 150,000, and I think that is more correct.

E-4260. When you state that "Of this probably about 50,000 circulate in employment" will you give a closer definition of what you mean by "circulate in employment"?—Those who are afloat at one time and those who are regular applicants for employment, basing it on a man being out of employment for, say, a period of six or seven months.

E-4261. Those are two different things. We would like to have a figure of those afloat at any one time, and secondly, those who had in fact got employment within a period of two years?—In the case of British India Company we have actually afloat at one time about 15,000 men, made up of about 4,000 deck lascars, 5,000 saloon ratings and 5,000 firemen.

E-4262. At what figure would you put the total number of men which you engage in a period, say, of three years?—We consider that we always

have between 20,000 and 25,000 men employed who are regular employees of the British India Company. The British India Company operate about half of the shipping visiting the port of Calcutta.

E-4263. Presumably there is a greater continuity or regularity of employment amongst the serangs and men who sail for you than amongst the general body of lascars in Calcutta?—It probably is so. My company aim at continuity of employment.

E-4264. Is the list of serangs whom you employ at different times in your company a limited list?—No; it is open to any one who cares to register to do so. We started the registers in 1921 after the International Labour Conference at Genoa. Up to the moment on our list the actual numbers which we have registered for employment in the company are 226 deck serangs, 200 engine-room serangs, 782 seacunnies and 200 butlers.

E-4265. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you confine your register to men who work in your line itself?—No, any man who wants employment must register with us, but we give preference to men who have served in the company previously.

E-4266. *The Chairman*: Out of that number of 226 serangs how many are engaged at any one time?—We have 127 steamers, and that is the number of serangs. Each ship has one serang, one fireman serang, four seacunnies and one butler. I am dealing now with the senior ratings.

E-4267. By the phrase "Of this probably about 50,000 circulate in employment," what you really mean is that only about 50,000 out of 150,000 have any reasonable chance of finding occupation?—No, I mean that that 50,000 is the number of men who follow the sea constantly and who do not go away from the sea for long periods. We have had cases of men coming down asking for employment who have been away from the port of Calcutta for six years.

E-4268. You say "The Employment Bureau has, since its inception, done much to further the interests of the seamen"?—Yes, it has been a means of bringing to the notice of the officials of the companies any complaints of the men. It has helped men to find employment, and it has generally co-operated with both men and the shipping companies particularly in advising masters of ships regarding suitable men who are available at the time.

E-4269. Do you think that the establishment of the office has been a benefit to both employers and employed?—I think so.

E-4270. Do you think it has had any effect in diminishing the exactions made from the lascars of which we have heard a good deal of talk?—No, I do not think it has been able to do much in that respect, because since the War period the question of exactions has automatically reduced itself. Before 1921 one heard of the great amount of bribery and corruption which went on, but during the whole of my contact with the seamen I have only had one or two definitely proved instances of bribery. I think it is a very much exaggerated statement. I think that to-day bribery is more or less negligible. I am speaking now of when the men are actually on the ship. What happens after they leave the ship I cannot say.

E-4271. Is it your opinion that as a general rule the serangs do not make exactions from the crews which they take on board?—Yes, at the present day. I think the exactions are almost negligible at the present moment, certainly amongst the ships employed on the coasts of India.

E-4272. Have you ever had to get rid of a serang on complaints of that kind?—Yes, I have had to get rid of two within the last three years.

E-4273. How did the complaints reach you?—Directly from a lascar.

E-4274. You found in those cases the complaints to be substantiated?—Yes. We believed them to be correct.

E-4275. Do you feel that by this means of close attention to complaints you are able to weed out your serangs and only get those who refrain from these practices?—Close personal touch between the shipowners' representatives and the men is one of the best ways of keeping things going right, and also to encourage the men to bring their complaints forward and have them sifted, but the seaman to-day generally is very much more alive to his own interests than he was in pre-war days. When once he draws his money and puts it into his pocket he, like any other human being, does not part with it.

E-4276. In your opinion, given conditions of close supervision on the part of the authorities, readiness to listen to complaints and a modicum of courage on the part of the lascar himself, there need be no complaint?—I think the complaints will become fewer and I think men will realize that the shipping companies, through their representatives, have a very clear and definite desire to help them.

E-4277. Dealing with the question of a roster system you say in India this is almost impossible and when tried has proved disastrous from a disciplinary point of view. How and when has the system been tried and failed?—When it was first proposed by the recruitment committee to set up registers we started out with the idea that we could work a roster system. Each individual man was chosen either by the Superintendents or the Captains in the presence of the Superintendents.

E-4278. Without the intervention of a serang?—Yes. We chose our serangs and then we took men according to the length of time they had been out of employment, and also according to their physique, with the result that we got two or three crews which proved a complete failure when they got to sea.

E-4279. That was in your company?—Yes.

E-4280. How many cases did you actually try?—Two; probably more. We tried it for a period of about six months, but these are two particular cases which were of an acute type. It was a failure from every point of view. Firstly, the serangs had no control over the men at all, and secondly, the men themselves were quite unhappy because they all came from different villages and towns. We then came to the conclusion, which has since been confirmed, that the men themselves will not sail under any other conditions than what we call the "village system".

E-4281. A moment ago you told me that the Employment Bureau has done much to further the interests of the seamen. Later on I see you say that you think the introduction of the Bureau was a mistake and you are doubtful whether it will ever succeed. That seems a contradiction?—What I meant to convey was that the Bureau as it stands at present, as represented by Captain Darvell who has not only a very wide experience of, but a big sympathy with, the seaman, did much to remove the little grievances they had and to represent them to us. On the other hand, as a recruiting office pure and simple I do not think it can be a success.

E-4282. Captain Darvell told us that through the Bureau about one quarter of the lascars at present going to sea from Calcutta were recruited He described to us Method No. 1, which is what your company and other companies work upon, and Method No. 2, through his office, which supply the crews where the companies are not in a position to act under Method No. 1?—But I do not think Captain Darvell takes on the direct supply of the crews. I think they are chosen in his office and he gives what help and advice he thinks necessary, because the masters of ships coming here are in the majority of cases ignorant of the local conditions.

E-4283. I agree the crews are not chosen in his office as units without regard to their ties with one another or their relationship to the serang, but we were informed that one quarter of the recruiting in Calcutta does take place with the aid of his office?—That is because the British India Company, which represents the biggest proportion, has their own system of recruiting. They actually recruit in their own office. They have a waiting room for the serangs and lascars. On the other hand those offices who have not such an organization or a staff of Marine Superintendents have to go to the Shipping Office to get their crews.

E-4284. The point is this: what you say in your memorandum would appear as if you thought the Bureau was no good, and that it should be abolished, but I think you will admit that one quarter of the recruitment does take place through Captain Darvell's office?—It may be it does. I do not mean to suggest that the office should be done away with, because it has done a lot of good; but I do not think that the crews should be put together and chosen on a roster system. That is what I really meant to convey.

E-4285. What you really mean is that you think the introduction of a roster system would be a mistake?—I do not think it is at all practicable in India.

E-4286. You describe the system which is adopted by your company which deals with some 50 per cent of the total crews and which, I think, is adopted also by other companies, forming about three-quarters of the whole?—I think most of the companies at the moment do not follow our system. I think we are the only company now which has direct recruitment.

E-4287. Describing to us the choosing of a crew you say "In this respect the actual time a man has been out of employment has a distinct bearing on the choice, but the company are forced at times to consider the applicant and the type of vessel to which he will be appointed". Will you tell us how far you are able to give consideration to the actual time a man has been out of employment?—If a crew is required for a steamer it very largely depends on the number of serangs available. One day you will have 20 serangs available. On the other days you will only have one available. If we have a number of serangs available for a certain class of ship, all other things being equal, and there being nothing against the men, he is given preference.

E-4288. The one who has been longest without a voyage?—Up to a point, but we have also to take into consideration the total amount of employment which the man has had previously. You could get a man who has been more or less in constant employment even if he has been out of employment for six months, and then you could get a man who is doing really very little employment over a period and is out of employment for a shorter period. That man would get preference.

E-4289. You say "the object is to work as near the roster system as possible and to alleviate unemployment as far as possible amongst the men. Instructions have been given that where crews have been for some considerable period in a cargo ship they should, all things being equal, be signed off, and a new crew signed on in their places". How far do you find that practicable?—It has been a complete failure. If we are going to have continuity of employment we think we should have the men who are the most suitable. If a man has been in a ship for three or four years and has given good service, I personally cannot see why he should be put out of employment for the sake of others.

E-4290. That is to say, where you have men, who are desirous of continuous employment, going back on a second or third voyage, in the interests of efficiency, it is desirable that they should go and not be signed off?—Quite so—definitely to keep continuity of employment so that we are able to build up a permanent employment for the men, but against that I find from experience that serangs do not wish to remain much longer than three or four years on a ship. That does not apply to the regular coasting steamers where they are in touch with their homes the whole time. In support of that it was suggested some time ago that the articles of agreement should be extended to cover periods up to three years.

E-4291. Will you look again at the paragraph I have quoted because it seems to me from what you have said now that the whole of it should be withdrawn. You begin by saying "Instructions have been given" and you end up by saying "It is hoped by this method that unemployment will be reduced"?—I should have said "Instructions were given" and "It was hoped", but it has not been found a practicable scheme.

E-4292. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you not think other companies have found it practicable? Take the Harrison Line for instance.—Yes, but I think it will be found that where men are on long voyages, say Continental and American voyages, when they are away from India for so long, they themselves want to sign off, but I do not think it should be made a practice to sign a man off automatically because he has been so long in employment.

E-4293. *The Chairman*: You tell us that after a strike in 1919 increases of wages were given ranging from 60 to 80 per cent. How comes it that that increase was only given after a strike? Were you not aware of the cost of living having risen?—I was not here at the time, but the strike came about simply from the state of unrest which existed everywhere.

E-4294. But here apparently was a state of things where the companies were blind to the grievances of the men and however readily they granted it, from what you tell us it was only granted after a strike?—I do not know that the grievances of the men were ever put to the companies properly. I think it will be found that there was no proper representation made to the companies.

E-4295. Is there now any channel through which the men can make known their grievances?—They can make them known by directly bringing them to the notice of the shipping companies.

E-4296. Does your company deal with any one of the two or three organizations amongst the seamen?—No.

E-4297. You tell us "It is to be admitted that unemployment and poverty amongst seamen are a serious matter". Have you any remedy to suggest for that state of affairs?—I think the only remedy is in controlling the number of men who become seamen.

E-4298. We have had a suggestion put before us to the effect that there should be a limit laid down in order to reduce the number. A limit of four years was suggested. What have you to say to that—where a man has been absent for four or more years from the sea he should not be entitled to call himself a seaman again and put his name on the list?—I do not know whether the men would not think that a hardship. If a man has been a sailor for so many years, and then goes away for a period of four years, when he comes back he would still want not to give up the sea.

E-4299. When I asked you what is your remedy just now you suggested limiting the list?—I meant limiting the number of new men.

E-4300. In what way would you limit the number of new men?—I would not grant any more first-discharge certificates if other men who have been to sea are available.

E-4301. You would absolutely stop recruitment for a period?—I would not lay down a period, but as long as seamen who have been to sea are available, I would not take other men as first-discharge men; we do not in our Company. We take no new men.

E-4302. We were told yesterday that that might apply to the upper ratings, but it could not be applied to the coal trimmers?—I understand that one of the difficulties about coal trimmers is that once they become coal trimmers they do not want to remain coal trimmers, and as soon as they become firemen they will not go back to coal trimmers. That goes right through all the sea-faring ranks. Once a serang always a serang; but amongst the lascars, where there are plenty of men available, I cannot see why it should be necessary to take new men.

E-4303. Your suggestion is that no new first-voyage certificates should be given until the unemployment situation has been solved?—Only for deck lascars, not for coal trimmers.

E-4304. You would stop the issue of new certificates in the case of deck lascars, but you would not apply that to the engine room staff?—I would sooner say that I would consider the advisability of stopping it, because there is one point which should be taken into consideration, namely, the question of the serangs and the tindals and the seacunnies wanting to get their children away to sea. They take them with them and train them. That is a point on which the Shipping Master could give more information than myself because he has the figures. From the seamen's point of view I think it might be considered whether they would desire to take their children to sea with them. There is no doubt that the serangs do take their relatives.

E-4305. Your suggested remedy now comes to this: that no more first-voyage certificates should be issued to deck lascars except where there is some already existing connexion with the sea?—Yes, some definite reason for granting it.

E-4306. Dealing with the question of indebtedness of seamen, you say "A first step to remedy this state of affairs is for the company to institute proceedings against anybody who imposes on the seaman, on the lines of the legislation which was framed in the United Kingdom". What is that legislation?—Right throughout the whole of the shipping legislation at Home there have been efforts made to protect the seaman from imposition.

E-4307. You cannot quote chapter and verse?—No.

E-4308. *Mr. Cliff*: You are referring, for instance, to protection against crimping?—Yes; that was one of the greatest evils all over the world, but there has been a gradual protection built up to save the seaman from himself.

E-4309. *The Chairman*: Then you cannot go further than you have done here?—The Recruitment Bureau Officer investigates every case that is

brought to his notice of people attempting to rob the seamen and proceedings should be taken against anybody where there is reasonable cause to believe that the accusations are proved.

E-4310. Then you think Captain Darvell and his office have been a real benefit to the seamen because they watch things of that kind and have been successful in reducing the evil?—I do most certainly.

E-4311. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Have you evidence to show that men who take to the sea have an alternative employment on the land?—Yes, I have the evidence of the men themselves; I know the lascars very well and I have made it my business to find out what the lascar does when he goes to his country.

E-4312. Does not your method of getting crews through serangs give a monopoly to the serangs and enable them to select such men as they like?—No, I do not think so; if you want a crew of twenty men he will bring thirty and you can select the men you want.

E-4313. But does it not imply that the actual employment is in his hands?—I do not think it is in his hands; it is in the hands of the Master of the ship who selects the men. The men are signed on and are paid a cash advance, the money is given to the men individually and I do not think the men pay the bribes that are stated. Theoretically the system may lead to bribery and corruption but in actual practice it does not.

E-4314. What proof have you of that?—The proof of personal experience through being in close and personal touch with the men. We have practically no cases of men complaining of bribery. During the last two or three years we have had two cases in which it could be proved. I was talking to the Shipping Master the other day and he said that when a man died at sea it was extraordinary how much their relatives knew as to their wages, the money due to them and that sort of thing. He said he had very few complaints of serangs robbing the men.

E-4315. Do you think it is possible to prove corruption of this kind in many cases?—I think it is very difficult to prove it.

E-4316. If they were able to prove corruption in two cases the inference is that many more cases of corruption actually existed although they could not be proved?—I can only repeat that it is my firm conviction that bribery does not exist to the extent which is stated.

E-4317. Then how do you account for the condition of indebtedness in which all the seamen are reported to be?—I do not think seamen are in debt any more than other workers. I am told that nearly all the Indian small wage earners are in debt.

E-4318. The cause of the indebtedness may either be that the wages are insufficient or that the amount the man actually gets after deductions is insufficient?—No, I do not agree with that. The social customs such as marriage dowries cost large sums of money which have to be raised through money-lenders. That has nothing to do with the system of recruitment.

E-4319. Marriage dowries are a form of expense which does not occur very frequently, does it?—That I cannot say.

E-4320. You say that the allegation of the Seamen's Union that the brokers take bribes and generally exploit the men is not the case?—I am most emphatic on that.

E-4321. After personal investigation into the matter?—Yes; the supervision is so close now that it is almost impossible for exploitation to go on.

E-4322. You say that preference is given to people who have been longest out of employment; that does not reduce the volume of unemployment?—We spread out the employment. The unemployment among the lascar seamen is a very difficult one to deal with. All our scaling and painting of ships is done in this Port. Originally it was done by contractors through our workshops. When the question of the unemployment amongst seamen was brought to the fore through various articles that were written I attempted to reduce it by giving sea-going lascars, tindals and serangs employment as daily lascars on ships. On that work we employ on the average about 600 men a day. The response to that offer from the sea-going lascars has been practically negligible. Another thing which makes me very sceptical about the statements which are made as to unemployment is this. At Home if men are out of employment for a long time they appear obviously to be down and out; but you never see that state of things in

India amongst the unemployed seamen, who after they have been away from the sea for a time appear just as fit and healthy as the day they left the ship.

E-4323. By this method the volume of unemployment is not reduced?—Yes; the difficulty in reducing unemployment is that once a man is a seagoing lascar he does not want any other kind of work although the conditions of that work may be the same. I do not say they all will not accept employment on land, but the response to the offer I made has been more or less negligible.

E-4324. *Mr. Clow*: I think you said you had a register of your serangs?—Yes, we keep a register of serangs and seacunnies.

E-4325. What are the numbers?—Actually on our register at the moment there are 226 deck serangs, 200 firemen serangs, 782 seacunnies and 200 butlers.

E-4326. Can you give us an estimate of the average time that each of these men spends on a ship?—It is very difficult to get at that. Where men apply for gratuities for long service we base any gratuity given on a period of 25 years. Assuming that a man goes to sea when he is about eighteen years old, which is the general average, he is between 55 and 60 before he has completed 25 years' service.

E-4327. I want the proportion between the time the man is employed and the time he is in his village unemployed?—It varies very much; on the average I should say he is in his village anything from eight months to a year.

E-4328. Out of the 226 deck serangs how many are at the present moment at sea?—127. That is the number of ships the company have.

E-4329. I suppose they are mostly on twelve months' agreement?—Yes, and the local mail steamers are on Coasting Articles.

E-4330. Have you ever taken steps to find out what the facts are with regard to bribery in cases where you have had no complaints?—No; if I get no complaints and at the same time make it clear that any complaints will receive sympathetic hearing, I do not go and ask for complaints because I think that would be looking for trouble. There is a very big difference between the lascar of to-day and the lascar of 1921; he is very much more in personal contact with us than he was. Never a day goes by without three or four men coming to see us, particularly seacunnies.

E-4331. You have not tried the experiment of going on a ship on the river and telling the serang that you are not going to take any action against him but ask to see his account book?—No.

E-4332. Captain Penny did that?—Yes, I heard of that. I will accept the statement that perhaps in those days there was bribery. If men can pay Rs. 500 or Rs. 1,000 for a ship, there must be a method of making that money. That money cannot be made out of lascars' wages; the ship must have been worth that for some special purpose. There is no doubt that the Indian generally is now protecting himself. For instance, on our passenger ships there are numerous societies for the protection of deck passengers and we now get very few complaints. Whether in the old days the deck passenger was exploited or not I cannot say, but if he was he has learned to-day that he need not be exploited and he has formed a society to protect himself. I do not think there are the opportunities now.

E-4333. On one of your ships a serang admitted to us that he was getting Rs. 88 per month from the men, that would enable him to pay off the sum you mention without trenching on the deck passengers?—Yes, but I do not think that man would get that amount to-day. Of course twenty or twenty-five years ago the wages of the lascars were paid to the serang in a lump sum and he paid the men who came from his village. Since the war, at any rate, the men have received their money direct; they know the value of money and they will not part with it once they get it.

E-4334. Are you satisfied that serangs are not themselves subject to exactions?—I do not think they are; we have watched that very carefully and we have done our utmost to satisfy ourselves that the *ghat* serangs do not extract money from the other serangs.

E-4335. Do any of your *ghat* serangs run boarding houses or are they interested in boarding houses?—No, I have made enquiries about that.

E-4336. The allegation is made that seacunnies work for two watches of 12 hours each; is that correct?—Yes, but they do not work all that time; part of the time they are just standing by.

E-4337. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many *ghat* serangs have you?—I have three *ghat* serangs, a *ghat* butler and one for the firemen.

E-4338. For what purpose do you appoint these *ghat* serangs?—The system has grown up from the time the Company was in its infancy from a very small beginning; I think they were originally serangs under the Company.

E-4339. Nowadays if there is a vacancy, are your *ghat* serangs chosen from the serangs on board?—No. We have had no vacancies during the last ten years; the *ghat* serangs whom we have to-day have been with us for the last ten or fifteen years, so that the position has never arisen. I think it would probably be kept in the family as a family concern and their sons would take their places.

E-4340. Evidently their purpose is to bring crews on board and to fill up blanks at the last moment?—Yes. They are what we call contact men; they have no say at all in the actual selection of the men; they put it about that we want men and once the men are chosen and signed on they see them on board. When we are sending crews away they go to the station and see the men off, look after their baggage and things like that.

E-4341. What are they paid?—Their pay is Rs. 75 a month and a commission on the advances. The ordinary serang is a paid servant who draws his monthly wages.

E-4342. You have told us you have stopped recruiting new seamen?—Yes.

E-4343. Have you stopped recruiting new serangs?—Yes; I do not think we have made a serang for six or seven years except where a serang has died at sea or gone into hospital when the *bara* tindal has been promoted. Actually the creation of serangs in the Port of Calcutta has been completely stopped.

E-4344. Do you not think the tindals have a grievance in that respect?—They have a very definite grievence and I think it is a justifiable grievance. I think the present system is a very bad system. In the course of time it is going to react against the efficiency of the shipping of the port and we shall have serangs who will not be up to the standard we are used to.

E-4345. Could you not pension off the older serangs and give the other men a chance?—Yes, but it would be a very slow process. The serangs who muster up for employment are from 45 to 50 years of age.

E-4346. Could you say you would not take a serang older than 50?—We could, but we do not advocate it because I do not think it would be fair to the men who have served the company for very many years.

E-4347. Would you rather have discontented tindals than be unfair to the older serangs?—Yes, I think so. I do not think we could justify the promotion of a man by putting another man out of employment. Where a man gets too old for the job we do give him a gratuity. We used to give pensions, but now we give a gratuity.

E-4348. Where men have been tindals a long time and have been waiting for the promotion that never comes do you give them extra allowances over and above the ordinary graduated pay?—No. Another thing is that it is not every tindal who will make a good serang.

E-4349. You say that seacunnies are independent of the serangs altogether?—Yes

E-4350. Are they actually independent of the serang in working?—Yes, absolutely; the seacunnies are chosen by the commanders of the ships or by one of the superintendents; now we do not allow seacunnies to be chosen on board a ship. In that respect we get nearer the roster system than with any other class of labour. Length of service is a very big factor with regard to seacunnies, particularly up and down this river. We have created very few new seacunnies for a number of years; where men have been promoted to seacunnies it has been the outcome of accidents at sea, desertions, death or illness.

E-4351. You say that when a crew is required for a vessel all serangs out of employment are mustered?—Yes.

E-4352. I suppose you mean the serangs who are on the spot at the time?—Yes; in our office we have built a waiting room for lascars, serangs and seacunnies. They sit there all day and when a crew is wanted those serangs are told.

E-4353. Out of the 100 odd serangs who are not at sea how many are available to-day?—To-day there are twelve serangs available.

E-4354. What happens to the rest of them?—They go away to their country.

E-4355. On what principle do you arrange for these twelve serangs to come down and be on the spot?—We do not arrange it at all; we choose from the men available. Any day about a dozen or fifteen will be found mustered.

E-4356. Is it the same dozen or fifteen?—No; they remain the same for a period of a month or two months and then they vary.

E-4357. How long do these serangs stay upcountry before they come back and wait for employment?—On the average about a year. The men who stop in their villages for three or six years are generally very old men, and I think they are in partial retirement because they do not seem to be particularly anxious to get ships and they will only take certain ships.

E-4358. Why do you send crews from Calcutta to Bombay?—Because the Calcutta crews are definitely more adaptable than the Bombay crews.

E-4359. Does that apply to both deck crews and engine crews?—Yes, generally. Perhaps custom plays a certain part in it; we have always had Calcutta firemen and the captains of the ships find that the Calcutta crews are more adaptable than the Bombay crews for several reasons. I think the principle reason is caste; all the firemen are Muhammadans and you have less trouble with the Calcutta crew with regard to water and food; they fraternize and are generally happier. There is no doubt that a happy ship is an efficient ship.

E-4360. Why do the P. & O. Company take Punjabi Muhammadan firemen?—I think again it is a question of custom; they have always taken Punjabi firemen; but I doubt whether they are any better than the British India crews.

E-4361. Is there any force in the argument that the Calcutta crews are cheaper?—No. Of course ours is a commercial concern and naturally the question of cost arises, but there is not much difference in cost. If we take a crew on one of our ordinary steamers of about 8,000 tons dead weight to Bombay it costs us about Rs. 3,350; then there is the cost of repatriating the old crew, so it costs practically Rs. 7,000; the saving in cost is really very small. On the British India steamers going up the Gulf Hindu crews are used, they are perfectly capable and very good crews; but for steamers engaged in international trade the general consensus of opinion is that the Bengal crews are better.

E-4362. *Mr. Ahmed*: Your Captain Penny was one of the members of the Clow Committee?—Yes.

E-4363. The Clow Committee reported that bribery and corruption was in existence, but since then you have maintained a system of employment through serangs, ghat serangs and butlers?—No, since then the system has undergone a change. Before 1921 it is true that the selection was more in the hands of the *ghat* serangs. But during the intervening period there has been a gradual tightening and hardening up, so that to-day these *ghat* serangs have nothing to do with the selection of the crews.

E-4364. How are the crews selected?—By the Captains of the ships, or the Company's officials direct, the Marine Superintendents.

E-4365. The Captain of the ship chooses the serang?—Yes.

E-4366. And the serang introduces the crews to the Captain?—Yes, if you like to use the word "introduce".

E-4367. At the time when the Clow Committee reported, was not bribery and corruption rampant?—I am quite prepared to accept the fact that there was a suspicion that bribery existed to a very large extent, but I have never

agreed with that view; I think it has been very much over-rated and exaggerated. During the period of 9 or 10 years which has elapsed since the Clow Committee reported I have satisfied myself that bribery is not rampant. I will not say there is no bribery.

E-4368. You have never appointed any man through this Employment Bureau?—No.

E-4369. Therefore you have not given a trial to this system which was decided upon by the Government and was introduced in 1924?—We have not considered it necessary to change our system. We have built up our system from the early days, that system has given perfect satisfaction to the lascar, the Bureau Officer and, I understand, to the Government, as being a perfectly clear and straightforward system of supplying men.

E-4370. You say this system is a bad one but you have never tried it?—I have not said it is a bad one; I said I thought it would not succeed, if we were to work it on a roster system, applying to the Shipping Master or the Bureau Officer to supply us with crews.

E-4371. You have not given the system any trial?—No; we have no desire to give it a trial.

E-4372. Without having any experience of the system you have jumped to the conclusion that it is a bad system?—No; I do not jump to a conclusion about anything; I investigate the matter and discuss it with people who are in a position to give an opinion.

E-4373. Captain Penny was your representative on the Committee and he agreed to it?—Yes, but it does not necessarily follow that because a technical officer of my company agrees with a thing as being suitable that I should agree with it. After all I have had as great an experience of lascar seamen as most people and it is my considered opinion that our system if it is worked properly is as good as any other system in existence.

E-4374. Without trial of the system you have come to the conclusion that the report of the Clow Committee is erroneous?—No, I did not criticize that report.

E-4375. You are maintaining the system of recruiting through these serangs; is that not so?—No, that is entirely wrong. We are not getting crews through the serangs at all; we are recruiting our own crews. I am most emphatic on this that the *ghat* serangs have no voice at all in the selection.

E-4376. But you have admitted that the serangs introduce the crews to the Captain?—No. I will explain the system again: when a crew is wanted we choose serangs. The serangs are chosen by the Captain of the ship or an official of the company. The serang is told to bring suitable men to the office. He brings a number of men, the crew are then selected from those men by the Captain of the ship or an official of the company. You are getting confused between the serangs of the ships and the *ghat* serangs who are totally different people.

E-4377. Do you not keep any *ghat* serangs now-a-days?—We have three *ghat* serangs.

E-4378. What is the duty of those three *ghat* serangs?—The duties of the *ghat* serangs are to keep in contact with men after they have been finally chosen, see them on board the ships, and supply other ratings if desertions occur. In the event of crews going away by train they accompany them to the station and look after them.

E-4379. In other words they also recruit men whenever it is necessary?—No, they do not; they only recruit men at the eleventh hour.

E-4380. Then they are kept for that contingency?—The *ghat* serangs have nothing to do with the recruitment of the men. That is a most definite statement which I should like to be clearly understood. They have no voice in the putting of the crew together.

E-4381. You say in your memorandum that As. 8 a day is the cost of living of an Indian seaman, and that you pay him As. 10 a day. Do you think that As. 2 a day is sufficient to maintain his family consisting of a wife and two children? Does he not get into debt simply to maintain his family?—We pay the market rate. The market rate has been considered sufficient for him.

E-4382. Because you get them at that rate and so you appoint them; you do not care to give a living wage to the Indian seamen?—I do not know what

you are getting at. We pay the lascar what is considered to be a living wage for a man in Calcutta. He can exist on that. That is the usual travelling allowance.*

E-4383. *Mr. Cliff:* In your memorandum you say that the Indian Seamen's union is not in any way representative of the men. Is that true?—In my opinion it is true. I understand that their numbers at the moment do not exceed 15,000. This has been increased tremendously since the Commission sat. I am told by the General Secretary that before the Commission arrived their numbers were much smaller. There are 150,000 seamen in Calcutta and surely if a body has only 15,000 men on it, it cannot be considered to be representative of the men.

E-4384. They may not be a representative body, but you say they are not representative of the men. Suppose you take a period last year when there were 8,000 seamen on the body. Does that not focus the opinion of those 8,000 men?—No, I do not think it does. I think it focusses the opinion of the executive of the union who may probably have a whole-hearted desire to help the men, but the men themselves are illiterate and do not understand.

E-4385. Would you apply that to an actual incident which occurred? You say that the seamen's union does not focus the point of view of the seamen. Do you remember the action they took against a certain serang broker in this city?—Yes.

E-4386. Why do you think the seamen took that action?—I do not know. I could not say. He was employed by our company and we have had no complaints from the men against that broker. They took the action at the instigation of the union. I understand from the Secretary of the union that he was accused of taking bribes. As it was a matter which did not concern me I did not follow it up closely. It was not one of our ships.

E-4387. Here is an instance where seamen are beginning to organize in order to free themselves from the exactions of a broker and they have determined not to sign on with that broker. Obviously they determined not to sign on with him in order to prevent exactions. He is a broker employed by your company. What co-operation is your company offering in order to break this system of exactions?—Every co-operation to the men and to the unions. Though we do not deal with the unions directly I am in the closest touch with the officials of the union. They come and see me with their complaints. If there was any proved case of complaint against any broker he would not be employed in any of the shipping companies here. I am confident of that. But I have to say in this connexion that we have to be very careful about these accusations. Not unoften do they proceed from malice. I have found that in some cases the professional anonymous letter writer has been at the bottom of it.

E-4388. I want to ask this pertinent question. I find that an organization of seamen have determined to prevent exactions from themselves and of their own volition as a union put a broker employed by you out of business. What is your company as a company prepared to do in conjunction with the union to prevent these exactions taking place?—We are prepared to do everything to stop any form of bribery. But the unions which bring them up must prove that they are genuine. We cannot accept complaints from one body of men against another as true without proper investigation.

E-4389. Many of the seamen are convinced that it is no use appealing to the shipping employers and therefore they feel that the only way to break this bribery is to act on their own?—I do not know whether that is true. We get occasional complaints about food, accommodation or ill-treatment and so on. Why should they refuse to bring forward complaints about bribery. As they do not bring such complaints we feel justified in assuming that this bribery does not exist to the extent that is made out.

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* (The witness subsequently sent in a written communication saying: "The report is not quite clear. The inference is that the question and answer is in reference to lascars on articles, whereas the discussion was about extra lascars who were given daily labour on ships. Mr. Ahmed asked if a lascar could live on eight annas a day why he was given ten annas and I replied that the additional two annas re-imbursed him for travelling expenses to and from the steamer, and in addition to his pay he was given food".)

E-4390. I have no reason to doubt your belief when you have stated quite frankly that you do not believe there is exaction by *ghat* serangs?—The supervision is so tight that they cannot get away with it.

E-4391. But seamen are themselves just as confident that it does exist. They are men who do not get good employment. Could you guarantee that they would not be penalized by the present serangs if they gave evidence of bribery?—They have the assurance of the company that they will not be penalized. We do as much as possible to reduce the influence of the higher ratings over the lower ratings. No matter what we do we cannot get away from the old village system.

E-4392. *The Chairman*: Within the last two or three years you have got rid of two serangs against whom bribery was proved?—We have explained to the men that if bribery was proved against anyone we would get rid of him.

E-4393. *Mr. Cliff*: Can I put it to you this way? Is there any objection on the part of your company that instead of the serangs bringing the men the union may bring the men?—Yes, every objection. We wish to select the men who are most suitable for our work; we do not want the union to select the men for us.

E-4394. If the principle of selection is granted what practical objection is there?—Because we cannot get away from these serangs, we find that our business is run successfully and our men are contented under the present system. We employ close on 15,000 to 20,000 men and the complaints we get are negligible. Ships are visited every day by our officers when they are in ports and the men have ample opportunities of making complaints if any. These men have been in this company for so many years, some of them 10, 15, 20 and 25 years and they know their officers very well. It is not the case of casual employees who are afraid to go to us. These men have known us ever since we joined service as young officers, so much so there is complete mutual knowledge and sympathy between the officers and the men. It is my firm belief that the seamen of Bengal to-day are a very happy and contented lot.

E-4395. Still you are getting day by day men organizing themselves into trade unions and one of their chief objects is to break the power of exaction of the serangs. What is that due to?—I think every body tries to better his conditions. On the question of bribery I seriously doubt whether it exists at all. This bribery at any rate does not exist to the extent that it is said to exist. Perhaps before 1921 that sort of thing did exist because every body seems to say it did. After all if responsible persons like Government officials, shipping officers and public men get together to stamp out the vice, I think they will to a large extent succeed.

E-4396. I am not speaking of 1921. I am speaking of 1929 and 1930?—I am saying that a great deal of change has taken place and that conditions to-day are not what they are exaggerated to be.

E-4397. You have stated in evidence that you find it practical to work the roster system as nearly as possible?—That was really a clerical error. I should have said that the roster system is not a practical scheme. We are endeavouring to give the first chance to people longest out of employment. That more or less becomes a roster system as far as the effort is concerned. But you cannot work a strict roster system. The idea is to give a fair chance to every one.

E-4398. Do you remember No. VII of the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee with regard to men who have been on shore not more than three months?—Yes, I think that an endeavour should be towards continuity of employment irrespective of how long a man has been out of employment. If a man is a good man and has served a particular company for a number of years, even though he has been only one month out, there must be no difficulty in appointing him provided he is the most suitable man.

E-4399. That is the recommendation of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee. I understand you are not really putting that into operation?—I think we are.

E-4400. You are trying to apply the roster system as near as possible?—We have 226 serangs on our register and we try to distribute the jobs among these men. All these men who are permanently employed with us may in the future get pensions.

E-4401. Having 226 serangs do you try to share the work among these 226 or do you try to work the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee?—We try to share the work among these 226 serangs provided the men are suitable for the particular type of ship. The British India Company have many and varied types of ships and the same thing applies to the Asiatic Steam Navigation Company. We have to consider the man's qualifications for the particular type of vessel.

E-4402. Apart from the answers which you have given in your evidence have you any other contribution to make with regard to reducing unemployment among seamen?—No. The maritime market is overstaffed. The only way to reduce unemployment is to try to prevent people coming to sea who do not want to follow it up ultimately and thus stop new recruits. I would not make any hard and fast rules but we should endeavour to limit new recruits.

E-4403. What gratuity do you pay your men who are being retired?—We pay on a sliding scale according to service.

E-4404. Would it help to encourage the men to retire voluntarily by offering them decent gratuity?—Whenever the men feel they cannot work hard they retire of their own accord. But employers generally feel that if a man has been in their service for a long time they should not compel him to retire and thus go out of employment, because gratuity is not the same thing as wages. I do not think it is a method which we can adopt.

E-4405. We have heard that men refuse to take a lower rank once they have been on a higher rank. Would it help the men if you guaranteed that if they took a lower rank for one voyage they would have no difficulty in getting a higher rank for any other voyage and that they would not be permanently reduced in their rank?—We have tried that, but the seamen would not agree. They feel that once a serang gives up the post of serang he would not get it back for a long time.

E-4406. Where do your crew sign on?—Ships actually in Calcutta sign off and sign on board-ship. We send a lot of crew to other ports and they sign on in the shipping office. It is simply a matter of convenience.

E-4407. Who selects the crew that you send to other ports?—Ships wire their agents and they select the crew. In the majority of cases the selection is made by myself and one of my assistants who is a responsible official of the company.

E-4408. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of the recognition of unions you said that there has been an increase in the strength of the unions since the advent of the Whitley Commission. Was it due to the fact that the men were told that if they joined the union they would get increase in pay?—I think it is quite possible. It is propaganda no doubt. I have no definite proof of it, but it is a reasonable suggestion to make.

E-4409. As regards the boycott of the broker referred to, was it not due to the fact that he tried to start a separate union?—I do not know, but there have been unions started from time to time of which we hear a good deal.

E-4410. The Seamen's Union object to the crew signing on in the ship. Would you have any objection to the crew being signed on in the shipping office itself?—It will dislocate the work. While the crews sign on the ship will be working cargo. Steam has to be maintained and ship has to be watched. We do not want casual labour to look after the ship while the crew are signed on.

E-4411. As a matter of fact the crew live round about the docks and it is much easier for them to sign on in the ship than in the shipping office which is sometimes not so near as the ship?—Yes, it is less expensive to them also.

E-4412. As regards the difference between Indian and European crews, would you give an example of how many European and Indian crews you would require for a standard ship?—There is a very considerable difference between the two. In the case of a ship of 8,100 tons dead weight, that ship

could be manned by 38 European crew including officers whereas it would require 80 to 90 Indian crew including 11 or 12 officers because you have wireless also now. It will be nearer 90 than 80 against 38 British.

E-4413. Could you give us exact numbers?—The firemen of course vary according to furnaces. But you can take the average crew for an ordinary standard type of cargo ship to be 25 to 26 lascars, 35 firemen and about 14 saloon ratings.

E-4414. That includes butlers, serangs and such other persons?—Yes; that is the actual lower deck ratings.

E-4415. That comes to 74?—Yes; and then you have got 12 Europeans.

E-4416. That comes to 86. For a boat of the same class you are able to carry on with about 38 Europeans?—Yes.

E-4417. So that, if we raise the pay of lascars to any extent we would get nearer the point at which it would pay to employ a European crew?—That is so.

E-4418. *Mr. Ahmed*: Then why do you not prefer to employ European crews?—There is no reason why we should. If the ships are trading in India, the Indian is more suitable; and of course the question of economy comes in. You cannot raise the wages to an extent which would stand in the way of operating your ships.

E-4419. *The Chairman*: We were consulting Captain Darvell yesterday and in particular directing ourselves to the possibility of reducing the number of seamen surplus to requirements, I will not say hanging about Calcutta but coming and going in the hope of obtaining employment, and he undertook to look into the question as to whether a limit of years of absence from the sea could be established. You yourself have also made the suggestion that to some extent the number of new certificates granted could be limited reasonably. Both these proposals are made with the object that those who remain as potential seamen should get a considerably increased chance of employment. Would you be willing to consult Captain Darvell to bring your experience to bear and see if some advance cannot be made in that direction, so that on the average you would bring the number of potential seamen more into relation with the actual numbers who have the chance of going on sea voyages?—I think we could do that. In fact, every proposal which the Shipping Master takes up he works in closest contact with the shipping companies, and we are indebted to him for all sorts of suggestions of that nature.

E-4420. You have agreed that there is something unsatisfactory in the present system because there are a very large number of men waiting for employment?—I think the question of unemployment is very much overrated. When I used the term "people are unemployed" I did not mean "people who cannot obtain employment".

E-4421. We are told that the bulk of them are away in their country, following some occupation on the land or otherwise. But still they occasionally come to Calcutta in the hope of getting employment?—Yes; but when I offered 300 or 400 men daily employment they would not look at it. I cannot therefore say that the distress from unemployment is as great as it is made out. That is my point, and that is what I have tried to establish right through my evidence.

E-4422. I am not following that side of the question at all, but I am simply taking your own figures presented to us. You have agreed that something like 140,000 or 150,000 potential seamen are on the lists in Calcutta, and you agreed also that 50,000 is about the number who can have anything like continuity in sea-going employment. Those two figures are quite enough to show that practical men might put their heads together to relieve that situation. Although a large proportion of those may not be in the real sense of the word unemployed, and although they may be reluctant to take other kinds of shore jobs here and would rather wait in the hope of getting a job, still, I think you will agree, there is a problem which is worthy of attention?—I think so.

(The witness withdrew.)

BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

SEVENTY-NINTH MEETING

CALCUTTA

Wednesday, 19th February 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.,
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.,
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.,
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.,
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. R. CHAKRAVARTI (of the Mohini Mills, Ltd., Kushtia, Bengal), Mr. U. M. BOSE, Mr. H. P. GHOSE, and Mr. J. H. SEN GUPTA, representing the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.

E-4423. *The Chairman*: What are the membership and purposes of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce?—(*Mr. Chakravarti*) There are altogether about 300 members of the Chamber representing cotton, engineering, mercantile, banking and jute mill interests.

E-4424. Have you any specific recommendations to make with regard to the organization of labour?—They should be educated; they should have their own men to guide them and not outsiders.

E-4425. Would you suggest that the good organization of labour must wait until primary education is general in this province?—No, but they should be sufficiently educated and that as soon as practicable.

E-4426. Is not that putting off to a rather distant future the possibilities of the proper organization of labour?—No, not necessarily.

E-4427. Has your Chamber itself taken any steps to promote the organization of labour?—No, not yet.

E-4428. You have no specific suggestion to make to the Commission?—No.

E-4429. Do the members of your chamber recognize such unions as there are and negotiate with them in labour matters?—No. There has been no occasion for it.

E-4430. Then at present you are really without orderly contact with labour?—Yes.

E-4431. Have any of your members made endeavours, within their own factories, to bring the labourers into contact with the management by means of works committees or works councils or any similar organization?—The labourers in our mill (the Mohini Mills) come direct to us; they have not any sort of committee or anything of that kind; whatever grievances they have, they put to us directly; they have no regular organized committees.

E-4432. Would you not agree that even in the absence of general education in any body of workers, there are usually some more intelligent than the others who might be their natural leaders within the industry?—Yes, that is my idea, that there are a good many intelligent men among them who can make them go according to their own dictation instead of being led by outsiders.

E-4433. Would it not be possible to bring together those more intelligent men amongst the workers to form some sort of committee or council?—I think that would be possible.

E-4434. And that might make the beginnings of some organization such as you indicate in your memorandum?—Yes, that will be just making the first beginnings of organization.

E-4435. Would it not have this advantage, that instead of the individual presenting any grievances to the employer, there would at any rate be a group of the more intelligent workers who would be in a position to act together in making representations to the employers as to the conditions of their work, and so forth?—Yes; they would form a sort of group, and if they have any grievance they can put it before the managing agents of the employer.

E-4436. But so far no steps in that direction have been taken?—No.

E-4437. It is left entirely to the individual to bring his grievances, if he has courage to do so, to the employer?—Yes, at present they are doing it themselves.

E-4438. Have you any remedy to suggest to us for removing the blot of bad housing from the industries of Bengal?—The mills should provide for better housing.

E-4439. Where these industries stretch for some 20 miles up and down the river, do you think the municipal organizations as they at present exist are capable of dealing with this big problem?—I do not think they have regulations for the building of houses.

E-4440. Do you think re-organization of local government which might establish one great authority outside the city of Calcutta covering a large area might be in a better position to deal with these problems than the various little municipalities?—Yes, if there were provincial legislation that would help. Government should make rules amending the Bengal Municipal Act as regards building regulations. Where there is a municipality it should look to these things, and where there is no municipality, Government could make regulations; Government should help them with finance and regulations.

E-4441. You suggest it should be possible to apply the powers of the Land Acquisition Act to the purchase of land for housing, whether by the municipalities or by the individual millowners?—Yes, acquire the land on behalf of the municipality or the mills.

E-4442. Presumably you would give the first opportunity to the municipality to do the building; if they were unable to do it you would provide that the mills might use that Act provided their housing schemes were approved by the local authority?—Yes.

E-4443. In order to prevent strikes and lock-outs you appear to advocate what is commonly called compulsory arbitration. Has your committee actually examined the results of such a scheme? How would you compel a millowner to keep his mill open against his will if he was making a loss?—If he is making a loss he should not be compelled to keep his mill open.

E-4444. If a body of workers were determined not to work how would you compel them to go back to work under the order of a court of compulsory arbitration?—If they go on strike without cause they should be compelled to go back to work.

E-4445. How would you compel them to go back to work?—By legislation.

E-4446. But legislation is just a piece of paper with something written on it; it does not in itself do anything?—Government have a long and strong hand to make them amenable to rules; it can be done with the help of the authorities.

E-4447. It appears from your own memorandum that you have a sickness rate which fluctuates very violently when there are epidemics?—Yes.

E-4448. In any attempted form of sickness insurance that would be one of the factors which would have to be considered in making the actuarial basis for such a scheme?—The epidemics are irregular in their occurrence; it is not necessary that there should be any insurance for sickness.

E-4449. Has any estimate been made of the times of occurrence of these epidemics or their magnitude?—No.

E-4450. Is the provident fund system which you tell us you have in your mill a compulsory provision applicable to the whole of your workers?—All the employees earning more than Rs. 10 a month have got to subscribe one anna in the rupee.

E-4451. There is a deduction at the time of the payment of their wages of one anna per rupee?—Yes.

E-4452. Have your workers made any objection to that compulsory deduction?—No; they are willing that the deduction should be made; they understand that it is a saving for their own benefit.

E-4453. What benefits do they draw from that fund?—They do not get any benefits but in times of necessity they can withdraw money up to two-thirds of their contribution. This scheme has been in existence for twenty-two years.

E-4454. Have you any figures to show how much your work-people on an average have accumulated in that fund?—Those who are very old get about Rs. 500 when they retire. Many of them withdraw sums of money from time to time in order to buy land or make a new house. When an employee leaves our service or dies the whole of his contribution is paid plus our contribution and interest.

E-4455. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Have you any suggestions to make with a view to prevent strikes occurring before negotiations?—Yes; the workers should put their grievances before the employer.

E-4456. But if they are not organized how can they do that?—They can select some of their men to represent their point of view.

E-4457. But they must be organized to select some men to represent their grievances?—Yes, so long as there is no organized trade union.

E-4458. Then you would advocate constitution of trade unions?—Yes.

E-4459. What would be the authority who would enforce the decisions of the compulsory arbitration which you advocate?—Government.

E-4460. That is to say by physical force?—Something like that.

E-4461. You seem to think it is desirable to compel people to work against their wish. You say that the trade unions are controlled by a few outsiders who have no direct or indirect touch with the mass of the labourers. Have the managing agents or the employers any direct touch with their own labour?—We have. I do not know whether they have in the jute mills; probably they have not. We have direct touch with our labour because our office is in the mill and the men can put their grievances before us.

E-4462. Is the understanding between yourselves and labour much better because of that touch?—Yes.

E-4463. You say that labour leaders wholly unconnected with labour and ignorant of actual labour conditions lead labour down a precipice and in some cases exploit them for their own advantage. What are the advantages which they secure to which you refer?—They used to pocket the money taken from these labourers.

E-4464. Can you give us any evidence to show that these leaders obtain money from labour in order to lead them to strike?—It is very difficult to get direct evidence to that effect.

E-4465. You have no evidence?—No: it is all hearsay.

E-4466. I suppose you appreciate that it would take a long time to make compulsory primary education effective in India?—Yes.

E-4467. Can you suggest any remedies in the meantime?—Yes, not to make them educated in A, B, C, but to give them general education as to what is good and what is bad with regard to strikes.

E-4468. Who do you think will carry out the distribution of pictures, literature and give popular lectures and talks to labour such as you advocate? —Dr. Bentley is giving lectures with regard to health and that sort of thing;

the Government should arrange for the exhibition of pictures with regard to health, sanitation and other education; the millowners could help by forming groups.

E-4469. Do you wish to throw all this on the Government?—Government should do it.

E-4470. What are you referring to when you say that Government have adopted various measures which are designed to benefit labour at the sacrifice of the interests of capital?—International Conventions reducing the hours of work and things of that kind.

E-4471. Apparently your panacea is that the cost of measures for the benefit of labour should be borne by Government and the general public?—Legislation fixing a minimum age for the employment of young persons and reducing the hours of labour has adversely affected production.

E-4472. *Mr. Clow*: The convention as to the minimum age to which you refer only relates to trimmers and stokers?—Formerly the minimum age was twelve, but now it has been raised to fifteen.

E-4473. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: To what are you referring when you say that national governments in other countries are adopting various measures to stimulate the progress of industry?—In Japan they have a system of compulsory education of workmen.

E-4474. It would take a considerable time for compulsory education to increase the efficiency of the workers. As a matter of comparison what have other national governments done which the Government of India has not done?—Compulsory primary education and commercial training.

E-4475. *Mr. Ahmed*: There is a commercial school in Calcutta?—Yes, in Corporation Street, but that is not meant for workers.

E-4476. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have nothing to add to what you have already said with regard to what other national governments have been doing in this connexion?—No.

E-4477. What are the indigenous industrial concerns which you say have disappeared in consequence of the policy adopted by Government?—The mercantile marine.

E-4478. Do you say that is a result of measures adopted by Government to benefit labour?—No; it is due to the indifference of Government; European companies reduced their rates so much that these people could not compete.

E-4479. Is there anything else?—No, nothing else.

E-4480. *Mr. Clow*: You have given a list of ten International Labour Conventions; could you indicate the ones which in your opinion have very adversely affected the industries of which you speak?—Limiting working hours, limiting the age of children.

E-4481. The convention with regard to the minimum age of children was not ratified and it is not contained in your list. Are there any others?—No.

E-4482. You remember that the ratification of the convention as to hours of labour was passed by the unanimous vote of the Legislative Assembly?—Yes.

E-4483. Do you suggest that the working hours should not have been limited to 60?—No, they could easily be raised a little more.

E-4484. What do you think the limit should be?—At least 66; workmen can very easily work 11½ hours a day.

E-4485. On what do you base that opinion; have you tried it?—No, I have not tried it. Before 1921 they used to work twelve hours a day and they did not complain.

E-4486. But were they really working twelve hours?—Yes.

E-4487. Is it not a fact that the ratification of the convention followed a series of strikes throughout the country in favour of ten hours a day?—No.

E-4488. There were a number of strikes throughout the country?—Not in our place; in our place they used to work twelve hours.

E-4489. I am not referring particularly to your mill, but there were several important strikes in favour of 10-hour day?—Not in Bengal.

E-4490. Why do you say that the payment of wages fifteen days after the end of the month is for the good of the workers?—Because otherwise they squander the money.

E-4491. But they get the money ultimately; how does it prevent them from squandering it?—Otherwise they will squander it every week on Sundays.

E-4492. Why should they squander it more if you paid it on the fifth day of the month instead of on the fifteenth?—It is necessary to pay it on the fifteenth in order that the wages may be calculated.

E-4493. Then it is not necessary for the good of the workers?—Not always.

E-4494. *Miss Power*: Pending the inauguration of a general educational programme by the provinces do you consider it is the duty of the employer to provide educational facilities?—In the present state of trade depression I do not think the mills are quite in a position to provide for it.

E-4495. It would appear from your memorandum that as a chamber you are in favour of employers providing educational facilities; is that so?—Yes, employers should help to some extent.

E-4496. Then your chamber feels that they should help but that they are not in a position to do so at the moment?—At present they are not, but they should do so as far as possible.

E-4497. Do you mean by providing schools for their own half-timers?—Yes, and for adults also if possible.

E-4498. When you speak of reducing the hours of labour in the jute industry and in the mines are you referring to the number of hours permissible in a day or a week?—In a week.

E-4499. Not in a day?—No.

E-4500. I do not quite follow why you suggest a reduction of the number of hours per week in the mines; are you not referring to the number of hours per day?—No doubt, it should be reduced but I have no experience of coal mines.

E-4501. In view of what you say as to the fixation of minimum wages, you would appear to suggest it is impossible to have any minimum wage machinery unless both employers and employees are entirely organized?—Yes; there should be a mutual arrangement between the two in order that there may be no loss to the employers or the employees; one should look to the interests of both.

E-4502. You suggest in your memorandum that it is impossible to have such machinery unless the workers are entirely organized; do you not feel that minimum wage fixing machinery is one of the methods of protecting the workers who are less capable of looking after themselves, that is to say the less well organized? But industry must be able to pay it.

E-4503. But do you not agree that if an industry is completely organized it will be able to look after its own interests without the necessity for such machinery?—Different rules may be made for different trades.

E-4504. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say that the workmen both adult and boys will not take to education unless the law compels them to do so?—Yes, that is my personal experience; they do not want to go to school.

E-4505. In the memorandum of the Chamber of Commerce it is said that in the jute mill industry, municipalities do not encourage expenditure on education as this would increase the taxes. Is that the case?—May I refer you to the Bulletin on Indian Industries and Labour?

E-4506. This is taken from some other publication, is it?—Yes.

E-4507. But if you say that from your own experience workmen whether adults or boys will not take to education unless the law compels them, how would the municipalities be able to compel them to go to school?—There should be legislation making primary education compulsory.

E-4508. But there is no difference in that respect between jute mill areas and your cotton mill areas, is there?—I do not know the mentality of the people on that side.

E-4509. Do you think that the people in the villages suffer more from diseases than people living in the industrial towns?—Yes, they are careless about their health and there are no sanitary arrangements.

E-4510. It is stated in the memorandum of the chamber "There can be no doubt that the establishment of public employment agencies would improve the conditions attendant on the recruitment of labour". Later on it is said "There is no unemployment". If that is so, what are you going to do with employment agencies?—They will be useful for filling casual vacancies caused when some of the workers go home.

E-4511. Would it be advisable to have an employment agency for your mills?—No. We do not need it.

E-4512. Who does need it?—I do not know whether the jute mills do.

E-4513. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have said that education is necessary in order to remove illiteracy, owing to which the workers in India cannot lift themselves up to the level of the workers in other countries. You want compulsory education?—Yes.

E-4514. If Mr. Gokhale's Education Bill of 1910 had been passed in the Imperial Council it would have been beneficial both to the country and to the masses, would it not?—Elementary education is needed.

E-4515. You think it is high time that Government should take up the question?—Yes.

E-4516. Are you of the opinion that the primary Education Bill which has been pending during the last two years will be of the same value as Mr. Gokhale's Bill would have been?—The primary point is that the labourer should be educated.

E-4517. You think there should be compulsory education among the masses?—Yes, if it is made compulsory amongst the masses the workers will be benefited.

E-4518. You referred to indebtedness and also to the want of proper nutrition on the part of the workers and their getting adulterated food. Do you mean that their want of proper nutrition is due to the fact of their indebtedness?—It is difficult for them to make both ends meet sometimes, especially when there is sickness among the family. Indebtedness is for not being economic.

E-4519. I take it that they cannot make both ends meet because they do not get enough wages; they do not get a living wage in order to maintain themselves decently. Is that what you mean?—Yes.

E-4520. Therefore, it is necessary that sufficient remuneration should be given to them in order that they can make both ends meet?—Yes.

E-4521. You say that it is difficult to collect statistics. You are, therefore, not in a position to say that there are more debts in the rural areas than in the mill areas?—I cannot say.

E-4522. Do you give medical assistance to your mill hands who live away from the mill area?—Yes.

E-4523. Do you send your doctor to those of your mill hands who live outside the mill area, and keep records about them?—Yes, we do. We spend over Rs. 3,500 a year on medical assistance because we think it is to our advantage to do so. That is a somewhat considerable sum for our size of mill and the capital invested.

E-4524. When you say "The chief complaints of the labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wages, and that they are overworked and ill-housed", do you mean that they are working more than ten hours, or do you mean that they are working very hard?—They cannot be made to work longer than ten hours under the Factories Act.

E-4525. Then what do you mean by "over-worked"?—That is the complaint of the workers. They want to work shorter hours and get more wages. They only look at it from their side of the matter.

E-4526. You state that "The leaders from amongst them fail to control the policy of the union effectively". Why do you say that? Is it merely a guess?—The recent jute strike proves that. The leaders tried to stop the strike, but they could not. The workers got out of control.

E-4527. Did they not listen to their leaders?—No.

E-4528. Was the strike not terminated in the workmen's favour; did they not get an increase of wages?—That was offered from the beginning. They did not actually know what their grievances were.

E-4529. Before the strike they did not get anything extra for additional work. They got it after the strike. The strike was terminated because the

employers agreed to pay the workers what they wanted. Their demands were satisfied. Is it not the fact?—I do not know about that; I am not concerned with jute.

E-4530. *Mr. Cliff*: As to what has been stated in your memorandum in respect of sex ratio in the jute mills, I want to know whether the statement contained therein is the result of the close personal knowledge of the jute mill area?—No.

E-4531. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have relied for your information on the books written by Miss Broughton and Miss Curjel?—Yes.

E-4532. And not from your personal knowledge of the conditions?—No.

E-4533. *Colonel Russel*: You say that there is no adequate system of registering births and deaths. Why do you say that?—There is no regular legislation compelling people to register births and deaths. If any body does not register a birth or a death, the municipality or the police do not prosecute.

E-4534. They have powers to prosecute?—Yes, they have, but it is very seldom that those powers are exercised.

E-4535. The system is there, but the practice is not there?—Quite so.

E-4536. Dealing with diet you say "It is entirely unscientific and possesses nutritional defects". Where did you get that quotation from?—From Miss Broughton's and Miss Curjel's books.

E-4537. Have you any facts to support that statement?—The food which is generally supplied in the market is wanting in nutrition. There is adulterated milk, ghee and so on.

E-4538. Have you any proof of that?—There have been many prosecutions.

E-4539. You say that working conditions are not satisfactory, but you do not give any details?—That is a quotation from Miss Broughton's book.

E-4540. You say that drunkenness and illicit relations are very prevalent. Have you any figures to prove that?—No, that is again taken from Miss Curjel's book.

E-4541. Dealing with medical facilities you say that the provision for medical relief in the mills is often unsatisfactory; in what way is it unsatisfactory?—That is a quotation from Miss Broughton's book.

E-4542. You say there is little or no provision for women doctors and trained midwives. Have you any women workers in your mill?—We have only five or six women employed in the spinning section.

E-4543. Are there any children in your mill?—Yes, half-timers. The mill doctor attends to them.

E-4544. You say that bathing facilities are by no means ideal. You also say that in connexion with Indian labouring women the lack of personal hygiene is due to the lack of adequate bathing arrangements, and you suggest as a solution of that, that hygienic propaganda is necessary. Would it not be better to provide bathing facilities first and then do the propoganda work?—Yes.

E-4545. *Miss Sorabji*: You have already been asked questions about the illiteracy and ignorance of the workers. From your remarks I gather that you differentiate between illiteracy and ignorance, and you recognize that to remove illiteracy would take a long time but that you might begin removing ignorance almost at once. Only your view is that Government should do it. Would it not be possible to consider this suggestion? Could the need not be met by a board of improvement or an improvement committee got together by the employers on which perhaps you might get the services of an officer of public health for teaching sanitation, as you yourself have suggested, and also the services of some body from a philanthropic society like the Y.M.C.A. or Toc. H. for teaching the duties and responsibilities of citizenship?—Your suggestion really amounts to the formation of a sort of welfare committee. I think that can be done.

E-4546. The employers would make an immediate beginning in that direction?—Of course, they should be helped by Government.

E-4547. Would it not be sufficient if Government were to give you one of their public health propaganda officers to give lectures?—That would do.

E-4548. So that you could start a committee of improvement to put this programme into operation almost immediately?—Yes.

E-4549. *Maulvi Lafafat Hussain*: In your memorandum you say that you will support any measure which will be for the amelioration of the conditions of Indian labour. Do you not think it would be advantageous if a co-operative bank for the use of the workers in every mill was started?—Yes.

E-4550. You say that the chief complaints of labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wage and that they are overworked. Do you not agree that their wages are inadequate and that some improvement in that direction should be effected?—The workers will never be satisfied with the wages they are earning, but you should see whether the industry can meet their demands.

E-4551. The workers are already overworked and yet you suggested that they can work for twelve hours?—The jute mill workers complain that they are overworked, but I think they can work for eleven hours easily without any detriment to their health.

E-4552. Again you say: "The committee would mention in this connexion that the attitude of labour also as expressed through their unions and leaders has not been conducive to the best interests of capital". What do you actually mean by this statement; what help do you expect from the labour leaders?—They only look to the interests of the labour; they do not see whether the employers are in a position to meet their demands; they ask for more than the capitalists could pay.

E-4553. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You are very much interested in cotton industry and you have some experience of cotton industry in Bombay, is it not?—Yes.

E-4554. In your factory what is the number of half-timers working now?—89 are working to-day.

E-4555. In the memorandum of the chamber you have advocated compulsory primary education. Do I take it that you want that the employers should be made liable to provide educational facilities for half-timers?—To some extent, but not to the fullest extent.

E-4556. On the question of sickness insurance, do you agree that some scheme of sickness insurance should be introduced for the benefit of the workers?—I do not think it is necessary because sickness is only casual.

E-4557. But all the same sickness is there?—Yes, but why should every body pay premium?

E-4558. I am coming to the question of payment later on. But do you approve of a scheme of sickness insurance which will benefit the workers from the point of view of medical aid?—They are getting medical aid now free of charge. They may not like to pay any contribution.

E-4559. At present you are spending Rs. 3,000 a year for medical assistance. Is it your opinion that the workers will refuse to contribute even a very small share to a sickness insurance fund?—It will create some hardship to them because they are now getting free medical help.

E-4560. But if it is made compulsory they will have to pay, and the hardship will disappear?—Of course, in that case they will have to pay, but all the same the hardship will not disappear.

E-4561. In your mill have you had any cases under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No. So far we have had only one accident; that happened only a month ago.

E-4562. You think that the Workmen's Compensation Act is beneficial to the worker, especially in cases of fatal accidents?—Yes.

E-4563. And so the Convention of the International Labour Conference regarding further extension of the present Act would prove beneficial. In cases of fatal accidents the amount of compensation given at present is thirty months' wages, and the International Conference insist that the amount of compensation should be greater. I take it that you would have no objection to that?—I should think that what is given now is quite adequate.

E-4564. You said that some of these conventions impose a burden on the employers; you referred in particular to the hours of work. May we know how many hours you work your factory?—Sixty hours a week.

E-4565. Have you ever worked less than sixty hours?—Yes; but at present we are working sixty hours.

E-4566. But you have worked less than sixty hours?—On account of *Ramzan* we are now working only 9½ hours a day.

E-4567. Do you not think that shortage of hours is conducive to the health and efficiency of the workers?—No. They can very well work eleven hours.

E-4568. In this climate?—Yes.

E-4569. Do you provide housing for all your workmen in Kushtiya?—No, only to a small proportion; most of the workers live in the surrounding villages.

E-4570. Can we take it that about 15 per cent of the workers are housed by you?—Two-hundred and thirty eight workers live in the company's quarters.

E-4571. What rent do you charge?—Rs. 1-12-0 for single quarters, and —The room is ten feet by eight feet with five feet verandah.

E-4572. You charge Rs. 1-12-0 for a single room in the village Kushtiya? —The room is ten feet by eight feet with five feet verandah.

E-4573. Have you got a municipality in Kushtiya?—Yes.

E-4574. Would you agree that all the municipalities in Bengal which are outside Calcutta should have larger powers to acquire land for the housing of the workers?—Yes, they should where there are industrial concerns.

E-4575. Have you any workmen's union in Kushtiya?—No.

E-4576. Have you had any strikes in Kushtiya?—We had one in 1926. That was a communal strike and not an industrial one.

E-4577. But you know that in industrial areas there have been what are known as lightning strikes, that is to say, strikes take place without the employers knowing what the grievances of their employees are. Do you think that in the absence of a trade union there should be some sort of a *panchayat* or works committee consisting of the representatives of workmen and the supervising staff, which can look into the grievances of the employees?—Yes.

E-4578. You think that such a committee would be a good thing?—It will be beneficial.

E-4579. The function of such a works committee will be to hold occasional meetings at which the grievances of the workers would be discussed?—Yes, and to put those grievances before the employers.

E-4580. Are your workers in Kushtiya heavily indebted?—Not many; some of them who have no good moral character are.

E-4581. Did the Government co-operative societies department write to you to start a co-operative credit society for the benefit of the workers?—No.

E-4582. Do you not think that such a society would be beneficial to the workers?—I do not think they need it. There are very few who borrow money.

E-4583. That may be so as far as your workers are concerned. But you know that many workers in industrial areas are heavily indebted. I want to know the opinion of the chamber as a whole whether they do not think that co-operative credit societies are beneficial to the workers?—Certainly they are beneficial.

E-4584. You think that the employers should advance some money to these co-operative credit societies?—They should help.

E-4585. I think you are aware that one of the Conventions of the International Labour Conference is that there should be some sort of legislative machinery established whereby the conditions of each industry could be investigated and a minimum wage fixed according to the needs of the workmen of that industry. Do you not think that in Bengal a machinery of that kind will be extremely useful both from the point of view of the employers as well as the employees, in finding out, after proper enquiry, what minimum wage should be fixed?—Yes, provided the enquiry is not one-sided.

E-4586. *Mr. Tassie*: You refer in your memorandum to the insanitary condition of the *bustis* adjoining the mill area. The Commission have seen some of these *bustis* round about Howrah and elsewhere. They are almost as bad as the worst slums at Home. A good many of the members of your Chamber are landowners and property owners, are they not?—Some of them are.

E-4587. Have they ever gone into the question as to whether it is possible to build a sanitary *busti* that can be let out to the workers at an economic rent?—(*Mr. Ghose*) An experiment in that direction was made by the late Rai Sithanath Ray Bahadur, who was the Honorary Secretary of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce. He built what are known as model *bustis* in Calcutta for workmen, but the experiment did not prove successful. These quarters had to be pulled down to make room for the Ray Mansions in Elgin road.

E-4588. This is the only experiment that you know of?—Yes.

E-4589. *The Chairman*: In what respect was it unsuccessful?—It did not pay an economic rent.

E-4590. *Mr. Tassie*: In your memorandum you say: "The Government have all along been very much indifferent to the promotion of industries in the country and their policy hitherto has not been such as to encourage the starting of new industrial enterprises". What do you suggest Government should do to help the industries?—(*Mr. Chakravarti*) There should be legislation for putting tariff duties and such other things when necessary. As far as cotton is concerned, I can say from my experience that we have to meet a heavy competition with Japan.

E-4591. But cotton is helped to a certain extent just now, is it not?—Yes, but it is not sufficient.

E-4592. And steel is also helped to a certain extent, is it not?—Yes.

E-4593. Both those industries are in a very bad way just now?—No. The Bombay millowners are in a very wretched condition.

E-4594. If you come to this side, the chief industries are jute and tea, and for the last five or six years they have been more or less paying very well, yet they are not assisted indeed—they pay export taxes?—Tea is not in a very good condition now; neither jute is.

E-4595. But both have done very well in the last few years. Surely with this before you it seems that industries that are unassisted by Government do better than those that are?—What we say is that what has been given is not sufficient.

E-4596. You referred to the indebtedness among the labour population. Would you say that indebtedness is worse among the labourers than it is amongst the *badralok* class or the ordinary agricultural population?—Yes, because they do not save a single pice.

E-4597. Do the agriculturists save any money?—They are more economical than these labourers.

E-4598. But they come from the same class, do they not?—Yes, almost the same class.

E-4599. Is it not a fact that the *badralok* class, that is the *baboo* class, are supposed to be very much indebted?—The middle class are more indebted.

E-4600. So, indebtedness is not confined only to the labour class?—No, but they pay a very heavy rate of interest. The *badralok* class is indebted for want, while the workers are for want of economy.

E-4601. As regards education, I notice that like any one else you are in favour of free education. Do you not think that if there was less education, the men from the intelligent class who are now overloading the professions of law and politics would go into industrial careers and provide a more intelligent class of weavers?—I do not refer to higher education. It should be only general education. My intention is not to make them M.A.'s or B.A.'s or lawyers.

E-4602. But do you not think that that is the effect of education here?—No.

E-4603. It is not right, but that is what happens?—No doubt it happens, but what I advocate is only general education among the workers.

E-4604. *The Chairman*: You are representing the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, is it not?—Yes.

E-4605. There is also, I think, an Indian Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

E-4606. What is the difference between the two?—The two are separate bodies.

E-4607. Do they represent the same or different interests?—Almost the same, but they have got different members.

E-4608. *Mr. Tassie*: Is it not a fact that the Indian Chamber of Commerce is mostly composed of upcountry men?—Yes, they are mostly Gujeratis and Marwaris.

E-4609. Whereas yours is very largely a Bengali Chamber?—Yes. There are some Gujeratis too. There are some members who are common to both the Chambers. For instance, Mr. Birla is a member of our Chamber as well as of the other Chamber.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

LABOUR IN INDIA.

WRITTEN EVIDENCE.

Vol. VI.—Part 1.

ASSAM AND THE DOOARS.

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1930.

NOTE TO PART I.

In this part is reproduced the bulk of the evidence submitted to the Commission in the form of written memoranda in reply to the list of subjects circulated in August 1929. In preparing this volume the Commission have sought to retain all matter likely to be of permanent interest to students of the subject, and not available elsewhere. Material supplied to the Commission which has already been printed and published elsewhere has in general not been reproduced. Where memoranda have been abridged all considerable omissions have been indicated in the text.

TERMS OF REFERENCE.

"To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations."

NOTE.—"Industrial undertaking" for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows :—

"For the purpose of this Convention, the term 'industrial undertaking' includes particularly :—

"(*a*) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.

"(*b*) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.

"(*c*) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.

"(*d*) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand."

* * * * * * * * * *

The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture.

M15RCL

LIST OF SUBJECTS.

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27	Mr. J. H. Copeland	Manager, Do. ..	..	101—108, F.-1
28	Mr. C. K. Besboruah	Manager, Boloma Tea Estate, Nakachari, Jorhat.	40—45	109—114, F.-1804.
29	Kadamoni ..	Woman Worker, Do. ..	..	114—115, F.-1927.
30	Bhano	Do. Do. ..	..	115—116, F.-1953.
31	Chuttan	Worker, Do. ..	..	116, F.-1971.
32	Mt. Miriam Musulmani	Woman Worker, Do. ..	..	117, F.-1990.
33	Suleman (Musulman)	Worker, Do. ..	..	117, F.-2002.
34	Babu J. Chakravarti	Doctor, Do. ..	..	117—118, F. 2006.
35	Ramaswami	Worker, Do. ..	..	118, F.-2012
36	Mr. W. G. McKercher	Representatives of the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association.	45 and 62-81	119—153, F 2025.
37	Mr. J. M. Kilburn			
38	Mr. E. J. Nicholls			
39	Mr. E. S. Roffey			
40	Dr. McCombie			
41	Mr. T. A. Chalmers, M.L.A.	Superintendent, Bazaloni Tea Company, Ltd., Rajgarhali Division.	..	153—156, F 2462.
42	Ram Dat Kurmi	Workers, Meleng Tea Estate, Jorhat.	..	157—158, F. 2488.
43	Ram Autar Pasi ..			
44	Autar Kori			

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45	Ten male workers ..	Meleng Tea Estate, Jorhat.	..	158—159, F.-2513.
46	Kundhan, Dome ..	Worker, Do. ..	..	159, F.-2527.
47	Kirodhar (Goala) ..	Do. Do. ..	..	159—160, F.-2539.
48	Chembeli (Kalondi Dome)	Woman Worker, Meleng Tea Estate, Jorhat.	..	160.
49	Nanee Dasi Ghasi (Pruliani)	Do. Do. ..	..	160.
50	Mr. R. H. S. Oliver	Manager, Meleng Tea Estate, Jorhat.	..	161—167, F.-2556.
51	Mr. James Fraser ..	Manager, Hunwal Tea Company, Mariani Division, Jorhat.	..	167—173, F.-2662.
52	Christine ..	Woman Sardar, Mariani Tea Estate, Jorhat.	..	173—174, F.-2788.
53	Kunda	Newly recruited Oraon Worker, Mariani Tea Estate.	..	174, F.-2800.
54	Nanhu	Do. Do. ..	..	174—175, F.-2803.
55	Mr. K. Cantlie, I.C.S.	Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, Jorhat.	..	176—195, F.-2821.
56	Dr. Percy Foster ..	Medical Officer to the Badlipar Medical Association, Badlipar.	..	195—204, F.-3018.
57	Rev. D. J. Tirthi ..	Deogharia.	..	204—206, F.-3142.
58	Mr. A. J. Laine, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Officer on special duty with the Govt. of Assam. (Representatives of the Govt. of Assam.)	3—35	207—226, F.-3175.
59	Lt.-Col. T. D. Murison, I.M.S.	Director of Public Health Assam. (Representatives of the Govt. of Assam.)	45—49	
60	Mr. F. C. King, I.C.S.	Chairman, Assam Labour Board, Calcutta.	49—62	227—242, F.-3422.
61	Mr. J. Insch, M.L.C.	Representatives of the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta.	62—86	243—269, F.-3672.
62	Mr. T. C. Crawford			
63	Mr. T. C. Crawford	Representatives of the Tea Districts Labour Association, Calcutta.	62—86	269—282, F.-4025.
64	Mr. J. A. Milligan			
65	Lt. Col. D. S. Mackay			

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87	Mr. N. R. Ghose ..				
88	Mr. J. G. Guha ..	Secretary, Indian Planters' Medical Board, Jalpaiguri.			

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM.

INTRODUCTION.

Assam is not an industrial province. It is an agricultural province with no large towns or industrial centres. Its largest and most important industry, tea cultivation, is mainly agricultural. Apart from the tea industry, the only large labour concerns are the coal mines and oilfields and a match factory. There are a few scattered saw mills, rice mills, oil mills, engineering workshops and printing presses, but they are small and of little importance in this province. Secondly, as an agricultural province with land still available for settlement and no pressure of population, Assam has practically no indigenous industrial labouring classes. There is, of course, some indigenous casual labour, both skilled and unskilled, in the small towns and villages to meet the ordinary needs of the people, viz., agricultural labourers, porters, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., but for the industries of importance labour has to be imported from other parts of India. The main difficulty which industry in Assam has to face is the labour supply, and the labour employed is a heterogeneous mixture of races and creeds drawn from almost every part of India.

This is the labour force in Assam which will chiefly engage the attention of the Royal Commission, and the Government of Assam propose to confine their remarks mainly to this labour force in discussing particular problems in the memoranda.

2. There is one point which must always be borne in mind when the several questions affecting the condition of labour are examined. The imported labour is almost entirely illiterate and composed of men and women with a low standard of living, conservative by nature, suspicious of change, and excitable. In dealing with such people caution is necessary. They are not an intelligent body of men who desire to raise their own standard of living and can appreciate and make good use of any improvements introduced for their benefit. On the contrary, the tendency of this labour force too often is to treat with suspicion and resent any change that is introduced, however well intentioned, and their resentment is quickly fanned into violence. A large proportion of this labour force has little or no ambition to improve its standard of living. It is content with little and does not want to do any more work than is necessary to secure that little. Any large increase in the wages rates would often mean less work or a dissipation of the additional earnings. Changes introduced by the employers, which were directed to raise the labourers' standard of life, would often be suspected and resented. What is needed is the education of the labour force to the appreciation of a higher standard of living, when they will want more and be prepared to work for it and make good use of their earnings. The very nature of the labour force makes progress in that direction slow, but it is only by such progress that any lasting improvement can be effected. It is impossible to introduce suddenly measures suited to the educated labour of other parts of the world. The ground must be prepared before the seed is sown, and it is the preparation of the ground that at present demands the most attention.

I.—Recruitment.

1. *Origin of Labour.*—The labour force for the large industries of the province is almost entirely imported in its origin. Some of the resident labour force in tea estates are the children of imported labourers born in Assam. The resident labour in tea estates is supplemented during the non-cultivation season by the employment of some local labour, but that labour is mostly drawn from the *ex*-tea garden imported labour which has taken up land and settled down in Assam.

The imported labour for tea gardens is drawn mainly from the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Bengal and Madras. In recent years some labour has been introduced from Bombay.

The following table shows the total number imported for the tea industry during the five years ending 1927–28 :—

——	1923–24.	1924–25.	1925–26.	1926–27.	1927–28.
Men	25,902	19,106	19,720	27,295	24,124
Women	8,705	7,842	7,452	10,566	10,027
Children	7,525	6,779	5,837	7,833	8,694
Total ..	41,862	33,727	33,009	45,694	42,845

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The total resident labour force in tea estates in 1927–28 consisted of 585,104 adults and 440,117 children. The nationality and sex of the adult labour force is shown in the following statement :—

Nationality.	Men.	Women.	Total.
United Provinces, Bengal and Bihar..	112,752	97,920	210,672
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Pargana ..	91,378	90,101	181,479
Central Provinces	39,380	34,957	74,337
Madras	34,682	24,152	58,834
Assam	29,188	24,076	53,264
Others	4,507	2,011	6,518
Total	311,887	273,217	585,104

The variations in the total volume of immigration and the numbers drawn from the several areas in different years are due to local conditions in the recruiting areas. Bad harvests and scarcity lead to increased emigration from the affected areas to Assam.

The labour force in the mines is even more heterogeneous. It is partly drawn from the same sources as tea garden labour and partly from different classes, Pathans, Nepalis, Punjabis, Makranis and even Chinese.

In the oilfields at Digboi about 22 per cent. of the labour is obtained from Assam. The rest is imported mainly from Bengal and the United Provinces.

2. *Contact with Villages.*—Contact with the home villages is maintained through the system of recruitment to be described later. Some of the tea garden labour is imported on short-term agreements, on the expiry of which the labourers can if they desire return to their homes. Others who are recruited with no definite period of agreement can and often do leave the gardens and return to their homes. A large proportion, however, of the imported labourers stays for a long period in Assam, and many after serving a period of years on tea gardens take up lands for cultivation and settle permanently in the province. The latest figures available show that 316,207 acres in the Assam Valley had been taken up for cultivation by *ex*-tea garden labourers, and these figures are probably not complete.

Labour in the mines is mostly short-term labour. For the Kongon mine in the Naga Hills some of the workmen are recruited nominally for three years, but no attempt is made to enforce the agreement. The labourers in the mines in the Lakhimpur district are engaged for periods varying from 100 to 425 days, and are free to return home then or to stay for another period. There is a greater tendency now for the mine labourers to return home after completion of their contracts, but many return again for a further spell of work.

The imported labour in the oilfields at Digboi usually works for short periods and then returns home, to return again later or to send their friends. The labour population there is constantly changing, the average number discharged and engaged in a month varying from 400 to 500 in a total force of about 6,000.

3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—(i) Recruitment of imported labour for tea estates in Assam is, except in Bombay, carried on under the provisions of so much of Act VI of 1901, as is still in force.

This system of recruitment may be briefly described as follows :—Recruitment is carried on by garden sardars, i.e., men employed as labourers in the tea estate and sent back to their country with their employer's certificate countersigned by a magistrate authorizing them to recruit from their own country. The work of these sardars is supervised by local agents in the recruiting districts, most of whom work under the Tea Districts Labour Association. The Assam Labour Board appointed by Government generally supervises recruitment.

In the Bombay Presidency, Act VI of 1901 is not in force. There the Government of Bombay have allowed recruitment provided the emigrants are produced before a magistrate. Agents other than garden sardars are allowed in that Presidency.

For the Kongon mine in the Naga Hills district, to which Act VI of 1901 does not apply, labour is recruited through contractors belonging to the areas where the labour is obtained. For the other mines about half the imported labour is recruited in exactly the same way as the tea garden labour. Similar methods are also adopted for the recruitment of other classes of labour from areas to which Act VI of 1901 does not apply, e.g., Makranis from Karachi and Pathans from Peshawar.

For the oilfields at Digboi no recruiting agency is now required. The industry has established such a strong connection with the recruiting areas that it is unnecessary to send sardars or employ any agency.

(ii) The question of improving the present system of recruitment will be discussed later in paragraph (6).

(iii) The question of the establishment of public employment agencies was considered by this Government in 1921. As has already been stated, the problem in Assam is not that of finding employment for surplus labour but of securing labour from outside the province. Consequently there is no room for public employment agencies in Assam. As regards the establishment of such agencies in the recruiting districts the Government of Assam in 1921 were of opinion that this would open the door to the reappearance of the professional recruiter with all the abuses that attended his operations in the old days before such recruitment was prohibited. The Government of Assam then held that such employment agencies, if considered advisable, should be established only in selected areas and under adequate supervision and control.

As will be seen later, the Government of Assam have recently advocated a relaxation of the present system of recruitment so as to allow additional recruiting agencies working under supervision. If effect be given to this proposal, there would be less objection to the establishment of employment agencies in the recruiting districts, provided that they were subject to supervision. The provinces, however, in which recruitment is conducted are mainly concerned in this question, although Assam is closely affected as any irregular recruitment or recruitment of an unsuitable type of labour results in unrest and disturbances in this province.

4. *Extent and Effects of Disturbance of Family Life.*—The system of recruitment now in force in the tea industry directly encourages the importation of families, and the statistics already furnished show that women are almost as numerous as men in the resident labour population in tea estates.

In the mines and oilfields there is much less work for women, and the population of women is much lower. The men recruited from the same classes and under the same conditions as the tea garden labourers often bring up their families, and many of these women live on the coal and oilfields without the necessity of work. Many Makranis also bring their wives. Pathans and Chinese practically never bring their wives. In the Lakhimpur district no ill-effects appear to result from the disruption of family life. Very little trouble on this account at any rate is reported. The Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, however, reports as regards the Kongon mine in his district that it leads to much prostitution and temporary alliances with local women.

5. *Recruitment of Seamen.*—This does not concern Assam. Seamen are recruited from Sylhet, but this Government are not directly concerned with the recruitment or acquainted with the system in force.

6. *Recruitment for Assam.*—The question of the recruitment of labour for Assam has recently been the subject of correspondence with the Government of India in connection with the proposal to repeal what remains of Act VI of 1901 and to substitute a new Act.. The views of this Government have been explained in their letters No. Immgn.-215/5705G.J., dated the 1st September, 1927, No. 884G.J., dated the 8th February, 1929, and No. Immgn.-61/1344G.J., dated 5th March, 1929, copies of which are given in Appendix A of the memoranda. It will be seen that this Government have advocated a relaxation of the existing restrictions in the interests of the industry, but are convinced of the necessity of retaining some supervision and control in the interests of the labourers and of the employers, as well as for the sake of peace and order in the province. It is unnecessary to repeat here the detailed arguments given in the correspondence.

7. *Unemployment.*—Unemployment amongst the labouring classes, as already explained, is not a problem which affects Assam, and this Government are not in a position to make any remarks on the subject.

8. *Labour "Turn-over."*—Such information as this Government have as regards the duration of employment and the extent of casual employment has already been furnished. There are no figures available to show the average duration of employment or the extent to which casual labour is employed.

9. *Apprentices Act,* 1850.—No use is made of this Act in Assam.

II.—Staff Organization.

11. *Selection of Managing Staff.*—The coal mines, oilfields and most of the tea estates have been started and are maintained by British capital, and the superior managing staff is British, recruited directly from England. In some cases control is exercised through managing agents in Calcutta, while other concerns are directly under the directors in England.

Indian-owned tea estates are managed either directly by the proprietor or by some Indian manager appointed by him or by the Company owning the estate. Europeans have occasionally been appointed as Superintendents in Indian-owned gardens.

12. *Recruitment and Training of Subordinate Supervising Staff.*—In the coal mines and oilfields the subordinate supervising staff is partly European and partly Indian. In the tea industry it is entirely Indian and drawn from the so-called *bhadralok** class, except for posts of sardars or foremen who are drawn from the labour force. The labour force as now constituted is almost entirely illiterate and drawn from primitive races in different parts of India. There is therefore little scope at present for any labourer to rise above the rank of foreman. Conditions are different on the oilfields at Digboi where men taken on as unskilled labour can be trained and rise to posts of drillers on a scale of pay rising from Rs. 45 to Rs. 90 a month. There are 60 drillers employed by the Assam Oil Company, of whom 60 per cent. are promoted men.

13.—*Relations between Staff and Rank and File.*—The relations are satisfactory. Apart from economic strikes, conflict occasionally has arisen in the past and will arise in the future. due sometimes to want of tact or bad handling on the part of the management, sometimes to misconduct on the part of the subordinate staff, but more often to misunderstanding or to the deliberate incitement of the labourers by some discontented workmen.

There are no Works Committees in Assam so far as the Government are aware.

15. *Contractors as Intermediaries.*—Except in the railways, where labour for construction work is usually engaged through contractors, and in some mines, contractors are rarely employed in the industries of Assam. They may be employed occasionally for the execution of some road or engineering work. They are employed also for such work by the Public Works Department of the Government and by the local boards and municipalities of the province. For earthwork on roads, etc., the contractors employ men of the *nunia* caste who specialise in such work and annually visit Assam in the cold weather for employment. They move from place to place as the work takes them and camp at the site of their work. In other cases the workmen employed by contractors are usually local men, who live in their own homes. Little control is exercised or needed over the working conditions of such labour for the reason that where labour is so scarce, a contractor would not keep his labour if they disliked the conditions under which they worked. Contractors are also employed in the timber trade for the felling and extraction of timber. They often engage Nepali sawyers, some of whom are imported from outside Assam while others visit Assam of their own accord to take up such work. These men are quick to move off elsewhere, if they are not satisfied with the conditions provided for them by the contractor, and that in itself is a sufficient safeguard. In fact the Assam Government have had very few complaints from this class of labour.

It is only in the case of labour imported by a contractor from a distance that any abuse might occur and in Assam the employment of such labour under contractors is practically confined to railway construction and to the Kongon mine. In the Kongon mine most of the labour is recruited through and works under contractors.

In the mines in the Lakhimpur district most of the underground work is done through the agency of contractors, but the labour employed is the company's labour and not the contractor's labour and is housed and looked after by the company. The system has been introduced on account of the difficulty of supervision underground. The company in such cases pays direct to the men the wages for the daily task and the surplus for additional work is paid to the contractor who distributes it among the men who have earned it.

The local labour employed in the oilfields at Digboi is also employed through contractors. This labour is looked after and housed by the contractor but the houses are usually built on the company's land and the company insists on them being kept in a sanitary condition and provides the conservancy arrangements and water-supply. These labourers are at liberty to take payment direct from the company if they so prefer.

III.—Housing.

16. *Extent to which Housing is Provided.*—Free quarters are provided for all resident employees of tea estates, both the labour force and the managing and subordinate supervising staff. Such non-resident labour as is employed is casual labour which comes in from the adjoining villages and lives in its own houses. In the mines and oilfields free quarters are provided for the labour force. In the oilfields the supervising staff is also provided with free quarters. The Assam Railways and Trading Company, which owns the mines in the Lakhimpur district and the Dibru-Sadiya Railway, charges a small rent for the quarters provided for some of the supervising staff.

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* "*Bhadralok*" means of respectable parentage. It corresponds to what in the U.K. is known as the 'black coat' class.

18. *Nature of Accommodation provided in each Class.*—The nature of the accommodation in tea estates naturally varies. In the smaller concerns or in newly opened estates without much capital, the housing accommodation is not of so good a type as in larger well-established concerns backed by a large capital. There is also a diversity of system which has been described in the following extract from the report of a Committee of Enquiry appointed in 1921–22 :—

" There is considerable diversity in the system of housing on tea estates. In some gardens coolies live in separate houses with a vegetable garden attached to each, and in others in more or less congested barracks. In fact, broadly speaking, there are two systems, the system of barrack lines and that of the *bustee* or small village. The former prevails on gardens where the location of a large labour force in a small area is more or less obligatory, and the latter, where more space is available for groups of houses constituting a scattered hamlet or village. The Committee endorse the opinion expressed by the Assam Labour Committee of 1906, in discussing the necessity for greater freedom of labour : ' Most of the aboriginal or semi-aboriginal races object to close contact with men of other castes ; in their own country they lived in separate villages or *tolas*. It is repugnant for them to live in a common barrack. Every facility will have to be given to separate castes to form their own little hamlets and assimilate as far as possible their life on the tea garden to their life in their own country.' Unfortunately on some large estates owing to want of foresight there is no room for hamlets, any more than for rice cultivation, grazing and fuel reserves, as the main area of the grant is under tea cultivation. Barrack lines, especially in the Assam Valley, are usually substantial structures, often with iron roofs and brick walls. It is probable that where the coolie is compelled to live in congested barrack lines under more or less artificial conditions there is a tendency towards more rigid disciplinary methods, as perhaps is inevitable in the interests of of sanitation alone. Speaking generally, every effort is made to provide the coolie with good houses and the initial and repair cost of lines must often be considerable. In some estates in Sibsagar the system of building barrack lines abutting on the public road does not seem to be conducive either to health or comfort, but in such cases there is probably a limited choice of sites owing to the extent of the area taken up by tea. There are gardens where coolies are allowed to build their own houses, thatching-grass and other building materials being available free from the grant. The Tara Tea Company on the eastern verge of the Doom-Dooma area affords an interesting example of both systems. The estate consists of 3,600 acres, of which 1,200 acres are under tea. There is one set of barrack lines with iron roofs inhabited by East Coast Uriya coolies. A staff of sweepers is maintained and iron latrines are provided which are said to be used by 80 per cent. of these coolies. There are three sets of widely scattered *bustee* lines which are really coolie villages with *baris* and cultivation on high and low land adjacent. In these hamlets the coolies build their own houses and receive an advance of Rs. 5 in the first instance to enable them to do so ; a large proportion of the labour force live in these hamlets and all have an option and no one is compelled to live in the barracks. The Cuttack Uriyas, however, are said to prefer the barrack lines while coolies from the Kalahandi State and aboriginal or semi-aboriginal labourers prefer the village system. About 300 acres of rice land are available for which 4 annas a *bigha** is charged and no rent is charged for high land attached to the hamlets on which crops of vegetables and mustard are grown. This estate enjoys exceptional advantages. Managers differ as to whether a coolie prefers to live in houses provided by the garden or built by himself and opinions are probably coloured by individual experience of particular districts and classes of labour. It is possible that coolies of some castes are gregarious and prefer to live in barrack lines ; most coolies, however, particularly those belonging to aboriginal races, prefer detached houses built by themselves, and like to live with people of their own race or community."

In Assam the tea estates are regularly inspected by district and sub-divisional officers. Although the legal powers of interference have been curtailed by the abolition of indentured labour and the repeal of so much of Act VI of 1901 as related to such labour, still in practice the inspecting officers do invariably report on the conditions of the " lines " or quarters. They are quick to call attention to the need of improvement and the management is generally ready to the extent of its means to effect such improvements as are considered necessary. The managing authorities realize that the labour force will work better if their material wants are well looked after, and that any failure in this respect may lead not only to a poor output of work but also to an exodus of the labourers.

The housing arrangements in the coal and oil fields are quite satisfactory. In the coal fields in the Lakhimpur district and also in the oil fields the houses are usually *pucca* and of a good type.

* A *bigha* is one-third of an acre.

19. *Utilization of Accommodation.* 20. *Rent Rates.* 21. *Other Problems, e.g., sub-letting and eviction.*—In view of the conditions described, there is little to be said on these questions. The imported labour has no alternative but to utilize the accommodation provided. No rent is charged to the labourers. Eviction only exists to the extent that a labourer may be moved from one house to another.

IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Conditions of Workers.*—In the tea industry there has been a steady improvement in the health conditions of the labour force. In the year 1927–28 the birth-rate in the Assam valley was 32·4 per mille and the death-rate 20·61, while the corresponding figures in the Surma valley were 31·73 and 18·66. In both divisions the birth-rate was higher and the death-rate lower than the provincial rates. In the districts of Cachar in the Surma valley and of Lakhimpur in the Assam valley, the death-rate among children was almost the same as among adults. In Sylhet in the Surma valley and in Darrang and Nowgong in the Assam valley, the rate for children was considerably lower than the rate for adults, while in Kamrup and Sibsagar it was higher. There was a very high death-rate among children recorded in Goalpara district, but that district has only a few newly opened gardens with a very small labour force, the total number of children being only 834.

The large majority of the labour force in tea estates is employed out of doors, only a small proportion working in the factory and other buildings. Many of the labourers and their dependents arrive from the country in a very poor condition, but they are treated carefully and given no work or only light work until they have recovered their strength.

No exact figures for the vital statistics in the coal and oil fields have been obtained. The number of deaths in the oilfields in the year ending 30th June, 1929, was 115. The working strength varied from month to month and the average daily working strength is not known. Taking the mean of the figures furnished for two months the death-rate would be about 18 per mille. In the several collieries the average rate was about 35 per mille. Accidents help to raise the death-rate in the mines. The birth-rate both in the mines and oilfields is low on account of the small proportion of women.

Rice is the staple diet of the tea garden labour force and of most of the labour employed in other industries in Assam.

24 and 25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are provided and utilized.*—In all tea estates medical attendance and medicine are provided free for all classes of employees. There are hospitals on most of the estates, which are usually in charge of qualified Indian doctors. The hospitals and medical arrangements in a large number of estates are supervised by European medical officers, each of whom has a group of gardens in his charge. In all garden hospitals diet, and in many clothing, is provided free. The hospitals generally are well equipped. In some of the smaller or newly opened estates the hospital accommodation is inadequate and in a few only untrained compounders are in charge. In some of the older and larger estates also there is room for improvement in the hospital accommodation, but unfortunately that criticism would apply also to some of the public institutions of this kind. Well equipped hospitals are provided, also for the labour force in the mines and oilfields, and medical attendance and medicine are provided free. The labour force in all cases, both men and women, avails itself freely of the medical facilities provided, so far as the acceptance of treatment is concerned. There is, however, some reluctance to go into hospital as an in-door patient.

There are, of course, public dispensaries and hospitals maintained by the local boards in the vicinity of some estates, but in view of the facilities provided by their employers the labour force rarely has occasion to resort to them.

26. *Latrines and other Sanitary Arrangements.*—The tea estates are not required by law to provide latrine or urinals for their labour force. It is unnecessary to insist on such provision in all cases, as these estates are in rural areas and many contain stretches of waste land to which the labourers can resort without danger to the general health. In the villages also there are no conservancy arrangements of this nature. The provision of latrines is required by law only in the case of a factory or a mine. In the case of tea estates, the factory is only that building or a part of building in which machinery is used. The Factories Act requires the provision of latrines in factories unless they are exempted by the inspector. In Assam, out of 591 registered factories in 1927, 549 were tea estate factories. The question of requiring factories in Assam to provide latrines was considered in 1912 in consultation with the Chief Inspector of Factories. An inspector who was deputed to make enquiries submitted the following report: "With reference to the factories in Assam where latrines or urinals are not provided, I made it a matter of special enquiry during my inspection there last month to see if any offence existed in or around the factory compounds,

but in no case could I find just cause for complaint or for the necessity for altering the sanitary arrangements. Further, I made it a point to look into the latrines, which are good structures, provided by the Dibru-Sadiya railway for their employees, and in few cases could I find much evidence of their being used at all. I am informed the various peoples in that district prefer using the jungle, which is unlimited." On receipt of that report the chief inspector said that the erection of latrines in the factories of Assam at present was needless and to enforce them would mean an unnecessary waste of money with no corresponding benefit. He, therefore, approved the exemption of the factories in this province from the provision of Section 13 of the Act. The Government agreed with the views of the chief inspector then and the position has not changed since.

Although it is unnecessary to prescribe by law the provision of latrines for factories or plantations in Assam, it does not thereby follow that there are not cases in which such provision is advisable. In fact, latrines have been provided in some estates. The question was investigated by the Committee of enquiry in 1921–22 and their recommendations are here reproduced :—

" The installation of a conservancy system on tea gardens in Assam has not advanced beyond the experimental stage, though in the last year or two considerable progress has been effected. Medical officers advocate the desirability of conducting an intensive campaign against hookworm infection by this method. The committee note with satisfaction that many managers are in favour of some system of conservancy. Several witnesses, however, have stated that the coolie will not use latrines, but in most cases it was found that latrines had never been given a trial. On the other hand, there is the positive testimony of medical officers and managers who have actually introduced latrines that they are a success in so far that coolies do use them with the result that in many cases there is an appreciable fall in the incidence of anaemia. The committee have seen latrines of different kinds in use. On Tara garden, in Lakhimpur, the bucket system of latrines is in vogue. This necessitates the maintenance of a staff of sweepers. Dr. Joly has pronounced this system satisfactory. At Panitola there is a system of *aqua* privy. The manager said it was regularly used and that the health of the adjoining coolie lines had much improved. At Gotonga, members of the committee were much impressed by a septic tank erected by Messr. Bird and Company, which had cost about Rs. 8,000. The manager expressed his satisfaction with it, and avowed his intention of installing a similar septic tank in another of his gardens. He was further of opinion that he could build one for about half the cost of the Gotonga tank. In places where latrines exist, the committee have been assured that, with few exceptions, the coolies do not object to using them. There is, of course, always a difficulty about children. It is not, however, to be expected that latrines will be regularly used unless they are kept clean. Sometimes there may be a difficulty in enlisting a staff of sweepers. Dr. Joly made the pertinent remark that unless managers themselves are interested in such schemes and have a reasonable belief in their success, there is little hope of progress. In some gardens trench latrines have been tried. In such cases supervision is difficult and there is the risk of fly infection, which may lead to other dangers, but it is a step in the right direction. The ideal is the septic tank, but there are two difficulties : (*a*) the question of initial expense and (*b*) the difficulty in getting an adequate water-supply. It has been stated that four to five gallons of water a day are required for each person using the latrine. As regards the question of cost which some gardens might consider prohibitive, Dr. Joly has observed that, in his opinion, the septic tank would decrease the cost of production of tea by saving garden labour. Without putting the figure of diminished efficiency as high as Dr. Ramsay, the Committee have no doubt that the average coolie, suffering from anaemia cannot be expected to do a full day's work, and where such cases are numerous, either the cultivation of the garden must suffer or an additional labour force must be imported. An anaemic coolie is obviously a financial burden to the garden. Prevention is better than cure, and practical efforts to improve sanitation with this object are to be welcomed. The committee do not think that where the labour population lives in scattered hamlets, latrines are either so necessary or indeed practicable, but they have no hesitation in saying that where congested barrack lines, with a large population living under artificial conditions are concerned, the introduction of some system of conservancy is essential. The Empire of India Tea Company in Tezpur, since 1919, have made considerable progress in the erection of latrines, and the medical officer, Dr. Jameson, regards a latrine system as a sound business proposition. Latrines are sometimes attached to hospitals, especially in the Assam valley. No system of conservancy will eradicate hookworm disease, but the committee are satisfied from the medical evidence, that the chance of infection will be appreciably diminished. Most medical witnesses state that coolies are infected with hookworm when they come up from their country. Dr. Jameson is of opinion that hookworm is mostly contracted on the garden. It was suggested to a medical witness that as the question

of the introduction of a conservancy system on tea gardens was in a more or less experimental stage, it might be advisable for medical officers to confer together and discuss the matter, and the committee think that action on these lines might have useful and practical results."

The Government are in general agreement with the Committee's view that while latrines are not necessary or practicable for the labour population living in scattered hamlets, some conservancy system is required for congested barrack lines.

In the oil fields at Digboi there is a good conservancy system with latrines and septic tanks.

The position as regards mines is different and the rule in force there runs as follows :—

" At every mine latrine and urinal accommodation shall be provided on the surface and, if the local Government so directs in the case of any mine or class of mines, in the underground workings of the mine, and, in the case of latrines, the accommodation shall be not less than one seat per 50 employees : provided that the local Government may require that in lieu of latrines or urinals a certain area or areas may be marked off in the surface of the ground for use for this purpose."

In the coal fields the latrine accommodation is adequate, but the septic tank system has not been introduced.

Water-supply, etc.—In most tea gardens no expense is spared to provide a pure water-supply and a pipe system from closed wells or reservoirs has been introduced on many estates.

A piped water-supply exists in all the collieries and in the oil fields at Digboi.

The Assam Oil Company has also paid great attention to drainage at Digboi and put down 12 miles of *pucca* drains in 1928.

27. *Extent and nature of official supervision.*—(i) *Boards of Health.*—There are no such Boards in Assam.

(ii) *Inspection of plantations.*—Tea plantations, which are the only plantations on a large scale in Assam, are regularly inspected by the District and Subdivisional Officers. New gardens and gardens in which conditions are not as satisfactory as they might be are inspected every year. Old established estates where conditions are good are inspected every other year. Unhealthy gardens are also inspected by the Civil Surgeon every year until they obtain a cleaner bill of health. Apart from these regular inspections tea estates are often visited by District and Subdivisional Officers for particular enquiries. With the abolition of indentured labour and the repeal of the provisions of Act VI of 1901, the District Officers as Inspectors of Labour have less legal power than before and any instructions they issue have generally only the force of advice. The management, however, is generally ready to co-operate with the Government officers and to carry out suggestions for such improvement of conditions as are within their power. During these visits the District and Subdivisional Officers pay special attention to the housing, water-supply, and medical facilities provided for the labour force.

The collieries are also inspected as regards these matters by the local officers, the technical inspection of the working of the mines being left to Mines Inspectors.

28. *Suitability of existing factories and mines rules.*—The Factories Rules as a whole are too elaborate for the tea garden factories which, as already pointed out, comprise 549 out of the 591 registered factories in Assam. This is well illustrated in the remarks made by the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal and Assam, in his annual report for the year 1927 which are here reproduced :—

" On account of their isolation, seasonal processes and concomitant difficulties tea garden factories have hitherto only received such attention from Inspectors as the circumstances permitted and only those provisions of the Act were applied which by their enforcement would bring most practical good and benefit to the employees. In other words, efforts have been made to apply the Act in both provinces with due consideration and keeping abreast with development in such areas.

" It has been borne in mind that the provisions of the Act and the precision of their enforcement are primarily based on the conditions and circumstances of developed industrial areas such as Calcutta, Howrah and the 24-Parganas and that such mathematical application is impossible with respect to mofussil factories and in particular, tea garden factories.

" With the present establishment of the Jalpaiguri office for the more effective administration of the Act in the tea garden area of Bengal and the possibility in the near future of the establishment of an office in Assam or the reservation of an Inspector for that province, it is an opportune moment to review the limitations of the provisions of the Act when applied to tea garden factories in consideration of the present comparative isolation, indifferent communications and associated difficulties.

" These factories, being seasonal and subjected to weather difficulties, have the benefit in both provinces of exemption from sections 21, 22 and 26 of Chapter IV with certain provisos. As children are not employed in the factory proper, section 23 is more or less of hypothetical application and as the remaining sections of the Chapter are so closely connected with those eliminated by exemptions that enforcement by better arrangements for inspection is similarly hypothetical. In these circumstances the employment register is of little value and inspections whether casual, surprise, or otherwise, necessary for the enforcement of the sections of this chapter, cannot be made with any degree of precision as they are dependent on the conveniences for travel and the weather conditions, monsoon visits in many cases being practically impossible.

" The absence of developed local administration, which as a matter of fact would be futile in such rural and sparsely populated areas, practically precludes the elaborations laid down in the rules regarding sanitary conveniences, and confines the Inspector's work to only superficial efforts in that direction. The administration of the Act in tea garden factories is, therefore practically limited to the enforcement of the main provisions of Chapter III respecting fencing, but nevertheless from the reports of the Inspector of the Jalpaiguri district it is evident that an officer set apart for tea garden factory inspection work is in a position to follow up accidents promptly and do considerable good work in offering useful suggestions regarding fencing, etc.

" The new tea factory pamphlet published by this department during the year, relating in non-technical language the provisions of the Act applicable to such factories, and giving illustrations of typical fencing, and the material to be used, should be of considerable value in the establishment of the fencing provisions of the Act and in overcoming to some extent the disadvantages of remote control by Managing Agents, the lack of facilities for the quick transit of fencing material and the inaccessibility of factories which is a handicap to the Inspector for the purpose of approval of fencing arrangements.

" The new inspection arrangements in Bengal and the expected reorganization in Assam, if worked on the lines indicated and with due consideration to local conditions, should meet the requirements of the general rural development and be a sufficient gesture of force to bring into line possible recalcitrant managers without alienating their sympathies and jeopardising the benefits the workers at present enjoy from the managers' voluntary interest in their welfare ".

The mines rules are generally suitable.

29. Industrial diseases are not prevalent in Assam.

30. *Sickness insurance.*—This Government were recently asked by the Government of India to advise on the International Labour Convention and they can only say now what they said in reply to the Government of India in March last. No compulsory sickness insurance scheme would be practicable in Assam at present. The tea and mining industries already provide free for their employees all the benefits that could be obtained by any such scheme and the introduction of any compulsory insurance to which the employees must contribute would be greatly resented by the labour force. The labour employed in these industries is illiterate and excitable. The labourers would not understand the merits of such insurance. They would certainly regard the contribution levied from them as an impost by their employers and their resentment might lead to serious trouble and violence. Outside the tea and mining industries labour in Assam is mostly casual and migratory, and it would be impossible to bring such labour within any scheme of sickness insurance.

The Government of Assam see no chance of success in Assam for any compulsory sickness insurance scheme on a contributory basis, until the spread of education and the general uplift of the labour population have changed the conditions now prevailing.

In view of that opinion the Government do not consider it necessary to examine the details of any such scheme.

31. *Maternity benefits.*—The Government of Assam were consulted by the Government of India in their letters Nos. I.-812, dated the 11th May 1920, and L.-920, dated the 26th May 1921, on the draft convention of the International Labour Conference on the subject of the employment of women before and after childbirth.

This Government agreed with the Government of India that the scheme outlined in the convention was unsuitable for India, and that the introduction of any compulsory benefit scheme was impracticable. Moreover, any such scheme could be applied only to organised industries and in such industries in Assam maternity benefits were already conceded by employers. Pregnancy leave was given usually on half pay and in some cases on full pay, and medical aid was always available, though the women often did not take advantage of it.

In a subsequent review of the benefits conceded this Government submitted the following report to the Government of India in their letter No. 2489R., dated the 14th October 1924 :—

" Tea estates are the largest employers of labour in this province, and from enquiries made it has been ascertained that voluntary maternity benefit schemes have been adopted by almost every tea estate of repute in this province, and that employers generally recognise that the care and comfort of women before and after childbirth are in the interests of the employer and the employed alike. The systems in force on the several estates differ. Leave is always granted for a period shortly before and after childbirth, varying from three to six months or even longer if this is advised by the medical officer. While pregnant women remain at work they are put on light work on full rates of pay. During the period of leave half pay is usually granted but in some cases full pay is allowed and a bonus at childbirth is often granted in addition. The bonus is in some cases conditional on the child being healthy. Medical treatment is always supplied free of charge and additional comforts are sometimes given. In some tea gardens a crêche system has been established, and the infants are looked after by *ayahs* after their mothers have returned to work. The Assam Railways and Trading Company, which is the next largest employer of labour in Assam, grants six months' leave on half pay provided the women have been examined by the medical officers and attend hospital once a week. Milk and feeding bottles, when required, are also supplied free of cost. By the Assam Oil Company leave is granted on half pay for three months."

The question soon arose again in connection with a private Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly. The gist of the Bill was that in factories, mines and tea estates, the work in which was regulated by any law, a woman worker should not be employed for a period of six weeks before and after her confinement and that during her absence from work she should be paid from a maternity benefit fund established and controlled by the Local Government, and financed by contribution to be levied from the factories, mines and tea estates. The opinion of this Government on that Bill given in their letter No. 332, dated the 5th January 1925, was as follows :—

" With the object of the Bill this Government, as well as all those who have been consulted, are in the fullest sympathy, but whether the measure as drafted is calculated to further these objects is another matter. The position in Assam was explained to the Government of India in Mr. Edwards' letter No. 2346R., dated the 2nd July, 1921, and again in Mr. Soames' letter No. 2489R., dated the 14th October, 1924, and the Governor in Council has nothing to add. His Excellency in Council is satisfied that on the vast majority of tea gardens in this province benefits generally in excess of those provided by the Bill are already enjoyed by female labourers, and he shares the apprehension freely expressed that the enactment of the Bill might result in a reduction of the generous maternity benefits now enjoyed to the minimum which would be perscribed by law. It might equally weaken the good relations which now obtain between employer and employee, as the responsibility of the employer would be limited to payment of the maternity cess.

" In the opinion of the Governor in Council the most objectionable feature of the Bill is the provision that a central fund should be established and that payments should be made to individual beneficiaries from this. Under present conditions a coolie mother receives her benefit at the place where she is employed. In this province distances are great and communications imperfect, and it would be impossible to establish anything like enough distributing centres to make it possible for beneficiaries to attend and receive their benefits, while it would be necessary to employ an enormous staff.

On the whole the Governor in Council considers that the Bill as drafted is both unnecessary and undesirable as far as this province is concerned. It might be suited to conditions in an industrial centre where large numbers of labourers worked in a factory or a group of factories, but is not suited to the conditions on the tea gardens of this province. If indeed legislation is required the utmost that need be enacted would be the fixing of a minimum benefit, the utmost discretion being allowed to the Local Government to prescribe by rule or executive order the estates to which it should apply and the manner in which it should be enforced. In practice the Bill would then apply only to estates where maternity benefits are not given, and the machinery required to work it would cost little because it would hardly ever be necessary to enforce the law."

V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing but including Education).

32 to 35.—Apart from measures for the physical welfare of the labour force, which have already been discussed, there is but little welfare work in Assam. In recent years there has been a movement for the provision of recreation. The Assam

Railways and Trading Company, the Assam Oil Company and many of the tea estates provide football grounds or playing fields for their employees, and cinema and circus entertainments are occasionally provided. The labourers of course have their own forms of amusement. Fishing is a popular form and is available in many tea estates, while in the evening the " tom-tom " with singing and dancing are still the chief attraction. There is of course not much scope for recreation for an illiterate labour force situated in the rural areas of the province, but more might and should be done in the direction of providing some attraction which might successfully compete with the nearest grog or opium shop.

There are no agencies for welfare work other than the employers themselves.

36. Little progress has been made in the direction of the education of the labourers or their children.

In 1908 the Government introduced a scheme to encourage the education of the children of tea garden labourers. Schools were to be divided into three classes, (A) schools maintained and controlled by Government (B) schools owned and controlled by the estate authorities but in return for a grant-in-aid subject to inspection by officers of the Education Department who would hold examinations, on the result of which the amount of the grant-in-aid would depend, and (C) schools owned and controlled by the estate authorities, receiving no grant-in-aid, and open only to informal visits from the district or subdivisional officer.

In 1910 it was estimated that there would be 46 (A) class, 85 (B) class and 230 (C) class schools but that the opening of these schools would be spread over a period of years. Later, it was decided to abolish the proportion of schools between the three classes. In 1916–17 there were 13 A class, with a total enrolment of 361 ; 40 B class with an enrolment of 1,094 and 96 C class with an enrolment of 1,172. The numbers have steadily declined until in 1926–27 there were only 9 A class, 23 B class and 33 C class, the total enrolment of all three kinds of schools being only 1,798. Apart from the tea garden schools, the Assam Oil Company maintains a Middle English school and the Assam Railways and Trading Company a Middle English and a Primary school for their employees. In no industry is any school maintained for adult labourers. The results can only be described as disappointing. The ordinary public schools are of course open to the children of the labour force employed, but it is unlikely that any large number of the children is sent to such schools. The reasons for the failure of the special schools are not far to seek. The labour force is generally either apathetic or actually hostile to the scheme. They do not appreciate the ultimate advantages which their children would derive, but they do appreciate the more immediate result, viz., the reduction of the wage-earning capacity of their children. Most of the children of school-going age supplement the family earnings and the loss of this additional income, necessitating perhaps a little more work on their own part, condemns the scheme in the eyes of a large majority. The managers, with a few exceptions, do not actively interest themselves in the question, more from the fear of upsetting their labour force than from any antagonism to the principle of the scheme. This policy may be short sighted, but so long as labour is so scarce, it would be too much to expect employers to risk the loss of labour by any attempt to insist on the education of the children, and little improvement can be expected until the supply of labour increases. The Government of Assam however recognize that education is essential for the general uplift of the condition of the labouring classes and if, as they hope, compulsory primary education is actually introduced in the province generally in the near future, it will be possible to apply it to the children of parents employed in industrial undertakings.

38. *Co-operation.*—So far as the Government are aware, co-operative societies do not exist among the industrial labour forces in Assam. They would have little chance of success among the heterogeneous, ignorant and primitive peoples employed on the tea estates of Assam. During the enquiry of the committee in 1921–22, a suggestion was mooted that employers might organize co-operative stores for the benefit of the labour force, but the Government are not aware whether that suggestion has borne fruit. A society of that kind was tried on an estate but failed and such stores have not been a success elsewhere in Assam.

VII.—Safety.

43. *Regulations in Factories and Mines.*—Provision for the safety of workers are contained in Sections 15 to 20 of the Indian Factories Act, and in Rules 8 to 20 of Part III of the rules issued under the Act by this Government.

Similar provisions as regards mines are contained in Sections 18 to 19 of the Act, and in the detailed regulations issued by the Government of India prescribing the qualifications of mine officials and others and regulating the raising and lowering of

persons or materials, haulage, the storage of explosives, ventilation and lighting, roads and working places, protection against fire and the provision of shafts and outlets, and fencings and gates. As these regulations are of all-India application and are framed by the Government of India, copies are not appended to this memorandum. These regulations are supplemented by rules issued by the Government of Assam regulating provision for ambulances and first-aid (Rules 6 to 8), the safety of the surface (Rules 12 to 17), and the abandonment of mines (Rules 18 to 21).

44. *Incidence of Accidents in Factories and Mines.*—The figures for 1928 in the case of factories are not yet available. The average daily number of employees in registered factories was 48,119 in 1926 and 48,694 in 1927. The number of fatal accidents in these two years was 7 and 5 respectively, or ·14 and ·10 per *mille*. The number of serious accidents reported was 28 in 1926 and 34 in 1927, while 24 minor accidents were reported in 1926 and 28 in 1927. The very low proportion of minor accidents was noticed by the Government of India in their letter No. L.1214, dated the 19th October, 1927, and they drew the conclusion that such accidents were not regularly reported. On this and other grounds the Government of India considered that an improvement in inspection was required a matter which will be mentioned again later. This Government does not dispute the correctness of the inference drawn by the Government of India that minor accidents have not been regularly reported.

The latest figures from mines show 9 fatal and 72 serious accidents in 1927, and 10 fatal and 63 serious in 1928. The number of persons killed and seriously injured was 11 and 73 respectively, in 1927, and 10 and 65 in 1928. One death in 1928 did not occur in a mine, but occurred on the surface, and was due to the fall of a tree. The incidence of deaths from accidents was 3·8 per mille in 1927 and 3·3 in 1928, while the incidence of serious accidents was 25·6 per mille in 1927 and 21·5 in 1928. The incidence has been calculated on the average daily working strength employed underground and in open workings, but excluding the surface workers. In the Chief Inspector's report for 1927 the death rate recorded was 4·22 per mille underground and 2·80 in open workings, while the death rate for the total labour force was 2·73 per mille. In the same year the proportion of serious accidents was 22·01 per mille underground, nil in open workings, and 18·77 on the surface, the proportion for the total labour force being 17·15 per mille.

45. *Cause.*—In discussing accidents in his annual report for 1927 the Chief Inspector of Factories said " the majority of these accidents occurred in tea factories, mainly in connection with transmission machinery, belts, pulleys and shafting, generally caused by the operator's loose clothing getting caught in the belts or shafting during belt manipulation or oiling operations. Where possible recommendations were made by the Inspector to shroud dangerous shafts with covers and to provide persons engaged in oiling operations with tight clothing."

Later in his report the Chief Inspector in discussing the accidents in factories both in Bengal and Assam said " Enquiries disclosed that the majority of these accidents could not have been prevented by any fencing devices, that there was little neglect on the part of managers in taking reasonable or prescribed precautions to ensure safety, and that either the deceased persons themselves or their fellow-workers were, in most cases, responsible for not taking proper precautions, or that the deceased or injured were victims of circumstances which could not be foreseen."

In the mines the accidents were nearly all due to falls of the roof or sides of a mine due to the treacherous nature of the soil.

46. *Accident Prevention.*—Apart from the framing of rules and the inspection of premises to see that the rules are carried out, it is not possible for Government to do much to eliminate or reduce the possibility of accidents. It is impossible to legislate against carelessness of the operatives. It must be left to the management of a factory or mine to warn and advise their employees. This was clearly recognized by the Eleventh Session of the International Labour Conference, which prefaced resolutions on the subject of accident prevention with the following remarks: " Whereas the results obtained by legal regulation and State inspection in the industrial countries with the longest experience of accident prevention show that, while these methods are capable of being and should be improved and developed, they are insufficient by themselves to prevent a large number of accidents which are due to such causes as (1) unsafe practices and arrangements, (2) fatigue, (3) want of reasonable care on the part of individual workers, (4) lack of appreciation by new and especially young workers of the dangers to which they are or may be exposed, and failure on the part of the management to arrange for adequate instruction of such workers." The resolutions which the conference then adopted in furtherance of the " safety first " movement were communicated by this Government at the end of last year to the principal employers of labour in factories and mines in Assam. The Government are not aware how far it has been possible to give effect to these

resolutions in Assam, but obviously measures which can be successfully adopted with an educated and enlightened labour force are far more difficult to adopt with the illiterate and often obstinate type of labour employed in the factories and mines of Assam.

47. *Accidents in non-regulated Establishments.*—No record is maintained of such accidents, and the Government are not in a position to furnish any information.

48. The rules issued under the Mines Act will show that in the coal mines in Assam there must be one man trained in ambulance work for every 100 men employed underground, and one or more stretchers and first-aid appliances kept ready for immediate use at a convenient place. There is no corresponding rule in the rules issued under the Factory Act, but, as has already been stated, in the tea estates, which own the vast majority of the factories in Assam, as well as in the coal mines and oilfields medical aid is always available.

49. *Stringency of Inspection and Enforcement of Regulations.*—In Assam 549 out of a total of 591 registered factories are seasonal, i.e., tea factories. This means that a factory inspection staff would be fully occupied for part of the year and have nothing or very little to do during the rest of the year. In view of these conditions the Government have until this year not entertained any special inspecting staff of their own, but, with the concurrence of the Government of Bengal, have utilized the services of the Bengal staff of Inspectors for technical inspections, while for work not requiring technical knowledge district and subdivisional officers have been employed as factory inspectors. It was realized that the expert inspectors of the Bengal staff would not be able to make regular inspections of all the factories, but it was thought that they would be able to give such clear instructions as regards the fencing of machinery and other technical matters that district and subdivisional officers would be able to see that they were carried out. The system has not worked very satisfactorily. Only about half the total number of factories have been inspected in any one year, while in 1927 only 90 visits of inspection were paid by the whole-time inspectors of the Bengal staff. The instructions as regards machinery given by the expert staff have not been clear enough for the district and subdivisional officers to see that they were carried out, and at times the managers of factories have complained that they could not understand the instructions, and that the instructions given at one inspection contradicted those given at another. Moreover, until 1927 no prosecutions had been instituted in Assam, and this fact, as well as the inadequate number of inspections and the small proportion of minor accidents reported, convinced the Government of India that a change of system was required. To this the Government of Assam have agreed, and they are now trying to obtain an expert as Inspector of Factories for Assam. The remarks of the Chief Inspector of Factories which were quoted earlier in this memorandum show that the scope of inspection must be limited in Assam, that within those limits an improvement has already been effected, and that with the new organization it should be possible to ensure an adequate observance of the law in the factories. As an instance of the tightening of control it may be mentioned that four prosecutions were instituted in Assam in 1927, all of which ended in conviction.

Mines.—The inspection of mines, so far as the observance of the regulations of the working is concerned, is carried out by the Special Mines Inspectors. Detailed inspections are usually made every six months.

50. *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*—There are no facts on record which enable the Government of Assam to offer any observation on this subject.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) In 1927 compensation was paid or deposited for 20 deaths, 5 cases of permanent disablement and 253 cases of temporary disablement. During that year a sum of Rs. 9,942 was paid as compensation within the province and Rs. 3,100 were remitted to other provinces for distribution. Of the sum paid within the province Rs. 7,716 were paid through the Commissioners for Workmen's Compensation and Rs. 2,236 were paid direct by employers. In addition to the amounts paid as compensation a sum of Rs. 5,598 which had been deposited as compensation was refunded as no dependants of the deceased workmen could be traced, and a sum of Rs. 2,350 remained undisbursed at the end of the year.

In 1928 the number of cases dealt with were 11 deaths, 10 cases of permanent disablement and 897 cases of temporary disablement. Rs. 8,985 were paid in compensation within the province and Rs. 883 were remitted to other provinces for distribution. Of the sum paid within the province Rs. 3,103 were paid through the Commissioners and Rs. 5,882 were paid direct by employers. In two cases the total compensation deposited amounted to Rs. 1,513, but in these cases payments were to be made in monthly instalments and only the amount actually paid during

the year, viz.: Rs. 213 has been included in the figures given above. In addition to the amounts paid, a sum of Rs. 835 was refunded to depositors as no dependants of the deceased workmen could be traced, and a sum of Rs. 5,544 remained undisbursed at the end of the year.

(ii) The Government have no information to show how far the compensation paid compares with the extent of possible claims. There is, however, a possibility as the Act now stands that with a labour force largely illiterate and often unaware of its rights, claims may not always be preferred. This Government have suggested an amendment of the Act which will enable the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation on his own initiative or on the report of an inspector of factories or mines to institute proceedings without waiting for a claim to be preferred.

(iii) So far as the Government are aware the Act has had no appreciable effect on industry in Assam. On this point the provinces with large industrial centres, where the Act must have been far more widely used, are in a better position to advise.

(iv) (v) Facilities exist for the voluntary insurance of employers' liabilities under the Act, but the Government have no information of the extent to which the facilities have been utilized in Assam.

The value of such insurance from the workers' point of view is that it will thereby be possible for the small employer, if and when the Act is extended, to meet his liabilities, provided of course that he avails himself of the facilities for insurance. No scheme for compulsory insurance would be practical.

52–53. *Suitability of the Provisions of the Act and the Desirability of its extension.*—These questions were recently referred to this Government for advice in the Government of India's letter (No. L.1125), dated the 30th November, 1928. This Government examined the questions carefully in the light of the opinions expressed by a large number of persons including employers, and the conclusions at which they arrived were set forth in their letter (No. Immgn.149–3394 G.J.), dated the 30th May, 1929. A copy of that letter is given in Appendix C.

IX.—Hours.

55 to 62. A.—*Factories.*—The Government have no statistics to show the actual or normal hours of work per day or per week or the number of days worked per week. Work in tea factories is seasonal, being altogether suspended in the cold weather, and during the season the work is intermittant, being dependent on the weather In bad weather there is little plucking and the quantity of leaf to be manufactured is small. In favourable weather there may be a rush of leaf, necessitating a brief spell of heavy manufacturing work in the factory. The exceptional conditions of this industry make it impracticable to apply the provisions of Section 21 of the Act prescribing a rest period, or Section 22 prescribing a weekly holiday, or Section 26 which requires the management to fix and adhere to specified hours of work for each person employed. The Government have therefore exempted tea factories from the provisions of these sections, but the exemption in the case of Sections 21 and 22 is subject to the conditions (*a*) that the number of workers employed on a particular job is always at least 25 per cent. greater than the number actually required to do the work at any given time, and (*b*) that no one shall be required to work without a whole day's leave for more than 14 days at a time.

The first condition in effect gives the workers a rest period, without prescribing fixed hours or shifts. The condition is in accordance with a practice which had previously been adopted in such factories and is popular with the labour force. It allows at least one man in every five to be always absent and resting.

In addition to the exemptions granted in the case of all employees in tea factories, conditional exemptions have been given also in the case of certain classes of workers in all factories on account of the essentially intermittent nature of their work. The work of adult male oilers and adult male persons employed solely on maintenance work has been exempted from the provisions of Section 21, which prescribes a rest period, and Sections 27 and 28 which limit the hours of work to be done in any one week or on any one day, provided that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed 66 hours.

The work of adult male boiler attendants, adult male engine drivers and adult male persons employed on despatching and receiving goods has been exempted from the provision of those sections and also of Sections 22 and 26, provided (*a*) that no person shall be employed for more than 14 consecutive days without a whole day's holiday; and (*b*) that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed 66.

For the same reason and subject to the same conditions the work of firemen and their adult male attendants employed on kilns in pottery works has been exempted from the provisions of Sections 22, 27 and 28.

The only other exemption granted in this province is the exemption under the provisions of sub-section 3 of Section 30 of the Act of the work done on " urgent repairs " by adult male persons in all factories from the provisions of Sections 21, 22, 27 and 28, subject to the following conditions : (*a*) notice, stating the names of persons employed and the precise nature of the work shall be sent to the Chief Inspector of Factories within 48 hours of such employment ; (*b*) no such persons shall be employed for more than 14 consecutive days without a holiday for two days, or in factories situated on and used solely for the purpose of tea plantations from the 1st April to the 30th November, without a holiday for one day ; and (*c*) the average weekly hours by any such person in any one month shall not exceed 66.

With these modifications of the substantive provisions of the law necessitated by the special conditions of work in tea factories or the special nature of the work of certain classes of employees, the law regulating the hours of employment have, so far as the Government are aware, worked satisfactorily. The isolated position of most of the factories in Assam makes it impossible to exercise any effective supervision of the hours of work, but there is no reason to believe that there is any " sweating " of labour in factories in Assam.

B.—Mines.

63 to 72. The Mines Act requires that no persons, other than persons defined to be holding positions of supervision or management or employed in a confidential capacity, shall be employed in a mine :—(*a*) on more than six days in any one week ; (*b*) if he works above ground, for more than 60 hours in any one week ; (*c*) if he works below ground for more than 55 hours in any one week ; provided that in a case of emergency involving serious risk to the safety of the mine or the persons employed therein the manager may permit persons to be employed in contravention of these conditions on work necessary for the protection of the mine or persons employed therein. With effect from the 7th April, 1930, the following further restrictions on the hours of labour will come into force :—(*a*) No person shall be employed for more than 12 hours in any consecutive period of 24 hours. (*b*) No person shall employ or permit to be employed in a mine any person whom he knows or has reason to believe to have already been employed in any other mine during the preceding twelve hours. (*c*) Work shall not be carried on in any mine for a period exceeding 12 hours in any consecutive period of 24 hours except by a system of shifts so arranged that not more than one shift of persons employed n work of the same kind shall be at work in the mine at the same time.

There is no provision for any exemption from these restrictions on the hours of employment except that relating to persons holding positions of supervision or management or employed in a confidential capacity. The Government of Assam have defined that class of employees to be :—(*a*) assistant managers, undermanagers or overmen or any person holding position under the manager equivalent to assistant manager, undermanager or overman ; (*b*) mechanical engineers or engine-wights or electricians ; (*c*) surveyors ; (*d*) clerks, accountants and time-keepers.

The figures quoted in the Chief Inspector's report shows that the actual hours of work in mines in Assam are 50 hours a week for miners and 54 hours for other underground workers and persons employed in open workings and 56 to 57 hours for persons employed on the surface.

The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur reports that although the mines are supposed to be worked for six days in the week, many of the men actually work for only four and a half days. The 60 hours' restriction has had no effect, because the hours of work have always been shorter.

C.—Railways.

73 to 77. With the exception of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway, the railways running in the province have their headquarters outside the province. The Government of Assam will leave the discussion of questions affecting railway labour to the Local Governments more directly concerned.

D.—Other Establishments.

78 to 80. (*a*) *Plantations.*—The Government of Assam are not in a position to give the actual hours of work performed on a tea estate in Assam, but they can safely say from their knowledge of conditions of such estates and the class of labour employed that there is no abuse in the matter of the hours of work and that no control in this respect is required. The system in force allows the worker practically to do as little

work as he chooses and if the actual hours of work could be ascertained, it would probably be found that the amount of work or the hours of work on a tea estate were lower than in any industry.

Under the old system there was a fixed quantity of work for which there was a fixed rate of payment, known as the " *hazira.*" The *hazira* was not a full day's work and on completing it the labourer could, if he so desired, undertake a second task the payment for which was known as " *ticca.*"

This system has in many estates given way to what is known as the unit system. There is no fixed daily task, but a piece rate is fixed and the labourer is free to do as much or as little work as he likes. With this system of piece work there is no reason for long hours. On the contrary it possesses the serious disadvantage that it does nothing to help the lazy or improvident workman against his own weakness. Many of the labour force are content with a low standard of living and are content to do just enough work to enable them to maintain that low standard. They can do enough work for that in a short time and they have no incentive to work longer. On the other hand, the system gives a greater chance to the hard working and provident labourers. There is another very important factor which affects the question of hours of work on a tea estate. On a very large number of estates the labourers are not solely dependent on their wages. On many estates they are given land free or at a nominal rent for cultivation and they are allowed to absent themselves freely from work in order to attend to their cultivation. Generally, then, it may be said that in the conditions of work on tea estates in Assam there is no danger of long hours of work.

(*b*) There are no docks in Assam.

(*c*) In the oil fields at Digboi the process of drilling on the fields and distillation in the refinery is continuous. The labour employed on these operations, about 25 per cent. of the force, works in three shifts of eight hours each. The remainder of the labour works from 6 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. and from noon to 4 p.m.

One day's holiday is given every eight days.

X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81 to 89.—A. *Factories.*—When the tea garden factories were brought under the Factories Act, the Assam and Surma Valley Branches of the Indian Tea Association undertook to advise managers to abolish or to reduce to a minimum the employment of children in the factory. The Government have always understood that children were practically never employed in such factories. In his annual report for 1927 the Chief Inspector of Factories confirms that impression as he says in the body of the report that children are not employed in the factory proper. The figures published in the statements appended to the report, however, are inconsistent with this. The total average daily number of employees in the factories of Assam is shown as 48,694, of which 44,428 were employed in tea garden factories. On the other hand, the total number of children is shown as 11,263. As the total daily number of employees in factories other than tea factories was only 4,266, the number of children shown must include children employed on tea estates. The explanation probably is that in their returns some tea garden managers have included children who were employed in buildings which are not part of the factory for the purpose of the Act. The total number of women employed was shown in the report to be 12,671. It is possible that that figure also includes women employed outside the factory proper on tea estates.

The Government of Assam are unable to give any further detailed information on this subject, but they are confident that in Assam the employment of women and children is in no way abused.

90 and 91.—B. *Mines.*—No children under 13 years of age are allowed by the Act to be employed in a mine or to be present in any part of a mine which is below ground. This rule is strictly observed. Before any one whose age is doubtful is employed, a doctor's certificate that he is not under 13 years is required. On a reference from the Government of India this Government agreed that the employment of women underground could at once be prohibited in the Assam mines. The proportion of women that had been so employed was so small that no serious dislocation of work would result from the immediate stoppage of the employment of women in underground workings. With effect from October, 1928, no women have been so employed in the mines in Assam. A few women are employed on light work in open workings or on the surface. There is no reason to restrict such employment.

92. C. *Other Establishments.*—There is no need for the regulation of the employment of women and children in other establishments. They are largely employed in the tea gardens as the statistics furnished in paragraph 1 show. It must however, be remembered that those figures include non-workers also. The exact number of

working women and children cannot be given. A tea estate provides light work suitable for women and children and there is no reason to suppose that their employment is in any way abused. Regulation is not necessary, nor indeed would it be practicable to enforce any regulation on the numerous estates scattered all over the province.

XII.—Wages.

A very thorough investigation of the conditions of labour and particularly the rates of wages on tea estates in Assam was made by a Committee appointed by the Government in 1921–22. An unfortunate combination of circumstances in the year preceding the enquiry had led to widespread unrest, which culminated in rioting on several gardens and an exodus of a large number of labourers from gardens in the Karimganj sub-division of the Sylhet district. There was on the one hand a serious depression in the tea industry which crippled the resources of all but the wealthy companies, and curtailed the work and in consequence the wages which could be earned. This occurred at a time when the rise in the general cost of living after the war was at its height, with the result that although the managers generally did their best to see that the labourer did not suffer there was inevitable dissatisfaction and unrest. In the same year, unfortunately, the political situation of the country was gravely disturbed by the so-called non-co-operation movement, a movement which was directed to paralyse the administration. The agitators found in the tea garden labour force, which was already unsettled by economic depression, an easy field for their activities, and there can be no doubt that they deliberately set to work to play upon the feelings of the labour force, with the result that serious trouble occurred in many parts of the province.

The Committee was appointed to enquire whether, in view of the great rise in prices which had occurred, the remuneration paid to the labour force on the tea gardens was sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and a reasonable degree of comfort, and to make any recommendations that seemed desirable for improving the conditions of labour. The Committee submitted their report after a very thorough investigation. Conditions have changed considerably since then and no purpose would therefore be served by quoting the wage figures that then prevailed. It will suffice to say that the Committee found that the rise in wages had not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living and that consequently the labourers' standard of living must have been lowered.

Since then with the return of prosperity there has been a steady increase in wages. In the year 1927–28, the last year for which figures are available, the average monthly cash earnings calculated on the average working strength were Rs. 13-2-1 for men, Rs. 11-6-11 for women and Rs. 7-0-6 for children in the Assam Valley, the corresponding figures in the Surma Valley being Rs. 10-4-7, Rs. 8-6-4 and Rs. 5-4-0. In 1920–21 the figures were Rs. 9-8-5, Rs. 8-1 and Rs. 5-0-10, in the Assam Valley and Rs. 7-10-0, Rs. 6-1-7 and Rs. 3-13-7 in the Surma Valley. The difference is greater than these figures indicate, for the 1920–21 figures included diet and subsistence allowances while the figures for 1927–28 represent cash earnings only.

A distinctive feature of work on tea gardens is that the labourer usually brings his family with him, and the wife and sometimes the children are also wage earners. The joint earnings of a family must always be taken into consideration. The average family of a tea garden labourer has been calculated as consisting of one working man, one working woman, about three-tenths of a working child, one non-working child and about two-tenths of an adult non-working dependant. The average earnings of a family so calculated would be Rs. 26-10-9 in the Assam Valley and Rs. 20-4-1 in the Surma Valley, whereas the Committee of 1921–22 calculating on the same principle found that the family earnings in 1922 varied from Rs. 17-7-4 to Rs. 21-15-3 in the several sub-divisions of the Assam Valley and from Rs. 14-2-10 to Rs. 16-8-9 in the Surma Valley. As already stated the figures for 1922 included, while the figures for 1927–28 exclude, diet and subsistance allowances so that the increase in earnings is not fully shown by these figures.

Another distinctive feature of work on a tea garden which is of importance in comparing the rates of wages with those given in other industries is that the cash earnings far from represent the total earnings of the labourer. In the first place he is given free housing and medical attendance. In the second place on most gardens land is given to the labourer for cultivation, and in some gardens rice is issued at a concession rate. Taking all things into consideration the earnings are adequate to maintain the labourers in a reasonable degree of comfort. Comfort of course varies with the standard of living. As has already been stated, that standard is not high with the illiterate tea garden labourers belonging mostly to aboriginal tribes, and it is an interesting question how far an increase in the wage rates leads to increased earnings or means merely less work done. The system of wage payment, which has been described in an earlier paragraph, practically leaves the labourer free to do as

much or as little as he likes, and when the question of the effect of a rise in wages on the labourer's earnings was considered by the Committee of 1921–22, there was a consensus of opinion among managers then that any appreciable rise in the wage rate would only result in the labourer doing just sufficient work to enable him to earn the same amount as before. The Committee did not accept that view without qualification. They held that if the increase in wage rate was not in excess of the rise in the cost of living, the average labourer would do as much work as before and some might be encouraged to do more, but if the increase in the wage rate is in excess of the increased cost of living, many would probably do less work. With that view the Government of Assam agree. In the Resolution on Immigration Labour for 1926–27 the Governor in Council made the following comments: "Satisfactory as the steady increase in wages in recent years is, it should be accompanied by an improvement in the standard of living if it is to be of real benefit. Not much is gained by an increase in earnings beyond the level of a subsistence wage, if the labourer has no desire for any additional comforts or luxuries save drink. An increase in the standard of liv ng would give a further incentive to work and improve the outturn and efficiency of the labourer. It is however, difficult to instil new ideas where any innovation is regarded with suspicion and often tends to active resentment. Progress in this direction must unfortunately be slow." This point was noticed again in the Resolution of last year when the Governor in Council remarked that what was now needed was a gradual and steady improvement in the standard of living and the amenities of life to accompany the gradual and steady increase in wages.

There is yet another consideration to be borne in mind in estimating the advantages which the tea garden labourer derives. They are agriculturists, and the ambition of most of them is to obtain land for cultivation during the period of employment in the garden and after their retirement. In 1928 the total land cultivated by labourers still in employ was 159,667 acres, of which 130,604 acres were held by them as tenants of the estates and 29,063 acres as settlement holders of land outside the estates. This represents more than a quarter of an acre per adult labourer, or about half an acre for a family, although actually the land is not, of course, evenly distributed among the labour force. The figures quoted in paragraph (2) show to what extent land is taken up after retirement.

Finally it must be remembered that from the point of view of the employer labour costs considerably more than is represented by the wages and other concessions. The labour is imported from long distances, and with the present demand and competition for labour large sums are paid in the form of bonus to the recruiting sardars in addition to the journey expenses and advances given to the recruited labour. It has been estimated that a labourer costs from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 to import. This adds very greatly to the cost, especially in the case of short-term labour. The cost of importation is excessive, but the industry must be left to solve that problem for itself. A reduction in such charges would enable the industry to increase the wage rates, and, even though this might not result in a proportionate increase of the individual's output for the reasons already given, the higher rates of wages should increase the labour supply, the industry's most pressing need.

Mines.—The rates of wages paid in the mines of Assam are high, and there is no shortage in the labour supply. The rates vary in different mines, and for the different classes of workers. For work underground or in open workings in the collieries of the Lakhimpur district the wages of men vary from 12 As. to Re. 1. 8 As., or even Re. 1 12 As. a day, and for work above ground from 10 As. to Re. 1. In the Kongon mine, in the Naga Hills district, the rates are rather higher. The wage rate for women, who are no longer employed underground, varies from 8 As. to 10 As. a day. The average rates of wages for all classes of work are approximately Rs. 26 a month for men and Rs. 15 for women. The average wages earned have not varied much in recent years. In 1921 the average wages were Rs. 26-7 for men and Rs. 14-4 for women.

The Chief Inspector of Mines in his report for 1927 noted that the wages paid in Assam compared favourably with those paid in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa.

In the match factory at Dhubri the average wages earned are Rs. 15 a month for unskilled labour and Rs. 25 a month for skilled labour.

In the oilfields at Digboi all men at first are paid at the rate of 12 As. a day, which is raised to 13 As. or 14 As. a day after three months. Ordinary labourers rise to Rs. 1-4 in the fields and Rs. 1-6 in the refinery. They can rise to posts of fitters on Rs. 3-4 a day in the refinery, or in the fields to posts of drivers on Rs. 40 a month or drillers on a scale of Rs. 45 to Rs. 90 a month. The average wages are from Rs. 26 to Rs. 35 a month.

No figures are available to show the rates of wages in other industries, but they are so few and unimportant in Assam that the data would have been of little value.

The average wages of ordinary agricultural male labour in the plains district vary from 8 As. to 12 As. a day, while village carpenters get from Re. 1 to Re. 1—8 and blacksmiths from 12 As. to Re. 1 a day. Ploughmen are usually engaged for the season, when their pay varies from Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 a month *plus* board and lodging. Women earn from 6 As. to 8 As. a day in agricultural labour.

105. *Minimum Wages.*—Minima rates of wages were fixed by statute for indentured labour on tea estates in Assam under Act VI of 1901 and even before that date, but with the abolition of such labour the law is no longer operative. There is at present no minimum wage legislation in force. The Government of Assam agree with the general principle that there should be minimum wage-fixing machinery for trades in which no arrangements exist for the effective regulation of wages by collective agreement or otherwise, and in which wages are exceptionally low, but it should be left to the Government concerned to decide what trades satisfy the criteria and to which of such trades a minimum wage should be applied. Whether or not it is either desirable or practicable to apply a minimum wage to any trade in Assam, the Government are not prepared to say definitely without a detailed enquiry, but at present they are disposed to think that it is not necessary or practicable. The fixation of a minimum wage would be a matter of great difficulty. Regard must ordinarily be had to (*a*) the cost of a suitable standard of living, (*b*) the state of the industry, and (*c*) the general level of wages, and the relative importance of each factor must vary with individual cases. The success of any attempt to modify by legislation conditions which owe their existence to economic causes must necessarily be limited, and even if minimum wage-fixing machinery were set up, it is doubtful if in Assam at any rate it would actually be required. It must be remembered that in Assam the demand exceeds the supply, and where such a condition exists wages generally will be comparatively high.

106. *Deductions.*—The question of the extent to which deductions from wages by fining was practised in Assam, and the necessity of legislation to regulate it was examined by this Government in 1927 on a reference from the Government of India.

It was ascertained on tea estates the system of fining for bad work or damage to materials was very rare. The piece-work system is generally in force, and as the labourer is paid for the actual work done, the question of fining for bad work does not arise. Members of the supervising staff are occasionally fined for neglect of work or irregularities. The power of fining for damage to tools and plant is not utilized at all in tea estates. Fines are imposed for breaches of discipline such as drunkenness, but the power is not abused. Any abuse of fining would at once lead to an exodus of the labourers, and this in itself is a sufficient safeguard. An instance of this occurred this year. A manager imposed some fines for bad work and for letting cattle trespass. A large body of the workmen struck work and leaving the garden proceeded to the district headquarters to ventilate their grievances. They returned to work on the manager undertaking to refund the fines. In industries other than the tea industry the system of fining for bad work and damage to materials as well as for breaches of discipline does exist, but there is no reason to believe that it is abused. In the Assam Railways and Trading Company which is the largest of such industries in the province, the total fines imposed in one year amounted only to ·18 per cent. of the wages bill. The Government of Assam are of opinion that the power of fining must be retained as an alternative to other and less desirable means of maintaining discipline and to the more drastic punishment of dismissal for bad work. There is no abuse of the power in Assam, and there is no danger of abuse in a province where labour is difficult to obtain and perhaps even harder to retain, and any abuse of the power would bring its own punishment in the loss of labour. For these reasons legislation to regulate fining is not required in Assam.

107. *Periods of wage payments.*—A Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in September, 1924, which provided for the payment of wages weekly to all employees in factories to which the Factories Act applied, to all employees in Government and private service and to all workers and employees wheresoever employed whose wages amounted to less than Rs. 100 a month.

(i) This Government then made an exhaustive enquiry as to the practice in this province both as regards the period for which wages were paid and the period elapsing before payment and also as to the necessity of legislation. It was found that the period for which wages were paid varied in different industries and in the same industry in different localities. In the tea industry weekly payments were the custom in the Surma Valley while in the Assam Valley monthly payments were made for the regular "*haziras*" and payment for *ticca* was made at weekly or even shorter periods. With the extension of the unit system of calculating wages, i.e., the extension of the piece work system, weekly payments have since become more usual in the Assam Valley also. In coal mines payments were made either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. In small rice and other mills monthly payments were the rule and

also in engineering works. All Government employees were and are paid monthly. The proposal to enforce by legislation a uniform system of weekly payments met with strong opposition in Assam. The system in force in the several industries was the one that had found most favour. There was no need of a change and no demand for a change among the employees. As regards tea estates it may safely be said that if the labourers want their wages paid at more frequent intervals, they will get them, but serious results would be likely to result if an attempt was made to introduce a change in system which the labourers did not want. A Railway Company reported that the weekly payment system had been introduced but at the request of the employees they had reverted to the monthly system. Government employees were opposed to any change from the monthly system, and there was also strong opposition to any change in the case of private servants. There are arguments for and against a weekly payment system. The member who introduced the Bill argued that the monthly system means that low paid employees had to live on credit, whereas there are many who hold and with justification that the monthly system encourages thrift. Employees find it more easy to make remittances home when their wages are paid monthly and too often the weekly payment means that more money is dissipated in drink and that men who had that failing would be incapable and absent from work for four days instead of one day in the month. Advances too are freely made in the industries in Assam and this custom meets the objection that the monthly system compels the workman to live on credit. There has been no change in this respect since 1924–25, and the Government are convinced that uniformity in the period of wage payments is unnecessary and that any attempt to enforce by legislation any particular period is not only unnecessary but would be greatly resented.

(ii) The question of the period elapsing before payment stands on a different footing. The enquiry made in 1924–25 showed that here too the practice varied. When wages were paid weekly or fortnightly they were usually paid within three to six days after they had been earned. In the case of monthly payments the interval varied from five to fifteen days. There was no evidence of any hardship in Assam, uniformity of the interval between the pay days being more important than the interval between the date of payment and the date in which wages had been earned. Still, even though no hardship had resulted in Assam, there is no justification for any long interval between the date on which the wages accrue and the date of actual payment. The Government of India in their letter No. L.–1391, dated the 28th July, 1926, consulted Local Governments on the desirability of legislation to prescribe short intervals and they suggested that if legislation were undertaken, the maximum interval allowed might be seven days in the case of monthly payments, four days in the case of fortnightly payments, two days for weekly payments and one day for daily payments. The difficulty of enforcing any such Act if it was left to the workmen to invoke the aid of the law was recognized by the Government of India. The inconvenience of going to law to secure a small advantage and the possibility of reprisals by the employer would generally deter a workman from taking action under the law. The Government of India therefore suggested that if legislation were considered desirable, it should be confined in its operation to establishments which are subject to the operation of the Factories Act or Mines Act, as the inspecting staff for such establishments could enforce the Act. The view which this Government expressed in reply to the Government of India's reference and to which they still adhere is that, although there is no real need at present for such legislation in Assam, they accept the general principles which the Government of India had put forward and agree that legislation on those lines and subject to the restrictions proposed could be given effect to in Assam without any serious difficulty.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—This question has not come up for consideration in Assam.

108. *Indebtedness.*—The Government have no statistics to show to what extent the labourers of this province are indebted. In the tea estates and other industries where advances are given there must always be some indebtedness to the employer. The system, however, is popular with the labour force and such advances are rarely if ever recovered except in easy instalments. Before the abolition of Act XIII of 1859 an outstanding advance, whatever its nature, was no doubt used as an argument against the grant of a discharge certificate, and to that extent the indebtedness of the labourer may be said to have affected his freedom. Now, however, there is nothing to prevent a labourer from leaving his work whether he is in debt or not, and the employer would have no remedy but a civil suit, which would never be brought.

There was one system of advances to which the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921–22 took exception and that was the system of issuing rice at concession rates on credit. They remarked that one result of this system and of realizing the cost of the rice at the end of the month was that the labourer not infrequently finds himself with little or nothing in hand for the purchase of other necessaries. Moreover rice

advances, they found, where sometimes kept outstanding over a series of years, deductions being made from time to time to reduce the debt, when the labourers earnings permitted deductions. This system was bound, they considered, to create discontent and misunderstanding. Moreover, when rice is issued on credit there is perhaps a tendency for a labourer to take more than he actually requires. If cash payment had to be made at the time of issue, the labourer might be more careful and the neccssity of doing more work to pay for other necessaries might be more obvious to him. The Committee therefore advocated that when rice was issued it should be issued only for cash payments.

To what extent the Committee's recommendations have been accepted, the Government are unable to say.

Of the indebtedness of labourers of tea estates or other industries to persons other than their employers, the Government have no reliable information.

109. *Bonus and profit sharing schemes.*—No such system is in force in the industries of Assam. With the labour force of the type employed on the tea estates and in other large industries, there are two main objections to any such scheme. In the first place the labourers would fail to understand why no bonus or a reduced bonus was given in bad years. Secondly, the bonus would generally be wasted. The Bombay Industrial Disputes Committee in their report, which was issued shortly before the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921–22, submitted their report, stated that it is an almost universal experience that a bonus has no permanent effect on the standard of living and that it is immediately dissipated in increased absenteeism or else in the grog shop. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee in agreeing with that view pronounced against the bonus system and stated that in their opinion the first essential of Indian labour is a higher standard of living and any spare money which employers have would be better spent on education, superannuation benefits and welfare work generally. With the views then expressed the Government of Assam are in complete agreement.

110. *Annual leave.*—There is no regular system of leave in force in the industries of Assam which employ mainly imported labour. Long leave to enable the labourers to go to their homes at short intervals would not be a practicable proposition.

Actually the system of recruiting through garden sardars does enable many labourers to visit their homes at not infrequent intervals. Labourers are often recruited for short terms and many return to Assam for another period after a visit to their homes.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112 to 116. The Government of Assam are not in a position to offer any comment on these subjects.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117–122. The only trade organization that exists in this province is the organization of those employers in the tea industry, a very large proportion, who belong to the Assam and Surma valley branches of the Indian Tea Association. That undoubtedly is a very strong organization. What effect that organization has on the industry or on the conditions of workers is difficult to say. As regards the industry the effect must be presumed to be beneficial. Union is strength and in so far as the Association has been able to formulate and adopt a common policy, that must generally be for the good. At times such policy is resented by individual managers or employers and it may at times be mistaken or short-sighted, but the success which the industry has achieved must be accepted as a proof that at any rate, from the point of view of the employer or the shareholder, the policy has on the whole been remarkably successful. It does not follow of course that success from that point of view means also the prosperity of the labour force. The fettering of an individual manager's discretion by the control exercised by the Association may act as a check on progress in the matter of the improvement of labour conditions. The shortage of labour is the industry's chief trouble and in these circumstances the Association cannot but realize that the contentment of the labour force is essential to the industry, but it takes longer to convince an Association than an individual, and an Association has to think of the circumstances of the less fortunately placed of its members, so that in any matter involving considerable outlay without an immediate return, the Association would take longer to move than an individual employer of a prosperous estate with nothing to think about except his own estate. This tendency must be more marked when, as in the case with the tea industry, control of the Association is largely exercised from Calcutta by men who have not the local knowledge that the managers of the estates possess. It must be admitted that the Association has not always moved forward in the matter of improving labour

conditions as quickly as it might have done. On the other hand it is easier to deal with an Association than with a host of individual employers, and Government have therefore been able to explain their views and advocate measures more effectively by addressing the Association than if there had been no controlling body. Government have not hesitated to bring to the notice of the Association any matter which seemed to them to call for improvement or redress, and it is only fair to say that the Association has generally been ready to go as far as possible to meet the wishes of the Government.

Outside the Indian Tea Association, there is no organization of employers or labour in Assam. There is no Trade Union in Assam. It would however be a mistake to suppose that labour has therefore been incapable of any concerted action. On the contrary a combination of labour on a tea estate to ventilate a grievance, real or imaginary, and demand redress is of frequent occurrence. The labour force is excitable and obstinate. Once they get an idea into their heads it is very difficult to remove it. Anyone with a grievance soon finds a host of champions and unless the manager can satisfy them that the grievance is imaginary or that, if genuine, substantial justice will be done, their resentment is as likely as not to find expression in violence or in an exodus from the garden.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. Strikes of a kind have been of frequent occurrence in the tea industry, and in fact are inevitable in the conditions of the industry. With an ignorant labour force, drawn mainly from aboriginal tribes, easily excited and rarely stopping to think, controlled by one or two Europeans and a small subordinate staff, situated in out of the way localities and at a distance from any assistance, the wonder has always been, not that outbreaks occur, but that they do not occur more often. The causes of such conflicts have already been described. Resentment at some grievance sometimes real and sometimes imaginary, such as the infliction of a punishment, a change in procedure introduced by a new manager and variations in the task, has been the usual cause. In the outbreaks of 1920–21, which have already been mentioned, economic causes were more prominent. Such outbreaks have always been short lived. The intervention of the police and the district or sub-divisional officer was often required, but they were always able to settle the dispute and restore peace and order. In such occurrences the principle of suspending work until a demand has been satisfied has played but a small part, the labourers usually venting their sense of grievance at once in an outbreak of violence and then resuming work.

Another form of strike, if it can be so called, which has become common in recent years is the exodus of a body of labourers who discover that Assam or the conditions of a tea estate are not to their liking. This has been due to the importation of labourers from areas which have not supplied labour for Assam before. Many such cases occurred when new areas were opened for recruitment in Madras, and again quite recently when recruitment was opened in the Bombay Presidency. Occasionally complaints were made that the wages were not what the men had been led to expect, but usually the sole cause was dislike of the Assam climate and of the work. The men and women found themselves in surroundings quite different from those of their own homes, and home sickness proving too much for them, they left their employ in a body, prepared if necessary, to walk to their homes. These events were not strikes to enforce any demand. The labourers were not asking for any better terms as an inducement to stay. They were merely determined to go back to their homes and were not prepared on any terms to stay in Assam. These occurrences could to some extent have been prevented by more judicious recruitment. When new areas are opened to recruitment, it is essential firstly that the type of man recruited should *prima facie* be suited to the work which he will be required to perform, and secondly that only a few such persons should be recruited in the first instance to any one garden. If and when they are found suitable and take kindly to their new life, then they can bring up more of their kith and kin. The mistake too often made was to import a large number in the first instance including men who were clearly not likely ever to adapt themselves to the life on a tea estate.

Strikes in the ordinary sense, i.e., stoppage of work as a means to induce employers to grant better terms are of recent date on tea estates. They came into prominence in 1926–27. A strike occurred in one estate in that year which was settled by the grant of some concessions. Exaggerated rumours of the concessions which had been obtained led to a series of strikes in the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts chiefly. They were all very short lived. In no case was there any serious grievance or any evidence of ill-will between the men and their employers, and on the grant of a few minor concessions in some cases and the promise of an enquiry in others the men contentedly returned to work in a day or two. Since that year there have been a few strikes of this nature which have also been quickly settled, but it is.

probable that the strike as a weapon to enforce demands reasonable or otherwise will be more readily resorted to on tea estates in the future. There has never been any lock-out of employees on tea estates.

In other industries in Assam strikes have been rare—(1) in 1921 there was a prolonged strike on the Assam-Bengal railway. In its origin it had no connection with any economic cause. It originated at Chandpur as a strike in sympathy for the tea garden labourers who had migrated to Chandpur from gardens in the Surma valley. The strike was an attempt to compel the Bengal Government to repatriate the labourers. The strike was closely associated with the non co-operation movement of that year and was kept alive partly by the political agitation and partly in the hope of securing reinstatement without loss of pay and service. This strike will probably be discussed in the memorandum of the Government of Bengal.

(2) In July, 1920, the drivers, boiler makers, workshop staff and many of the traffic department of the Dibru-Sadiya railway struck work for a 50 per cent. increase in wages. The strike was settled ten days later by the grant of an increase of 35 per cent. for employees drawing less than Rs. 30 a month and of 30 per cent. for those drawing more than Rs. 30 but less than Rs. 100.

(3) In 1928 a strike of platelayers and mistris occurred on the Dibru-Sadiya railway. Thirty men of one section struck for higher wages. At different dates they were joined by others until about 430 men were on strike. The strike lasted for 17 days and ended in the grant of an addition of Rs. 2 in the monthly wage rate.

(4) In November, 1928, a strike occurred at the match factory at Dhubri. The strike originated with employees in the box filling department who demanded an increase in wages. There had been a reduction some months previously in the piece work rates of that department. The old rates had been fixed when the factory was first established and all the workmen were untrained. With the installation of more machinery and the training of the employees the work had become easier and the old rates gave the employees disproportionately high wages compared with men in other departments. The rates were revised but even with the lower rates the employees were earning higher wages than they had a year before, the average being from Rs. 45 to Rs. 60 a month. In spite of this the employees in this department decided to strike and they induced almost the whole staff in other departments to join them. The management however remained firm. On the fourth day the men began to resume work and by the end of the week all resumed work unconditionally except about fifteen irreconcilables who were discharged.

(5) In 1929 about 800 men, comprising drillers, drivers and ringmen of the Digboi oilfields, struck against work on Sundays. Under the arrangement in force a holiday was given to batches of men every eighth day. A general holiday on Sunday was not given to avoid a complete suspension of work. Sunday, however, is the local market day and the strikers demanded that there should be a general holiday on that day. To enforce their demand they suspended work on Sunday, the 2nd June, resuming work again the next day. They announced their intention of striking each Sunday, but the matter was settled before the following Sunday by the promise of a bonus varying from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 for each man who worked on a Sunday in addition to the three preceding days and was prepared to work for the three following days.

124 to 126. Hitherto in the tea industry both employees and employed have looked to the District or Subdivisional Officer for the settlement of any dispute, and hitherto the intervention of the local officers has always been sufficient. Owing to the nature of the labour force and the isolation of the tea estates, prompt intervention is enjoined on the local officers by Government in the interests of peace and order, but the duties imposed on the local officers do not stop at the suppression of any disorder. They are required always to investigate the causes of the trouble and the grievances put forward by the labourers, and if any substantial grievance is disclosed, the District or Subdivisional Officer endeavours and generally succeeds in securing its redress. Reports of all such cases are submitted to the Government and, if the management is unwilling or unable of its own initiative to carry out the recommendations of the local officers, the Government address the Managing Agents of the estate or the branch of the Indian Tea Association concerned. Conditions, however, are changing in Assam as elsewhere, and the time may not be far off when it may be necessary to call into being the machinery created by the Trades Disputes Act. Widespread strikes throughout the tea estates would be a public calamity not only in the inevitable distress of the labour force and the great loss to the industry which any prolonged stoppage would cause, a loss which would affect tea consumers throughout the world, but also in the serious discrder that would probably ensue. Any machinery which would be serviceable in such an emergency is to be welcomed, not only by employers and employed, but also by the Government and the general public.

XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127 to 132. The Government do not desire to offer any remarks on this subject except to say that the repeal of the Workman's Breach of Contract Act has had no ill effects on the tea industry, but it is impossible to say to what extent the abolition of the Act has effected an improvement in the industry.

The working of the Act was dealt with at length in the report of the Committee of 1921–22 and in the Resolution thereon published by Government. The abolition of the penal provision for breach of contract in itself has of course improved the position of the labourer, but to what extent that has given a stimulus to recruitment or led to the increase in wages it is not possible to say. Although it had been worked generally with fairness, the Act might be and was occasionally abused, and the removal of the possibility of abuse must be to the interest of the employer as well as the labourer.

XVII.—Administration.

133. *Provincial Legislature.*—The Legislative Council has not concerned itself much with labour questions. This may be due to the fact that labour is not properly represented in the Council. One seat is reserved for nomination of a member to represent labour but it has been impracticable to find anyone who could adequately represent it. Among the labouring classes of Assam there was no one of sufficient education and ability to be selected as their representative, and even outside the labouring classes it was difficult to find anyone who possessed a close acquaintance with their condition and needs and had identified himself with their interests. The difficulty is illustrated by the fact that for most of the period since the Reforms the member nominated to represent labour was himself an employer. Although he was one who had always shown himself keenly interested in the welfare of his labour force, the nomination of an employer was admittedly an anomaly. During the last session of the Council, an Indian missionary, who worked among the classes to which the labour population belongs, was nominated to represent labour. In their recommendations to the Statutory Commission the Government of Assam, recognizing that the present position is unsatisfactory, have suggested a scheme by which labour could be directly represented by election.

As matters now stand it is not surprising that labour questions have not figured prominently in the proceedings of the Legislative Council. In 1924 a resolution was carried demanding that the maintenance of schools by tea garden proprietors should be made compulsory. This was opposed by Government as singling out a particular industry for application of the principle of compulsion which had not then been accepted by the Council for general application. The planting representatives in the Council also urged that compulsion would have a seriously disturbing effect on labour. Questions have at times been asked on the subject of conflicts between the management and the labour force which had figured in the newspapers, but otherwise the Council proceedings have not given any indication of special interest in the industrial labour population as distinct from the general rural population of the province.

Outside the Council individual members have from time to time interested themselves in the welfare of labourers, principally on occasions of an exodus of a body of imported labourers from some tea estate, when the questions of their maintenance and repatriation to their country have been taken up by individual members of the Council.

134. *International Labour Organization.*—This is a matter which the Government of Assam will leave to the Central Government.

135. *Relations between Central and Local Governments.*—Inter-provincial migration is a central subject and accordingly questions concerning the recruitment of labour from other provinces and its importation to Assam are directly controlled by the Central Government and legislation on these subjects is undertaken in the Central Legislature.

Mineral development is also a central subject and the Central Government therefore directly controls mines and the conditions of labour therein.

Industrial matters included under the following heads :—(*a*) factories, (*b*) settlement of labour disputes, (*c*) electricity, (*d*) boilers, (*e*) gas, (*f*) smoke nuisances and (*g*) welfare of labour are classed as provincial subjects under item 26 of Part II of Schedule I of the Devolution Rules, but subject in the case of heads (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and (*g*) to legislation by the Indian legislature. The central legislature is therefore given power of legislation in these subjects, and in virtue of the provisions of section 80A of the Government of India Act, no legislation on these subjects can be undertaken in a provincial legislature without the previous sanction of the Governor General. The final executive control vests also in the Governor General in Council under section 45 of the Government of India Act. This control is unrestricted as these subjects are reserved subjects and do not therefore come under section 45A (3) of the Act and Rule 49 of the Devolution Rules framed thereunder.

The powers vested in the Central Government have been freely exercised, but not hitherto to the prejudice of the Local Government. There is of course always the possibility that legislation might be introduced in the central legislature which would not be suitable to a particular province, but on the other hand the power of control is a check on hasty or predatory legislation in a provincial Legislative Council. In their recommendations to the Statutory Commission the Government of Assam have advocated the retention of the control, both legislative and executive, which now vests in the Central Government.

136. *Administrative Authorities in Various Governments.*—There are no special labour officers employed under the Assam Government.

137. *Effect of Difference in Law or Administration in Indian States and British India.*—This question does not concern Assam. Manipur is the only Indian State with which this province is directly concerned apart from the small Khasi States. In Manipur there is no large industry and no industrial labour problems arise. The Khasi States are only semi-independent and the terms of the *Sanads* given to the Siems or Chiefs bring them under the close control of the Assam Government and their officers. Should the necessity arise in future, it should be possible to bring conditions in the Khasi States into conformity with those prevailing in British India at any rate in all important matters.

138. *Acquaintance of Work People with Factory Legislation.*—It can safely be said that the tea garden labour force which comprises most of the labouring classes in Assam know little of and perhaps care less for the factory legislation that has been introduced. The reasons for this have already been given.

139 to 142. The nature of the work of inspection done in factories, mines and plantations has been discussed in earlier paragraphs where it was explained that such work was necessarily limited in scope by the conditions prevailing in Assam.

XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. As regards tea estates the Government obtain from the managers vital statistics and statistics showing the number of men, women and children resident in the estate, recruitment and wages.

For mines statistics showing the number of employees and accidents are furnished in the annual returns. The Deputy Commissioners also inspect the registers of vital statistics. For factories only figures showing the number of employees and hours of work are supplied.

These statistics may be accepted as accurate.

No statistics are furnished by other concerns, but they can be and are obtained when required. For instance the figures furnished in the memoranda as regards the oilfields at Digboi and the Assam match factory have been supplied to the Deputy Commissioners concerned by the managers.

There is also a triennial census of agricultural wages. The decennial census also furnishes details of the cost of living and wages.

144. For the purpose of the requirements of this province no more elaborate statistics are required.

145. There was an enquiry into the conditions on tea estates in 1906, and a more recent one, which has been referred to in the memoranda, in the year 1921–22. There have been no other special investigations in this province.

APPENDIX A.

No. Immgn.215—5705 G.J., dated Shillong, the 1st September, 1927.

From G. E. SOAMES, ESQ., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

To the SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, Department of Industries and Labour.

Subject.—Revision of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, VI of 1901.

I am directed to refer to Mr. Clow's letter No. L.1266, dated the 23rd December, 1926, in which the views of this Government have been asked on the subject of recruitment for the labour districts in Assam.

2. The first question which the Government of India have asked is whether it is necessary now to maintain any form of control over recruitment. The Governor in Council fully agrees that the policy of Government should be directed towards the removal of all restrictions on the free movement of labour, and he strongly sympathises

with the view that the tea industry in Assam should no longer be placed under special disabilities in the matter of recruitment as compared with the industry or other industries in other parts of India. Free and untrammelled recruitment is admittedly the ideal towards which all efforts should be directed. The Governor in Council is anxious to do all in his power to assist the industry in Assam towards the realization of that ideal, and he agrees that at any rate some relaxation of the existing rigid restrictions should at once be conceded. He is not, however, prepared to admit that the time has already come when all control can be removed. The Government of India on this point have asked for the opinion only of the local Governments of the provinces from which labour is recruited for Assam and thereby seem to suggest that it is only those governments who are concerned in this aspect of the question. To this view the Governor in Council must demur. The local governments of the recruiting districts may be primarily concerned in this matter, but the matter is one in which this Government also are vitally interested. It would be in Assam that any trouble would arise from irregular recruitment or the recruitment of unsuitable persons. In the event of such trouble it would be for this Government to intervene to keep the peace and to take such other action as the situation required. They are also interested in seeing that nothing should occur which would endanger the industry on which the prosperity of the province so greatly depends. The Governor in Council is confirmed in his view that the time has not yet come for the removal of all control by the opinion not only of all officers in Assam, who are in close contact with the conditions of the industry, but also of the Indian Tea Association with whose representatives he has thoroughly discussed the question. Under the present system most of the abuses of the past have been suppressed, cases of irregular or fraudulent recruitment are comparatively rare, and the majority of the employers and their agents set their faces sternly against any unauthorised or improper methods. There are, however, some concerns which are not members of the India Tea Association and do not recruit through any recognised agency, and these must always be a potential source of trouble and open the door, even if a small one, to the recrudescence of the evils of the past. Moreover, the competition for labour is so keen that, with the removal of all control, the **arkati* will again find a lucrative business in recruiting for the industry and some control will undoubtedly be required to keep in check what the Indian Tea Association has described as "the admitted tendency for professional recruiters to resort to unscrupulous methods."

The Government of India suggest that emigrants are now more sophisticated, the journey from their homes is shorter, and greater interest is taken in their welfare by the press and the legislatures, and they suggest that in these altered conditions it might be possible to dispense with control altogether. The opinions of all who have practical knowledge of present-day conditions are emphatically opposed to this view. The emigrant is still credulous, he will be easily deluded by specious stories of work and wages which he may expect on an Assam tea garden, and although it is true that he is now free to leave his employ whenever he likes, that will not save him from being stranded in a strange province with no means to get back to his own country. The journey to his own country may have been shortened but only if he has the money to avail himself of the quicker means of transport now available. This he will not have unless he stays in his employ long enough to earn it. The unwilling labourer, it is true, is a bad investment for an employer, but the professional recruiter will be scrupulous neither of the employer's nor of the emigrant's interests. He will care only for his own immediate gain, and it must be remembered that even the unwilling labourer may be compelled for the reasons given above to remain for some years in Assam. The Governor in Council is confident that employers in Assam, with a few possible exceptions, will in no way encourage malpractices. On the contrary, as has already been stated, they are directly opposed to them, but with the removal of all control, they as well as the emigrants will be victimised by the unscrupulous recruiting agent, whether he be a garden sardar or a professional recruiter, and it is in the interests of employer and labourer alike that the retention of some form of control over recruiting is still required.

3. While holding the opinion that the time for the removal of all control has not yet come, the Governor in Council agrees strongly with the view that some relaxation of the existing restriction should at once be granted. The prohibition of all recruitment except recruitment by garden sardars is now not merely unnecessary but actually harmful to the industry. As the Government of India have pointed out, sardari recruitment cannot be used by a new employer or in a new area of recruitment. The sardar with good connections is admittedly the industry's best recruiter, and employers will certainly continue to exploit their sardari connections, but, owing to the essential limitations of the sardar, some other recruiting agency must be recognized.

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* Labour contractor.

4. The Governor in Council has carefully considered the question whether a new Act is required or whether provision can be made for the extension of recruiting facilities with the retention of adequate control under the provisions of Act VI of 1901 as amended by Act VIII of 1915. The existing Act has been so altered and amended that its replacement by a simpler self-contained Act would have obvious advantages. On the other hand, there are serious objections to the introduction of new legislation at the present moment. It will suffice to mention one. The ideal is admittedly free recruitment and removal of all restrictions on the movement of labour. Control is a temporary expedient, the necessity for which may reasonably be expected to disappear within a short time. So long as a new Act is not absolutely necessary, it would be inadvisable to introduce new legislation which is intended to be only of a temporary character. The Governor in Council would therefore prefer to work under the existing law, if this is found feasible. In this connection he has been in correspondence with the Indian Tea Association and he has also had the advantage of personal discussions with the Association's representatives. At his suggestion, the Association formulated their proposals for the consideration of his Government with the intention of consulting other local Governments, if the Governor in Council considered their proposals to be practical. I am to enclose for the information of the Government of India a copy of the Association's letter with their draft scheme and a copy of this Government's reply.* It will be seen that the Association have proposed two alternative schemes. Under one scheme revised notifications under section 3 of the Act would be issued by the local Governments of the provinces from which emigrants are recruited. These notifications would restrict recruitment to recruitment by garden sardars and to other accredited agents holding a permit or licence from an employer. Rules regulating the transport of emigrants would be prescribed which would require every emigrant to pass through the depot of a licensed local agent, who would be given the power of an Inspector of Labourers and would maintain a register of all emigrants passing through his depot and satisfy himself that there had been no irregularity in the recruitment and that the emigrants were willing to go to Assam and understood what they were undertaking. The emigrants would finally pass inspecting officers of the Assam Labour Board at the points of entry into this province. The rules would also provide for the cancelling of the licence or permit of any recruiting agent in the event of misconduct. The Association suggests this power should be exercised by the Assam Labour Board, but the Governor in Council recommends that it should be vested in the District Magistrate or Superintendent of Emigration. This scheme follows very closely the suggestions in paragraph 6 of the Government of India's letter, but there is some doubt whether effect can be given to it under the present law.

In this Government's letter to the Association mention has been made of the possible legal objections to this scheme. If the legal difficulties do not exist or can be overcome without fresh legislation, the Governor in Council is strongly in favour of the scheme. It would eliminate the independent *arkati* altogether and the control which could be exercised by the cancellation of permits or licences and by the rules requiring emigrants to pass Inspectors of Labourers and the officers of the Assam Labour Board should effectively prevent any recurrence of the abuses which were in the past connected with professional recruiters. If, however, there are insuperable legal objections to this scheme, the Governor in Council would be prepared to adopt the alternative scheme put forward by the Association. Under that scheme all notifications under section 3 of the Act would be withdrawn and would not be reimposed except as a disciplinary measure against particular estates. All recruitment would be under section 92 read with section 93 of the Act, but would be regulated by similar rules as regards transport as would be provided under the first scheme. Although the independent *arkati* would not be eliminated and the control would not be quite so effective, the Governor in Council believes that the alternative scheme would provide sufficient safeguards against any serious abuse. In the recruiting districts care will be required in the selection of local agents, the provision of suitable depots and the maintenance of the proposed registers will be essential and frequent inspections would be desirable, but if the local Governments concerned concur in the proposed arrangements, the proposals of the Indian Tea Association offer a practical solution of the problem, by providing under the existing Act increased facilities for recruitment with sufficient control to prevent serious abuse.

5. The Governor in Council agrees that it would have been advisable to amend the constitution of the Assam Labour Board so as to make it more representative, in particular by the inclusion of officers of the recruiting districts. Any such alteration, however, in the constitution of the Board, would require an amendment of the Act and, for the reasons given, the Governor in Council is averse to fresh legislation being undertaken, if this can be avoided. The Governor in Council understands

* Not printed.

that the Indian Tea Association would be prepared to consider the advisability of including representatives of the recruiting districts among the members elected by them. If this were done, there could be little exception taken to the constitution of the Board.

6. The proposals of the Indian Tea Association would give the Assam Labour Board more direct supervision over recruiting operations than it exercises at present. Rules under Section 116 F., as inserted by Act VIII of 1915, could be framed to give the officers of the Board the necessary authority, but it would be impracticable, as adding too greatly to the expense, to place the Board's supervisors in charge of all recruiting depots.

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No. Immgn. 3/7884 G.J., dated Shillong, the 8th February, 1929.

From G. E. SOAMES, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

To the SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, Department of Industries and Labour.

Subject : Revision of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, VI of 1901.

I am directed to refer to Mr. Lall's letter No. L.1266, dated the 3rd December, 1928, forwarding for the opinion of this Government a draft of the Assam Labour Recruitment Bill which the Government of India propose to introduce.

2. I am in the first place to say that the time allowed for a reply has been far too short to enable the Governor in Council to give to the Bill the careful consideration which it requires. Indeed, he has been compelled to reply before receiving the final views of the Indian Tea Association, and it may be necessary to supplement the reply now sent after the Association's views have been received.

3. The Governor in Council in the first place urges that the Bill should apply *proprio vigore* to the whole of British India. There is no reason why the Bombay Presidency should be excluded from its provisions. One result of such exclusion would be that a labourer recruited from that Presidency would not be a labourer within the meaning of the Bill, and could not be repatriated under Clause 9 if he had been recruited by coercion, undue influence, fraud or misrepresentation, or in any irregular way. Moreover, recent experience of recruits received from that Presidency show that it is desirable in the interests of all that recruitment in the Bombay Presidency should from the outset be subject to the same control as recruitment in other provinces.

4. The Government of Assam also recommend that the provisions of the Bill should apply to recruitment within the labour districts of Assam. Abuses in connection with the recruitment by professional *arkatis* within the labour districts have already occurred, and it was in consequence of such abuses that the Government of Assam, with the previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council, conveyed in Mr. Clow's letter No. 11292, dated the 12th January, 1925, issued a notification under Section 3 of Act VI of 1901, prohibiting persons from recruiting, engaging, inducing or assisting any native of India, not being a native of a labour district, to emigrate from the district of Kamrup to any labour district. To prevent the recurrence of similar irregularities within the labour districts, the control over recruitment provided by the Bill should be extended to recruitment within Assam. Effect could be given to this proposal by deleting the definition of "recruiting district" in Clause 2 (1) (*l*) and substituting the words "for the labour districts" in place of the words "in recruiting districts" in Clause 5. No definition of the term "recruiting district" would then be required.

5. In order to provide for the extension of the tea industry into areas within the province of Assam beyond the districts declared to be labour districts in the Bill, the Governor in Council would suggest that the words "and any other district or backward tract in the province of Assam which the local Government may declare by notification in the "Gazette" to be a labour district" should be added at the end of the definition of "labour district" in Clause 2 (1) (*f*) of the Bill.

6. In the explanation under the definition of "labourer" in Clause 2 (1) (*g*) the Governor in Council would insert the words "or Nepal" after the words "an Indian State." A case recently occurred in which Nepalis were irregularly recruited for a tea estate in Assam, but no action could be taken under Act VI of 1901, as Nepal is not an Indian State, and a Nepali is not a native of India. Such cases are likely to recur, and it is necessary to provide for them in the Bill.

7. As the Bill now stands there is nothing to prevent persons working as recruiters who have not been deputed to do so by any employer. Such recruitment could be prohibited by the issue of a notification under Clause 3 (1), but in the absence

of any such notification there would be nothing to prevent professional *arkatis* recruiting without any authority from an employer with the object of selling any labourers they obtain to the highest bidder in the labour districts. Not only would such methods be legal, but they would be free from all restriction, as the *arkatis* would not be " recruiters " within the meaning of the Bill, and would not therefore be subject to the provisions of the Bill. The system of hawking labourers by professional *arkatis* is open to the gravest abuse and is condemned by all. The Governor in Council would, therefore, press for the inclusion in the Bill of a substantive clause prohibiting all recruitment otherwise than by garden sirdars or recruiters as defined in the Act.

8. The Government of India have deliberately provided in the Bill for the possibility of recruitment by garden sirdars or recruiters working independently of any local agent. To this the Governor in Council is opposed on the ground that serious irregularities will certainly occur if garden sirdars and recruiters are allowed to work independently. The Bill should require all garden sirdars and recruiters to work under the control of local agents, and should not leave to any local Government the discretion to allow independent recruitment by either agency.

9. The Governor in Council also objects to the power given to a local Government by Clause 3 (1) of the Bill to prohibit all recruitment other than recruitment through the agency of garden sirdars. The exercise of this power would handicap the tea industry in competition with other industries. There should be no prohibition of the agency of " recruiters " unless and until definite abuses have occurred. The control necessary to stop abuses can be secured by the power to prohibit individuals from working as recruiters, and no local Government should have the power to prohibit that method of recruitment altogether. Should the abuses be of so general and serious a nature as to justify the complete stoppage of this method of recruitment in any province, the power of prohibition should be vested not in the local Government but in the Government of India.

10. Clause 5 of the Bill vests in the Government of Assam the control over the grant of certificates to recruiters as well as to garden sirdars. As recruiters will usually be persons belonging to the recruiting areas, the control in their case could more properly be exercised by the local Government in whose jurisdiction the recruiter will work.

11. The Governor in Council also recommends that the authorities should be given wider powers of repatriation than those given by Clause 9 of the Bill. There have been cases in the past of the recruitment of labourers who have been totally unsuited to life and work on a tea estate in Assam. On many an occasion an exodus has occurred, and the Government of Assam have been forced to intervene and repatriate the labourers. Hitherto the tea industry has undertaken the cost of such repatriation, although under no legal obligation to do so. To provide for such cases the Governor in Council would suggest that the Bill should give power to repatriate and recover the cost in any case in which the authority is satisfied that the labourer was unsuited for work on a tea estate and had no means for his journey home, provided that the labourer concerned had been less than two years on the estate and had not previously been employed on an estate in Assam.

12. The supervision over local agents is vested in the Labour Board by Clause 11 (1) of the Bill, but the Board has no voice in the matter of their appointment. The Governor in Council would recommend that, as at present, the Board should have some say in the matter of the appointment of local agents.

13. The Governor in Council must take strong exception to the constitution of the Assam Labour Board proposed by the Bill. The reduction in the size of the Board is welcomed, but the inclusion of labour representatives is regarded as unjustifiable and likely to have unfortunate results. The Board, which should more properly be styled " the Assam Labour Recruitment Board," is concerned merely with recruitment, and on such a Board labour has no real claim to be represented. Labour can fairly claim representation in a body which deals with the conditions of labour at work, but with such conditions the Labour Board has no concern. The Labour Board has hitherto worked very satisfactorily as a Board of employers in which the whole industry had confidence. The appointment to the Board of labour representatives would destroy the present nature of the Board and would seriously impair the confidence it enjoys and consequently its efficiency. There could be no objection to the appointment to the Board of officials from the recruiting areas. In fact the appointment of such officials would be welcomed by all, and would give the local Governments of the recruiting areas greater confidence in the Board. The appointment of labour representatives, however, stands on quite a different footing. The accredited representatives of labour in any province are those who claim to represent the labour at work in that province and not the potential labour to be recruited for work in another province. Even if it is considered essential

that some proportion of the Board's members should be nominated to represent the potential labour from which recruitment is made, the Governor in Council could not in any case agree to an equality between the members representing labour and the members representing the employers. The Board is financed by the employers, and on that ground also, as well as for the reasons already advanced, the employers are entitled to predomination on the Board. The Governor in Council would not object to, though he cannot recommend, a Board consisting of six representatives of employers, two representatives of labour, and two official members to represent the recruiting areas, the representatives of labour and the recruiting areas being appointed by the Governor-General in Council. If, however, that is not accepted and the question resolves itself into a choice between a board on which labour would be given equal representation with the employers and the abolition of the Board, the Governor in Council would prefer that the Board should be abolished and the powers of control be vested in an official agency. The abolition of the Board is greatly to be deprecated, but it is preferable to its retention with the constitution proposed in the Bill.

No. Immgn. 61/1344G.J., dated Shillong, the 5th March, 1929.

From G. E. SOAMES, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam,

To the SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, Department of Industries and Labour.

Subject : Assam Labour Recruitment Bill.

I am directed to refer to the correspondence ending with your letter No. 1015G.J., dated the 16th February, 1929, and to say that this Government have received from the Indian Tea Association a copy of the draft Bill which the Association submitted for the consideration of the Government of India with their letter No. 229.O., dated the 18th February, 1929. In the opinion of the Governor in Council, the Association's draft Bill is on sound lines, and meets most of the points raised in my letter No. 884G.J., dated the 8th February, 1929. The Government of Assam, however, regard it as important that the repatriation provisions should be widened as suggested in paragraph 11 of my letter, and they think it advisable, at any rate if the provisions are so widened, that the District Magistrate's powers in this respect should be subject to any orders made by the Local Government, as in Clause 9 of the Government of India's draft Bill. I am also to mention another point in this connection, which this Government omitted to notice before. Power should be given as in the present Act, to recover the cost of repatriation from the person recruiting the labourer or assisting him to proceed to a labour district, if there is no employer or the employer is not known. This provision is needed especially to enable the authorities to repatriate labourers who have been illegally recruited by persons who are not the representatives of any employer, but have recruited the labourers with the object of offering them to the highest bidder in Assam.

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APPENDIX C.

No. Immgn. 149—3394G.J., dated Shillong, the 30th May, 1929.

From G. E. SOAMES, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam,

To the SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, Department of Industries and Labour.

Subject.—Proposed Amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.

I am directed to refer to your letter No. L.1125, dated the 30th November, 1928, in which this Government have been asked to advise on the revision of the Workmen's Compensation Act. There are no representative organizations of employees in Assam, but the Governor in Council has consulted a large number of employers of labour and other non-officials as well as officials, and the difficulty involved in the revision of the Act is illustrated by the great variety of opinions expressed. Except on one point there is no unanimity and on only a few points is there any considerable weight of opinion in favour of any one view. The Governor in Council has carefully considered the opinions received, and I am now to state the conclusions at which he has arrived on the several questions involved in the reference in the order in which they have been summarised in paragraph 18 of the Government of India's letter.

2. (i) *To what fresh classes of employees, if any, should the Act be extended* ?—Logically the Act should apply to workmen employed in all branches of industry, but the practical difficulties of administration make this at present impossible. The

scope of the Act can however be widened to some extent without serious difficulty. It can be applied to workmen employed in all organized industries, whether hazardous or not. In Assam for instance this extension would bring within the scope of the Act all workmen employed on tea gardens, whereas now it is restricted in its application to those who are employed in the factories. Secondly, the Governor in Council would recommend the application of the Act to all workmen, including casual labour, employed in hazardous industries. His Excellency in Council would include in the schedule for this purpose any industry in which machinery not worked by hand is used. Elephant catching operations might also be specifically included. The main objection to the inclusion of unorganized industries is that some employers would be unable to meet their obligations under the Act, but there is no reason why those who can afford to pay should escape because others cannot. Moreover in industries of the classes suggested there would not be many employers who would be unable to meet any liability which they might incur under the Act.

(ii) *Should any provisions be introduced for securing workmen against possible loss by reason of the inability of their employer to pay any compensation that may be due* ?—In the opinion of the Governor in Council it is impossible to include in the Act any provision of this nature. No insurance scheme could be worked in this province and, in the absence of such a scheme, there can be no practical provision to protect a workman against an employer's inability to pay compensation. In the case of contractors or licensees working under Government it might be possible to require them to insure as a condition of the grant of their contract or license, but it is not possible to include any provision on this account in the Act.

(iii) *To what extent, if any, should recurring payments be substituted for the lump sums at present payable under the Act* ?—There is a great diversity of opinion on the advisability of providing in the Act for recurring payments of compensation. The objection to lump sum payments is that they are likely to be squandered. On the other hand, with migratory labour it would be difficult in some cases to arrange for recurring payments. The Governor in Council would prefer that this matter should be left by the Act to the discretion of the Commissioner who should direct that the compensation should be paid in such form as would appear to be most suitable to the circumstances of the dependants.

(iv) *Should the scales of compensation be enhanced either for the more poorly paid workmen or generally* ?—With a few exceptions those who have been consulted agree that some increase in the rates of compensation is required. Some favour a general increase, while others would restrict the increase to more poorly paid employees. As to the amount of the increase, whether it be general or restricted, there is no consensus of opinion. There has been little practical experience of the working of the Act in Assam, and His Excellency in Council, while recommending that some increase is desirable, would leave to other provinces to suggest the extent to which an increase should be given.

(v) *Should the waiting period be reduced either generally or in the case of those workmen who are disabled for more than ten days, and if so, to what extent* ?—The Governor in Council is definitely opposed to the "dating back" system on the ground that it will inevitably lead to malingering, an evil which cannot be checked on account of the lack of an adequate medical staff in this province. Any serious reduction in the waiting period would certainly lead to an increase in cases, but that is a less serious evil. The Governor in Council would suggest that the Act should provide for a waiting period of not less than a week with the proviso that, in the case of permanent disablement, compensation should be payable from the date on which the disablement arose.

(vi) *Should the list of relatives entitled to claim compensation be enlarged* ?—In order to meet the difficulties which the Government of India have mentioned in paragraph 8 of their letter, the Governor in Council would suggest that the following words should be added to the definition of "dependant" given in section 2 (1) (*d*) of the Act :—"any other relative who proves to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he or she was actually dependent on the deceased workman". This, with the discretion which the Commissioner now enjoys regarding the distribution of the compensation, will enable him to award the compensation to the persons who are most fitted to receive it. The objection to the proposal is that it will involve more work for the Commissioner, but that cannot be avoided.

(vii) *Should proof of dependence be required in order to enable a relative to claim compensation* ?—If the suggestion made above be accepted, it will be unnecessary to include in the Act any further provision requiring proof of dependence to be given.

(viii) *Should the compensation payable vary with the number of dependants and with the extent of their dependence on the deceased workman* ?—The Governor in Council is opposed to the suggestion that compensation should vary with the number of dependants and the extent of their dependence. Wages do not vary with the number of the workman's dependants, and there is no reason why an employer's liability for

compensation should vary with the number of his workman's dependants or the extent of their dependence. Moreover the adoption of any such provision would make employers chary of employing any man with a large number of dependants, a result which is greatly to be deprecated.

(ix) *Should section 12 of the Act be amended*—(a) *so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the person directly employing the workmen in every case, or* (b) *so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the principal, or* (c) *in any other manner* ?—The Governor in Council would prefer that the Act should impose the liability in all cases on the principal, leaving him to protect himself by special contracts with his contractor or sub-contractor. This would simplify the working of the Act and, as the principal is in a position to protect himself, it can cause no injury to him. There should of course be a proviso as in sub-clause (4) of section 12 that where the accident occurred elsewhere than on or about the premises of the principal, the person immediately employing the workmen shall be liable and not the principal.

(x) *Should any penalty be provided in the Act for failure to comply with the provisions of section* 16 ?—The Act should certainly provide a penalty for failure to submit returns. Prosecutions under section 176 of the Indian Penal Code would not often be successful, and the provision of a penalty in the Act itself would be the only effective means of securing the prompt submission of returns.

(xi) *Should employers be required to submit returns of accidents in respect of which compensation has not been paid and if so, to what accidents should this provision apply* ?—It is clearly desirable that returns of all accidents, whether compensation has been paid or not, should be submitted so that the Commissioner and the Government may be in a position to judge of the extent to which insured persons succeed in getting compensation. To meet the difficulty referred to by the Government of India in paragraph 12 of their letter, the Governor in Council would suggest that employers should be required to submit returns of all accidents "arising out of and in the course of employment or suffered otherwise by an employee or occurring on the employer's premises." This would include accidents for which the employer might not be liable, and the inclusion of such accidents in the return would not therefore be an admission of liability by the employer. There might be a proviso that no accident of which the victim returned to work within the waiting period need be included.

(xii) *Should a dependant claiming compensation be relieved of the necessity of approaching the employer for the settlement of his claim* ?—For the reasons given by the Government of India in paragraph 13 of their letter His Excellency in Council agrees that a dependant should not be required to approach the employer first before applying to the Commissioner for the settlement of his claim.

(xiii) *What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that dependants who may have valid claims for compensation do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights* ?—There is a strong body of opinion in this province in favour of the proposal that the Act should provide for some means of ensuring that dependants do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights. Of the alternative methods suggested by the Government of India some favour one, some another and some a combination of two or more. The Governor in Council does not attach much weight to the argument that a Commissioner will be regarded as a partisan if he initiates proceedings. Magistrates initiate proceedings, but they are not suspect on that account, and His Excellency in Council can see no valid objection to a Commissioner being given power to initiate proceedings. Employers should be compelled to furnish returns of all fatal accidents, showing whether compensation had been or would be deposited or not and, if not, giving reasons why liability was not accepted. The Commissioner should then be authorised to initiate proceedings at once in any case in which there appeared to be grounds for holding that the employer was liable. In practice there would be little difference between the Commissioner's initiating the proceedings and his informing the dependants of their rights, especially in this country where the people concerned are generally illiterate and ignorant. Moreover if the Commissioner is empowered to initiate proceedings, much time will be saved. The Governor in Council also recommends that the Commissioner should be authorised to initiate proceedings on the information furnished by any Inspector of Factories or Mines without the necessity of a formal complaint by the Inspector.

(xiv) *Should employers be required to maintain a register of relatives of their workmen* ?—If employers maintain a register showing the names of the relatives of their workmen, the working of the Act would undoubtedly be simplified, but the Governor in Council does not consider that it is feasible with the existing conditions of labour to require all employers to maintain such a register. Where an employer is required by any law in force to maintain a register of his employees, he might be required by a provision in this Act to include in such register the names of the workmen's nearest relatives. Beyond that it would not be practicable to go in any legal enactment. Employers however should be encouraged as far as possible to keep a record of the relatives of their workmen.

(xv) *Should Commissioners be empowered to call on employers depositing inadequate compensation for fatal accidents to make a further deposit* ?—On this point alone the opinions received are unanimous, and the Governor in Council agrees that the Act should authorise the Commissioner to call on employers to make a further deposit if they deposit inadequate compensation for a fatal accident.

(xvi) *Should provision be made for the suspension of distribution by the Commissioner pending the disposal of an appeal against his decision* ?—Logically the Act should undoubtedly provide for the suspension of the distribution of compensation pending the disposal of an appeal. Provision however must be made to prevent unnecessary hardship to dependants, as an appeal may pend for a long time. The Governor in Council would therefore insert the proviso that the Commissioner should be authorised to make payments as subsistence allowances in special cases where he found this necessary to prevent hardship. Any sum so paid pending an appeal would be irrecoverable if the employer won his appeal, but that cannot be avoided. The indigent and helpless must not be deprived of all means of subsistence while an appeal is pending.

THE SURMA VALLEY BRANCH, INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.

Note on the Tea Industry in the Surma Valley.—The Surma Valley Branch, Indian Tea Association, covers the two contiguous Tea Districts of Cachar and Sylhet and represents 90 per cent. of the area under tea in the Surma Valley.

The Tea District of Cachar.—This district is comprised of 177 plantations occupying a gross area of 283,501 acres, of which 56,965 acres are planted with tea, of the remainder a considerable portion has been taken up in small plots by the coolie for his own rice, sugarcane and other cultivation, the rest is either pasture land, or still unreclaimed jungle.

The Tea District of Sylhet.—This district is comprised of 157 plantations occupying a gross area of 315,495 acres, of which 89,723 acres are planted with tea, the rest being jungle, pasture and cultivated land, as in Cachar.

Labour.—Immigrants from the tea garden recruiting areas pass through the debarkation depot at Goalundo (Bengal).

The total population living on tea garden land in the Surma Valley numbers 323,329, of which 178,445 are employees—the others being children and dependants.

The birth and death rate per mille in 1927–28 was 31·73 and 18·66 respectively.

Employees of the tea plantations cultivate for their own profit 49,887 acres of land, 40,641 acres of which they hold as tenants of gardens at a very nominal rental, and the remainder they hold direct from Government or other landholders. In addition to these figures, ex-tea garden coolies have opened out and cultivated 35,698 acres as settlement holders under Government, and 12,229 acres as sub-tenants.

The relations between employer and employees are of a cordial nature, and there has been no serious trouble for several years, although there have been a few petty and abortive strikes, but these can in no way be attributed to the management of the gardens.

Production of Tea.—The average production of tea per acre in 1928 was :—

Cachar	478 lbs.
Sylhet	536 lbs.

The average outturn is considerably lower than in other tea producing districts, and the teas being of an inferior quality, realize lower prices ; this is probably due to less favourable climatic and topographical conditions. These two factors of low outturn and low price undoubtedly cause the fluctuations of the market to be acutely felt in the Surma Valley.

With regard to the schedule issued by you, this branch has been in collaboration with Calcutta, and finds itself in entire agreement with the written statement which will be submitted to you by the Chairman, Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, and therefore it is considered any recapitulation by this branch is unnecessary.

THE ASSAM OIL COMPANY, LIMITED.

This company is engaged in the winning, refining and marketing of mineral oil and has been operating in this district for 30 years. Geographically it is not well situated owing to the long and expensive railway lead to markets, and until nine

years ago development was consequently hampered. Dating from a change of management in 1920, and more particularly from 1926, its activities have increased very materially, not on account of the immediate profitableness of the undertaking but because the new directors decided to find capital to develop the properties on a bigger scale with a view to eventual profitableness and also with a view to keeping pace in the matter of housing, sanitation, anti-malarial measures, water supply, education and the like amenities for labour in the developing period that must intervene before any profit can be realized. In preliminary illustration of the policy adopted it may be stated that with the exception of a few mat walled lines built during the kerosene rate war all quarters provided for employees of whatever grade are "pucca"; the directors in June, 1927, sanctioned further expenditure of Rupees four lakhs for this purpose, of which the unexpended balance (Rs. 83,675 at date) will be used by March, 1930. A water flush sanitation scheme, to cost Rs. 120,000, for all cooly lines, was sanctioned in 1928, and during the current year the laying of pipes and construction of septic tanks has been proceeding, expenditure to date being Rs. 97,500. This scheme will be in operation by the end of the current cold season. Water is supplied from artesian wells and education is free.

In general, plans are in hand for keeping pace with the growing population's requirements. The company now employs about 8,000, men 300 women and 200 boys.

I.—Recruitment.

1. *Origin of Labour.*—

Bengal	2,450
Assam	1,670
Nepal	1,000
United Provinces	1,200
Bihar and Orissa	50
Central Provinces	100
Chota Nagpur	140
Madras	20
Bombay	4
Punjab	350
Manipur	21
Darjeeling	32
China	2

These figures will of course vary somewhat from time to time. This shows the distribution of origins on our 1928 list.

2. It is estimated that about 50 per cent. of the Assamese and 25 per cent. of the Nepalis return to their villages every year in April and May. About 25 per cent. of the Chittagonians return yearly but at no fixed period.

The remainder of the men return to their homes for a few months every three or four years.

3. Applicants for work apply to the Labour Bureau, except in the case of a few skilled specialists men are not recruited from outside the oilfields.

7. Unemployment has never been a problem since for many years the company's activities have been extending.

Unemployment at any time would merely be the result of reduction in numbers of construction labour when some extension work is completed, or alternatively due to the temporary presence of applicants coming by rail to look for work.

8. (i) Owing to the recent growth of the company no useful figures can be given of the relation of length of service among workmen to numbers at present employed. It has been observed that skilled labour stays in many cases for many years, while cooly labour is migratory—frequently staying not more than six months. When coolies become even semi-skilled and by a little experience or ability obtain particular jobs there is a tendency to stay for a year or so.

(ii) With the exception of a few Nagas, who come in yearly for work as jungle clearers, and Noonias, also seasonal visitors, as earth workers, no casual labour is employed by the Assam Oil Company.

(iii) *Absenteeism.*—(*a*) The desire to go back to one's own country and relatives after making some money. This applies chiefly among semi-skilled labour and Nepali coolies whose home country is very distant.

(*b*) The seasonal call for the cultivation of family land, in the case of those whose homes are not very far distant. This occurs about May and November. About 25 per cent. only of absentees return after varying periods.

(*c*) No statistics available.

II.—Staff Organization.

12. Senior staff is engaged from the United Kingdom. Subordinate staff is engaged locally—sundry posts are held by, for example, Indian trained chemists.

13. *Relations between Staff and rank and file.*—Contented.

14. (i) In the refinery and workshops timekeeping is carried out through the common system of hanging metal tokens on a board when going to and coming from work. This is supervised and checked, and time-sheets prepared by clerks under the control of departmental heads.

In the oilfields, which is an unenclosed area, men are checked at work by clerks under the control of departmental heads.

The whole is checked by the accounts department.

(ii) Each man's wages, as calculated from the time-sheet, is counted out by the wages section of our accounts department (they are separate from the timekeepers) and put into a tin box. This tin box has a number corresponding with the man's number on the pay-sheet and with a pay-out token which is handed out to the man on pay day by the European under whom he works; the latter has the wages sheet of his department. Pay out takes place under the supervision of a European accountant and the head of the man's department.

15. (i) Certain contracts for construction work are given out to local contractors and are carried out by contractors' own labour. Also a certain amount of transport work is undertaken by a contractor.

(ii) All the company's operations in connection with the winning and treatment of oil are carried out by the company's staff; only small auxiliary work, e.g., building quarters and transport, is contracted out.

(iii) Control is exercised by the company's engineers to see that the work is properly carried out. Some contractors' coolies are housed in company's quarters. All are given free medical attention by the company, and all use the company's water supply. Working conditions are to all intents and purposes the same for the contractor's men as for the company's men.

III.—Housing.

16. *Extent to which Housing is Provided.*—(i) *By employers.*—Over 70 per cent. of the company's employees are accommodated in company's quarters.

(ii) *By Government or other public agency.*—Nil.

(iii) *By private landlords.*—The village adjoining the oilfield is small and little rented accommodation is available.

(iv) Some workers have settled in houses built by themselves on waste land belonging to the company.

18. (i) As far as has been economically possible quarters have been built to suit the various classes they are intended to house.

(ii) The majority of the company's quarters are single storied and built of brick, with brick drains round them and with due regard to airiness, light and drainage.

(iii) Sweepers are allotted to each barrack area and the conservancy is under the supervision of the medical officer. Water is supplied by means of stand pipes to all barrack areas.

19. All company's quarters are fully occupied and workers who live outside are eager to secure accommodation in company's quarters.

20. All company's quarters are rent free.

21. There is no subletting. The workmen of other employers, apart from the small amount of contractor's labour mentioned in 15 (iii) do not occupy our quarters. There has been no trouble about discharged men leaving company's quarters.

IV.—Health.

23. (i) During the period 1926 to date the mortality rate among company labour and those of others in the station with whom our medical organization came into touch was 7 per 1,000.

(ii) The ascertainable birth-rate was 3·3 per 1,000, and infant mortality (under 2 years) 0·5 per 1,000. There is no statutory registration system in force and our figures cover only our whole labour force, contractors' labour, and others who seek medical attention or whose need for it is made known.

(iii) (*a*) In the fields the men generally work in the open, but drilling well derricks provide as much shelter against sun and rain as working conditions permit. Refinery and workshops are newly built, are light and airy, and come under the Factories Act.

(*b*) None of the company's work is done in the men's homes.

24. (i) The company employs a whole-time European medical officer, with a staff of five Indian doctors and 22 dressers and compounders. There is an hospital with ample accommodation and two dispensaries for the treatment of out-patients. Medicines and medical attention are given by the company free of charge. All these facilities are available to contractors' labour.

(ii) Nothing is provided by the Government.

(iii) Three dais are on the hospital staff.

(iv) *By other agencies.*—Nothing.

25. (i) Employees in general avail themselves of our medical facilities with great readiness, although a few have some hesitation about becoming in-patients.

(ii) The female population is small. A few become in-patients in hospital, but generally medicines are sought for them by their husbands.

26 (*a*) (i) Latrines are provided in the refinery and workshops. Field workers are seldom employed in any one place. The fields are surrounded by jungle and men generally go there.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Available.

(*b*) (i) Latrines are provided in all barrack areas. An automatic water-flush system is now being installed.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Stand pipes in all barrack areas.

(iii) Married quarters are supplied with bathing places. Stand pipes with cement washing places are provided in the barrack areas.

29. (i) Industrial diseases are not found.

(ii) A review of our medical records from the year 1926 to date gives returns as follows :—

Cholera	Nil.
Choleraic diarrhœa	10 cases per annum. Mortality 25 per cent.
Malaria	9,000 cases per annum, each separate attack counted as one case.
Hookworm	12 cases per annum. These are serious ; we have no indication of prevalence of mild or early cases.
Dysentery	500 cases per annum.
Blackwater fever	3 in whole period—*1 fatal.*
Plague	Nil.
Typhoid and para-typhoid	12 cases per annum.

30. *Sickness Insurance.*—In principle full pay is given whilst in hospital, half-pay whilst under treatment as out-patients and all medical treatment is free. The full-pay period is 2 months (half-pay being given thereafter for 4 months) in the case of employees of service over five years. The periods are halved in the case of employees under 5 years' service.

These generous terms were given at a time when the district was considered essentially unhealthy and although health conditions generally have since been greatly improved, the terms have not been changed. It is unlikely that any system of sickness insurance would confer greater benefits overall on our workers, and in the meantime we consider it undesirable to introduce such a system.

V.—Welfare.

32. *Extent of Welfare Work*—(i) *By employer.*—A European Labour Superintendent is employed by the company. He receives complaints from the men and investigates their grievances.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—Nil.

34. (i) *Provision of Rèfreshments, Shelters and Crêches.*—Nil.

(ii) *Provision for Physical Culture, Recreation, and Amusements.*—An Indian club has been provided by the company for staff of clerical and similar grades, for indoor games and amateur theatricals.

Sports grounds have been provided by the company for all Indians wishing to play cricket and football. Football is becoming popular.

36. *Provision of Educational Facilities by Employers*—(i) *For adult workers*—Nil.

(ii) *For half-time workers.*—We employ no men on half-time.

(iii) *For workers' children.*—Two schools are provided by the company, one for boys and one for girls. A staff of 7 teachers is employed.

(iv) *Extent to which used.*—Attendances for a long time were not encouraging, but recently advantage has been taken of the educational facilities provided and there are now about 90 boys and 40 girls attending.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. The company voluntarily applies all the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act to all men in its employ who are injured at work.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. (i) Normally shift workers work an eight-hour day for six days a week. There are some processes in the refinery which are continuous and for which special arrangements are made.

Day workers work an 8½-hour day and 7 hours on Saturdays or 49½ hours a week.

(ii) Shift workers are not called upon to work overtime. Day workers are only called upon to work overtime when the completion of some job is necessary.

(iii) Normally there is no spread over. In the event of a breakdown in the refinery, which is unusual, it is estimated that at the outside only 10 per cent. of the workers would be in any way affected.

56. The normal week is 6 working days.

60. (iv) Four holidays a year with full pay.

61. Sunday is the normal day of rest.

D.—*Other Establishments.*

78. (i) Fields shift workers work an eight-hour day and a 7-day week. Day workers work an 8½-hour day and a 7-hour Saturday, making 49½ hours week.

(ii) Shift workers are not called upon to work overtime. Day workers only work overtime in order to enable some important job to be completed.

(iii) In the oilfields there is practically no spreadover.

79. *Days worked per week.*—Shift workers, 7 days. Day workers, 6 days.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The average cooly wage is 14 annas a day. Semi-skilled and skilled workers obtain up to Rs. 3–8 a day according to their work and ability.

(ii) We understand that bustee labourers ordinarily earn 12 annas per day.

. . . . . .

102. Overtime is paid at the rate of straight time based on an eight-hour day Sunday work is normally paid for at the rate of pay and a half, but in some departments is paid for at double rate.

106. (i) The fines collected in 1928 amounted to Rs. 3,930–8, but this consisted mainly of the value of cooly beds not returned by workmen at the time of leaving the company's service.

Coolies on engagement are issued with beds. If these beds are not returned when a man leaves the company's employ, a sum of Rs. 6 per bed is collected from the man to whom the bed was issued. There are no other deductions.

(ii) Fines are kept in a special account and are used at the discretion of the general manager to assist objects of interest to the men.

(iii) We see no necessity for legislation.

107. (i) *Periods for which wages paid.*—Monthly.

(ii) Wages are paid from the 7th to the 15th day of each month depending on the man's work and department.

(iii) We see no necessity for legislation.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept in a suspense account and are paid to workmen if and when claimed at some later date.

. . . . . .

109. (i) Men on rates of pay of not less than Rs. 30 a month may join a provident fund scheme under which the employee subscribes up to one month's pay in the year and the company contributes a similar sum. Interest at 5 per cent. per annum is paid on the balance at each member's credit.

110. *Annual or Other Leave.*—(i) *Extent to which taken by workers.*—Figures are not available as regards workers on daily rates.

(ii) *Extent to which countenanced and/or assisted by employers.*—Any man may apply for leave when he wishes and his department makes every effort to spare him. Men returning within 6 weeks are sure of reinstatement and this is generally extended for a reasonable further period if the employee shows cause for it.

Annual leave with pay is only granted to a limited class such as clerks, drillers, and others on a consolidated rate of not less than Rs.100 a month.

(iii) *Extent and consequential loss to worker of back lying wages.*—All wages are paid up to the employee before going on leave.

(iv) *Desirability of fair wages clause in public contracts.*—Desirable.

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Mr. C. K. BESBORUAH, BOLOMA TEA ESTATE, NAKACHARI ASSAM.

I. Recruitment.

7 (1) Under the existing circumstances in Assam tea gardens, there is no possibility of unemployment of labourers in the near future. If however taking it for granted that a tea garden abandons much of its tea areas, the labourers are not thrown off from employments for the sake of retrenchment as they are either employed in improving the garden lands or opening up new areas for cultivation, for cultivating paddy for the garden and for themselves.

Of the gardens which do not possess enough paddy lands to provide for the coolies, the case will be quite different, but even if such gardens stop work for special reasons the thrown-off coolies will get enough employment in other gardens which are in running condition.

(ii) (*a*) Dismissals among labourers are so rare that this can be taken as quite a negligible factor. Any labourer found guilty of doing his work dishonestly forfeits the full or half the wage of the work which rectifies him.

(ii) (*b*) The coolies are at liberty to leave the garden if they are dissatisfied with the management.

(iii) and (iv) When there is no possibility of unemployment in a garden these points do not arise.

8 (ii) In all seasons of the year the coolies living within the garden find enough employment. Over and above these permanent coolies the garden employs casual Assamese workers who come to work in the garden when their own transplantations of paddy and harvest are over.

(iii) (*a* and *b*) When a day's work means a day's income to a coolie, he does not remain absent from his work unless he is sick. He takes leave for a day or half a day to look after the household duties. They take leave to cultivate the paddy lands apportioned to them by the garden. They take leave to see a friend or relative in a distant basty which happens once or twice a year.

(*c*) They lose the wages of the days they remain on leave. Those who remain absent for serious sickness are kept in the garden hospital and are fed from the garden until they are fit.

II. Staff Organization.

10. The garden is divided into several blocks which are given different numbers. The coolies are divided to work in particular blocks under different sirdars who are promoted from the coolies. Several coolie sirdars under one mohurer. Over all mohurers there is one head mohurer.

Checking of the works of the coolies is done by the sirdars under the supervision of the mohurer. All mohurers submit their reports to the head mohurer after the completion of the days work assigned to them.

The head mohurer supervises the work of all the mohurers. The manager in consultation with the head mohurer ascertains the multifarious indoor and outdoor works of the garden and thus assigns the number of men required for each work.

The Ganti mohurer remaining present in such consultation, notes down the work and the number of men required for each work at the suggestion of the manager.

Thus works are distributed within the garden. The manager personally checks all the works. The office is managed by a few clerks.

11 and 12. Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.

Intelligent and competent men among the coolies are selected to become sirdars and chowkidars, who manage the men working under them.

Literate young local men are appointed on probation as mohurers. If they can show competency in managing the sirdars and their men, they are appointed permanently.

Assistant managers are generally appointed from men having previous experience in garden works. If the managers are not proprietors of the gardens they are appointed from men having previous experience in other gardens.

Competent head mohurers are often promoted to assistant-managership and managership.

12 (ii) In my last statement I have shown how sirdars and chowkidars are appointed from the coolies. The reason of their not being appointed as mohurers and in the clerical line, is their inability to read and write which is essentially required for such posts.

But their promotion in other lines is kept always open. In my workshop two ordinary coolies are now driving and making small repairs to engines and other machinery which they learnt here. My motor-car and lorries are driven by coolies. Moreover there are coolie smiths, carpenters in my garden earning higher wages.

13 (i) Relations between the staff and the labourers is cordial. The manager is not only the paymaster of the coolies but settles all minor disputes through a coolie panchayat for which they are not to go to the law courts.

14 (i) The head officer in charge of the workshop is the timekeeper.

(ii) How and by whom wages actually are paid to workers.

The manager or other head of the staff pays the labourers weekly, i.e., on the local market day, and the staff on the 1st of every month.

III. Housing.

16 (i) Within the garden area a high piece of land has been selected to erect houses in separate rows for the coolies at the expense of the garden.

18 (i) and (ii) The quarters for bachelors are separated from family men.

For the bachelors a room is given for cooking and sleeping. Two men live in a room and sleep on wooden bedsteads supplied by the garden. Often the men mess together from 2 to 3 according to their own convenience. They husk their corn with a dekhi.

For a family a room is provided for cooking and sleeping from the garden. Bedsteads are supplied to them. They husk their corn in the dekhi.

No rent is charged from the occupants of the houses by the garden.

The coolies here rear pigs and goats for which they erect enclosures at their own expense. Bamboos and branches of trees required for such enclosures are given free from the garden forests.

The coolies are allowed to keep cows for which sheds are erected by the garden away from the coolie lines, where the cattle are kept at night. Cattle shed cleaners and cattle boys are appointed to look after the cattle whose pay is paid by the owners of the cattle. So that the caretakers are properly and regularly paid, the garden authorities look after it.

The coolies sell the milk of their own cows and use their bullocks in tilling the lands given to them by the garden for their paddy cultivation.

The coolie families who have permanently settled have been given lands to erect houses and to cultivate vegetables and other fruit trees according to their wants. They live in basties, away from the coolie lines. These bastiwallas are not to pay any rent of their "bari" to the garden, and they utilize the products of the soil occupied by them. They have cows, pigs, goats, pigeons, ducks, and fowls, etc., of their own. I mention here of a coolie family bastiwalla which earns over Rs. 300 annually by selling goats' and cows' milk.

The garden possesses much paddy lands. One pura of such lands (a little more than an acre) is given to each coolie or coolie family to grow paddy for their own use by the garden at a special concession rate, which is Rs. 4 to Rs. 8 per pura.

The coolies who have no bullocks of their own sublet such lands to other people in "adhia" (half-half) system.

(iii) On both extremities of a row of coolie houses lamp-posts are provided at the expense of the garden.

The garden has excavated a tank for drinking purposes for the coolies. They wash their clothes in a brook which, however, dries up in the dry season. They are not allowed to drink the brook water.

20. In coolie lines erected by the garden the coolies live there rent free.

In basti lands belonging to the garden, where the permanent settlers live, the basti lands are given free of rent.

N.B.—But paddy lands given for cultivation to the basty coolies are given at a special concession rate, which is Rs. 4 to Rs. 8 per pura.

21. Under the existing system in tea gardens no subletting of houses ever takes place.

Eviction is so rare that this is a negligible factor.

22. Moral effect on the workers under the above housing conditions has proved satisfactory.

IV.—Health.

23. (i) Total average mortality from the figures of last two years, i.e., *1927 and* 1928, is 17 out of 740 coolies.

(ii) Birth-rate and infant mortality; methods of registration; average birth-rate is 18 for 1927 and 1928; information of births and deaths are sent to the Deputy Commissioner's office at Jorhat.

(iii) (*a*) At working places they take fried rice or " chara " and tea is supplied to them free from the garden at mid-day.

(*b*) At home in the morning and evening they take rice, dal, vegetables, and fish on market days. They also take ducks, fowl, and sometimes goats, on market days.

24. All the patients within the garden are well looked after by the garden doctors, who remain in charge of an hospital with a full stock of medicine. The patients are not charged for the treatment nor for the diets given to them in their long illness.

26. (i) The coolies go to the jungles to answer the call of nature.

(ii) There are two tanks from which they take water for drinking purposes.

(iii) For bathing and washing purposes they use the brook water and the water from the tank in front of their lines.

29. Cholera among the coolies here is rare. They often suffer from malaria in June, July and August, to prevent which quinine is administered to all the coolies twice a week.

I believe that amongst my coolies there is no case of hookworm.

30. (iii) The coolies do not object here to take western forms of treatment for their diseases.

31. (i) A woman is given leave of two months before and three months after childbirth. The husband or her children are to look after her during this period.

When a woman brings her child to show to the manager she is given Rs. 5 only.

(iii) Some sort of legislation is urgently required to ameliorate the condition of such women.

VII.—Safety.

43 and 46. The engine room and other dangerous machinery is always kept strongly barricaded, as required by the factory regulations for the prevention of accidents.

44. Accidents in Boloma garden are nil.

45. Prevailing factory rules in Assam tea gardens are quite sufficient to guard against accidents. No new suggestions are required.

48. As the medical officer of the garden always remains in the garden the first-aid can be given to all patients.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. (i) Though the normal working hours are eight, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an interval of one hour at mid-day, the coolies do not work more than 6½ hours generally.

(ii) *Actual.*—In job works only the men are to work for full eight hours.

(iii) Spreadover, i.e., relation between hours worked and hours during which the worker is on call. All the men and women congregate in front of the workshop nearly half an hour before 8 a.m. every morning to learn from the Ganti mohurer their day's duty.

In the withering room, rolling house, drying room, and fermenting room the working hours are not bound by any hard and fast rules, as the leaves cannot be sent to the factory until they are well withered, which depends solely on weather conditions. If for special reasons the machines are worked at night, extra hands are employed for such works for which extra wages are paid.

56. Per week they work for six days.

57. *Effect of 60 hours' Restrictions.*—As 48 is the total number of maximum hours a coolie is to work in a garden this question does not arise.

58. *Effect of Daily Limit.*—For the limitation put on the 8 hours for working per day a labourer can look after his household duties.

59. There is no necessity or possibility of reducing the working hours per diem.

60. (i) (*a*) In hot days the labourers take one hour's rest at mid-day for taking light refreshment. In the winter season they do the same. (*b*) The labourers go out for work taking their morning meal.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—No need.

(iii) *Suitability of hours during which factory is working.*—Cannot be regulated, as it depends on the time when the green leaves are well withered to be sent to the factory.

(iv) On the market day of each week they get a holiday. Moreover, they get one day for Durgapuja and two days for Fagua as holidays within a year. They have special pujas of their own for which they take leave.

61. (i) Friday, which is the local market day of the week, is the day of rest for the coolies.

D.—*Other Establishments.*

(*a*) *Plantations.*—Actual working hours in a tea garden varies from normal hours for the following reasons, e.g., a labourer who finishes hoeing 30 × 1 nals of earth before mid-day or before 5 p.m., gets the full day's wage, and he is at liberty to go home. But in most cases without going home he tries to earn more wages by doing more work.

(ii) Women are used in plucking green leaves. They work eight hours in the garden with an interval of an hour at mid-day for light refreshment. As they pluck leaves on ticca system, the more leaves they can pluck the more money they can earn.

X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

82. No children are employed either in the garden, factory or in the garden. Only children between the age of 7 to 10 accompany their parents to help them in plucking, weeding, manuring, etc., which are suitable to their constitution. It is at the option of the parents to take their children to the garden to help them in their ticca works.

N.B.—In most other gardens children are employed in different works.

83. The existing system of employing women for plucking leaves without mixing them up with men has proved satisfactory.

Women are not allowed to work in factories. Only in the stalking room situated in one extremity of the factory, weak and convalescent women are engaged to sort out the stalks from the manufactured tea.

84. (i) Hours and intervals of work of children depend entirely at the will of their parents, whom they help in their ticca works. The parents give them rest whenever they find their children tired.

(ii) Seven is the minimum and ten is the maximum age for such children.

85. *Double Employment of Children.*—No.

86. Young adults are employed in grazing and looking after the cattle. In the factory they are employed in the leaf house to spread the green leaves and to collect them for the rolling machine. These young adults are given every opportunity to learn other indoor and outdoor works.

88. The open air ticca works, such as plucking, weeding, light pruning and manuring for women are rather conducive to their health.

XII.—Wages.

96. (i) An adult coolie gets Rs. 9–12 and a woman gets Rs. 8–2–0 per month at Boloma T.E. At the above rates a man gets 6 annas and a woman or a young adult gets 5 annas per diem besides extra ticca wages.

Every man, woman or young adult to earn these wages must finish some measured works fixed by the garden. If he can finish the fixed works allotted to him before time, the labourer begins extra work, for which an extra wage is paid. Thus a labourer can earn double wages per diem. Those who work in the workshop their wages are fixed.

(ii) In the surrounding agricultural villages a few cultivators engage labourers temporarily during transportation of paddy and in harvesting time at 8 annas per diem, which induces the garden coolies to leave off their permanent work of the garden. But such seasonal works being very limited, only a few coolies living in basties can find such employments.

97. (i) and (ii) To state whether the present wage of a coolie has appreciably increased from their old system of monthly pay, is difficult to state.

In old times an adult coolie used to get Rs. 6 and a woman Rs. 5 per month of 26 or 27 days; that is, a man earned 3 annas 9 pice and a woman 3 annas per diem. According to the prevailing system, the old system of whole-day work of eight hours has been changed to contract or unit works. As for instance other gardens pay 4 annas for a full hazira to a coolie if he hoes 30 by 1 nal or 35 by 1 nal. In my garden a man is required to hoe 30 by 1 nal of land to earn a full hazira of 6 annas.

An average man, provided he is healthy and strong, if he works honestly, and if that work is checked honestly, can hoe a full hazira of area. If he hoes less than the hazira area of land he earns proportionately less.

I should like specially to mention that we must not take the daily earnings of a man who can finish 1½ or 2 haziras daily as the average income of a coolie, because though there are such coolies they are to be counted as exceptions, and exceptions should always be avoided in showing the average income.

As an average able-bodied coolie cannot hoe more than 30 by 1 nal of land, he earns 4 annas per diem, i.e., Rs. 6-8 annas per month, which is a little higher than the pay of the old system.

As regards a woman, as only fine plucking is allowed in my garden, a woman gets 9 pies per seer of plucked green leaves. Taking eight seers, which is the average plucking for a woman per day, she earns Rs. 9-12 annas per month. Thus a woman often earns more than an average man in the plucking season.

(iii) Relation to prices and cost of living (pre-war and post-war). The abnormal rise of prices in the bare necessaries of life has, however, far counterbalanced the little rise in wages of a coolie family at the present time.

While dealing with this point we must not ignore the expenditure incurred by a coolie in liquor. If a liquor shop remains within his reach, a coolie spends more in liquor than he should and thus leaving only a small fraction of his weekly or fortnightly wages to buy the necessaries of life.

I read a report of a witness given before a "Commission" in which he stated that liquor to a coolie meant work. If the gentleman would have spoken honestly he would certainly have stated that liquor to a coolie means his starvation from week to week and the tattered clothes he wears.

The local market day is the payment day for each garden all over Assam. On that day he drinks in the market, and what is more, it is difficult to bring him out of his house on the next day for work for the previous day and night's reaction.

When I and all other managers of the gardens have this bitter experience, I cannot realize what induced the gentleman to state before the "Commission" that liquor to a coolie meant work.

The nearest liquor shop is situated some seven miles off from my Boloma garden and consequently the coolies find little opportunity to spend their wages recklessly in liquor. The coolies here do thus spend the major portion of their earnings in buying the necessaries of life.

The Boloma labourers are far better off than my coolies at Borsoikata T.E. where the coolies spend most of their income in the liquor shop, which is situated within 1½ miles of the garden. The coolies in Boloma do not trouble me much for advance wages, whereas my Borsoikata coolies take too much advance wage.

We must never expect the coolies to be provident until they are given proper education, which is a far remote thing.

Under the prevailing rates of wages in tea gardens, it is my honest conviction that the present wages are quite inadequate for the average coolies to keep their body and mind together. They cannot make any saving either for evil days or for the education of their children.

Single men and couples without children to help them are the greatest sufferers, as no one can help them during their days of absence when no wages are earned.

98. I have never seen a coolie send money to his home. If he can accumulate a little sum he settles in a basti permanently.

99. As most of the shopkeepers give short weight to the ignorant coolies, I give them paddy or rice only from my go-down to last them for a week, the price of which is deducted from their wages.

100. Wages in Boloma garden:—Adult coolie (outdoor) 6 annas per diem; young adult 5 annas per diem; woman 5 annas per diem. Besides, they are engaged in ticca works, when they earn more.

106. (i) A labourer is fined for dishonesty and carelessness, and the fine in each case does not exceed a full day's wage.

(ii) Deductions ranging from 2 annas to 8 annas are made for advances taken or for small loans taken on emergent cases.

107. (i) In my garden, wages are paid weekly, which is a safeguard against their improvidence and short-sightedness in spending recklessly their earnings.

(ii) On every seventh day, wages are paid for the preceding six working days.

(iii) It is essentially necessary to make legislation to pay the coolies weekly, and not fortnightly or monthly. This method should not be left to the discretion of the garden authorities, as I am sorry to state that there are instances of abusing this " discretion ".

ASSAM BRANCH, INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION, DIBRUGARH.

The Assam or Brahmaputra Valley.—This valley consists of the following six districts :—Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. There are few tea gardens in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, the majority being in the remaining four districts.

The Assam Branch, Indian Tea Association.—This association was formed on the 29th October, 1889, with a membership representing 76,692 acres of tea. The present membership represents 251,277 acres of tea.

There are 641 tea gardens in the Assam Valley, having a total area of 1,021,640 acres, of which 280,139 acres are under tea cultivation.

The Assam Branch, Indian Tea Association, therefore represents over 89½ per cent. of the total under tea in the Assam Valley.

Labour.—The total tea garden population in the Assam Valley living on tea garden land is 701,892, of whom 400,710 are adults and 301,182 are children.

The birth and death-rates per thousand in 1927–28 were 32·41 and 20·61 respectively.

The land held by labourers still on the garden books in the Assam Valley amounts to 109,791 acres, of which 89,963 acres are held as tenants of the garden at a revenue of Rs. 89,917–9–6, equivalent to 15 annas 11 pies per acre, as compared with the revenue of Rs. 2–4–10 per acre charged by government and Rs. 6–6 annas per acre charged by other landlords.

Apart from the above area the land settled with ex-tea garden coolies by government in the Assam Valley amounts to 316,207 acres.

From a census taken from 107 typical gardens in the Assam Valley with a total adult Labour Force of 99,102, it appears the coolies owned 5,335 buffaloes and 63,936 cattle.

Production and Prices of Tea.—The average out-turn per acre in 1926 was 602 lbs., in 1927, 556 lbs., and in 1928, 609 lbs. The quality and prices vary considerably throughout the Assam Valley owing to soil, climatic conditions and age of the tea.

At the present moment prices have relapsed and are likely to continue to do so, with the result that many concerns are now selling at under cost price.

Major S. L. MITRA, D.P.H., I.M.S., Officiating Director of Public Health, Assam.

The Director of Public Health has no contact with tea gardens. Information as far as available is given below :—

IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Conditions of Workers.*—Tea gardens are the chief industrial concerns in Assam. Registration of births and deaths is compulsory in tea gardens under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901. The population of tea gardens according to the census of 1921 was 915,480. Tea garden managers maintain registers of births and deaths and submit a monthly return to the district civil surgeons through the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer. The Civil Surgeons include tea garden returns in their district monthly returns of vital statistics which are submitted to the Director of Public Health.

The following statement shows deaths and death-rates from the various diseases registered in tea gardens during 1926, 1927 and 1928 :—

Registration of Vital Statistics in Tea Gardens.

Years.	Deaths registered.																	
	Cholera.		Small-pox.		Plague.		Fevers, including *kala azar*.		*Kala azar*.	Dysentery and diarrhœa.		Respiratory diseases.		Injuries, including suicide.		Other causes.		Total mortality.	
	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.
1926	449	·49	128	·14	—	—	3,217	3·51	127	3,220	3·51	3,168	3·46	217	·23	6,599	7·21	16,998	18·57
1927	669	·73	95	·10	—	—	2,640	2·88	124	3,131	3·42	3,429	3·74	169	·18	6,447	7·04	16,580	18·11
1928	381	·42	73	·08	—	—	2,967	3·24	93	2,863	3·13	3,522	3·85	162	·18	6,516	7·12	16,484	18·01

For the purpose of comparison provincial deaths and death-rates from the various diseases for the years 1926, 1927 and 1928 are given below :—

Registration of Vital Statistics among General Population.

	Deaths registered.																	
	Cholera.		Small-pox.		Plague.		Fevers, including *kala azar*.		*Kala azar*.	Dysentery and diarrhœa.		Respiratory diseases.		Injuries, including suicide.		Other causes.		Total mortality.	
Years.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Number.	Ratio per 1,000.
1926	10,275	1·49	4,840	·70	—	—	93,689	13·67	4,176	9,787	1·43	5,300	·77	1,941	·28	31,955	4·66	157,787	23·02
1927	15,392	2·24	5,237	·76	—	—	89,324	13·03	2,859	10,469	1·52	5,658	·82	1,871	·27	32,862	4·79	160,813	23·47
1928	6,915	1·01	8,461	1·23	—	—	89,255	13·03	1,660	8,501	1·24	5,615	·82	1,821	·27	31,289	4·57	151,857	22·16

It will be observed from the above statements that the total death-rates in tea gardens is much lower than that among the general population.

The following statement shows birth-rates and infant mortality rates in tea gardens and in the province of Assam in 1926, 1927 and 1928 :—

	Tea gardens.		Province of Assam.	
	Birth-rate.	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 births.	Birth-rate.	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 births.
1926	29·58	105·06	30·82	181·94
1927	28·78	93·80	30·25	171·35
1928	28·11	94·08	31·24	172·01

The above figures show that the birth-rate being nearly equal, the infant mortality rate is much less in the tea gardens than in the province of Assam generally.

26. Information and advice are given by the Provincial Public Health Department to tea garden managers and their medical officers as to the suitable form of latrines such as septic tanks, aqua privies and pit privies which the gardens might find suitable to instal. The department also give advice in regard to preparation of suitable water-supply schemes.

The water-supply is generally derived from wells and streams and in some cases it is distributed by pipes to the coolie lines.

An adequate supply of water for bathing and washing for the labourers is provided.

Every agent or person appointed by him to accompany emigrants to the destination provides emigrants travelling by train two meals to which they are accustomed. Purest drinking water obtainable is supplied to them in a drum placed in the carriage. The supply is at least one quart for each emigrant and dependant.

Emigrants and dependants are accommodated in third-class carriages especially reserved for them and the number in each carriage does not exceed the regulation number.

At certain stations the trains are met by medical officers to see if the above sanitary provisions are complied with.

They pass through the depots established at suitable places, e.g., Naihati, Goalundo, Gauhati and Tezpur, where they are treated for minor ailments and segregated for infectious diseases.

An emigrant suffering from leprosy is not allowed to proceed to a garden without the approval of the Director of Public Health, Assam. Such permission is not generally granted and the managers are advised to put the patient under treatment in one of the leprosy centres. Emigrants suffering from conjunctivitis are detained in recruiting depot before being despatched to the gardens.

29. The chief prevailing diseases in tea gardens are dysentery, diarrhœa and malaria. *Kala azar* is also prevalent in certain gardens.

The extensive improvements of conservancy arrangements in the coolie lines by the provision of septic tank latrines, aqua privies and various types of pit latrines have of late years materially reduced the mortality from dysentery and diarrhœa. The difficulty which lies in inducing the primitive aboriginal people who form the bulk of the labourers on tea estates to conform to the custom associated with a conservancy system is being gradually overcome.

Anti-malarial schemes have been adopted in some of the important gardens. An expert of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine has studied the condition responsible for the prevalence of malaria in tea gardens and has submitted a report. The garden authorities are fully alive to the extreme necessity for bringing all cases of *kala azar* under treatment and thereby remove the infection. Tea gardens are provided with urea stibamine at wholesale concession rates, in precisely the same manner as the Public Health Department of the province.

Tea gardens employ fully qualified medical officers and well equipped hospitals are provided in which the sick are treated and infectious cases are isolated.

When a garden is declared as unhealthy it is inspected by the civil surgeon and the report is shown to the Director of Public Health.

Intimation of the occurrence of an epidemic disease in villages in the neighbourhood of a tea garden is immediately given to the garden medical officer. Similarly, when an epidemic disease prevails in a garden, it is promptly communicated to the District Civil Surgeon.

MR. F. C. KING, I.C.S., CHAIRMAN ASSAM LABOUR BOARD.

INTRODUCTION.

In this memorandum I have confined myself to those heads of enquiry which have a direct bearing on the subject of recruitment to Assam. Though I have had some opportunities during my tours in Assam, of observing the conditions of employment on the tea gardens, I have refrained from discussing those items in the schedule of subjects which deal with the labour conditions in Assam as I consider these matters are better dealt with by experts who can speak from long and familiar experience than by a casual visitor. In view, however, of the stress I have laid in my note on the lavish expenditure incurred in recruitment, which might, with advantage, have been diverted to an increase of wages, it is only fair to the employer to record my impression that, as a class, tea garden managers have shown themselves very zealous for the health and welfare of their labour forces. All through Assam one finds well-equipped hospitals and improved housing conditions, often in the form of model *bastis*, with an up-to-date water-supply and plots of homestead land for each house. The system of discipline under which the labourer lives is not a strict one. He is free to work or to idle as he chooses, but work is always available for him when he chooses to work. In many gardens arrangements are made for the care and feeding of small children when the mother is absent at her work, and orphan children are looked after till they grow old enough to earn their living. Pregnancy leave on full or half pay is allowed to women for a period of three to six months before and after child-birth. Anti-malarial measures are adopted, often at very considerable cost, and conservancy and sanitary services also receive attention in some localities. Add to this the fact that in many cases the labourer gets rice-fields of his own from the garden, or can take settlement of a farm from Government, and it will not occasion surprise to find that the labour force is on the whole well off happy and contented. There is no doubt that the abolition of penal contracts under Act VI of 1901, and the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, and of Sections 490 and 492 of the Indian Penal Code have had much to do with the improvement of the coolie's position by leaving him free to seek the best market for his labour and by giving an added stimulus to the employer's efforts to retain his services by the offer of better conditions and of employment. The abolition of restrictive labour rules, which is now under contemplation by the tea industry, will contribute further to the progress of the coolie. If to this could be added the diversion of a considerable proportion of the high cost of recruitment into the labourer's wages bill, the lot of the Assam labourer would be hard to beat. Now that the last restrictions on the free movement of labour in Assam are being discarded, the time seems to be appropriate for such a development.

1. *Origin of Labour.*—(i) The labour employed in the Assam tea gardens is unskilled, agricultural labour. Aboriginal labourers make the best settlers in a jungly and mountainous country such as Assam is, and consequently they are most sought after by employers. Mundas, Uraons and Kharias from Chota-Nagpur, Santals from the Santal Parganas, Sawras, Parjas and Godubas from the agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam, Khonds and Gandas from Orissa and Gonds from the central provinces are the pick of the Assam labour force from the tea planter's point of view. These tribes do not, however, supply sufficient labour to go round, so lower caste Hindus and a few Muhammadans from Bihar and Orissa, the central provinces and the united provinces, Bengal, Bombay and Madras have to be recruited to make good the deficiency.

(ii) The chief causes of emigration to Assam are (*a*) Increase of population and consequent pressure on the soil. Junior members of families go out to earn when the ancestral holding becomes insufficient to support all. The choice of Assam in preference to other fields of labour is often determined by the fact that emigrants have friends or relatives who may have obtained land and settled down there. (*b*) Indebtedness is another great stimulant to emigration. (*c*) Other causes which sometimes operate are love of travel and change, domestic disagreements, hopes of obtaining lucrative employment as sardars, famine, etc.

(iii) *Changes in recent years.*—On 5th September, 1923, the whole of the Madras Presidency was thrown open to recruitment for Assam under certain conditions. Since 1919 a system of regularised recruitment has been carried on from the following Feudatory states in accordance with a set of rules called the " Model Rules " framed for the purpose in consultation with the Bihar and Orissa Government and approved by the Government of India : Athgarh, Athmallik, Baud, Beramba, Daspalla, Dhenkanal, Gangpore, Hindol, Khandpara, Kharswan, Keonjhar, Mourbhanj, Narsingpur, Nayagarh, Nilgiri, Pal-Lahera, Patna, Rairakhol, Seraikella, Sonpur, Tigiria and Jashpur.

Recruitment of labour for the Assam tea estates from Bastar State was prohibited with effect from the 5th December, 1924.

2. *Contact with Villages.*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return.*—Home leave, as such, is not ordinarily given to labourers on Assam tea gardens during the period of their employment, but contact is maintained with their home districts through the sardari system, under which a number of labourers is deputed to the recruiting districts each year to recruit fresh labour. These labourers sent down to recruit are called sardars. They are, as a rule, sent to their home districts and spend ordinarily three or four months there before returning to the gardens. On an average, 41,500 sardars are sent to the recruiting districts each year.

Recently a system of short-term recruitment for the tea gardens has sprung up and has proved remarkably successful in Ranchi district. The period of engagement under this system is six months, nine months, one year and sometimes two years.

(ii) *Extent of the permanent labour force.*—It is computed that there are 1,025,221 labourers on the books of tea garden managers in Assam. About four per cent. of these are deputed to the recruiting districts as sardars each year.

3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—(i) *Existing methods.*—Recruitment for Assam is, at present, confined to what is known as the sardari system. A " garden sardar " is defined as " a person employed on an estate and deputed by his employer to engage labourers." The definition is very wide, but, in theory, the sardari system is supposed to be a system of recruitment of labourers by *bona fide* labourers who know the conditions of employment thoroughly and who have been deputed to their home districts to explain the advantages of employment on their garden to their relatives, friends and acquaintances and to recruit those who are willing to emigrate.

(ii) *Possible improvements.*—The sardari system of recruitment is a very restricted form of securing labour, though, in theory at least, it is a very safe one for the labourer. The theory has been explained in the previous paragraph. In actual practice this theory is breaking down. Advantage is being taken of the comprehensive nature of the definition of garden sardar to employ, in increasing numbers, recruiters who cannot conform to the best traditions of sardari recruitment. The scarcity of labour has forced employers to strain the true sardari system by employing unsuitable recruiters, often not genuine labourers, as sardars, and the high commission paid by managers has brought into existence a plentiful supply of petty professional recruiters in the guise of garden sardars. The situation is well summed up in the tour notes of a former chairman of the Assam Labour Board, Mr. Mills, who, from his experience as an Assam Deputy Commissioner and as Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, knows the recruiting problem from both ends. He says :—

"Among the many points which were discussed on the gardens, there are two in particular which I should like to bring to the notice of members : Could not another effort be made to arrive at uniformity, and reduction of the commission paid to sardars ? This question has been raised before but with little effect. Not only does the present system of high bonuses increase cost of recruiting but it gives rise to abuses. It is only too common to come across sardars who are merely professional recruiters. These men draw large sums as commission, and as a rule, recruit very inferior coolies. It is far from uncommon for a man of this type to abscond with all his coolies as soon as he draws his commission and to recruit them again for some other garden and again draw commission. Even where a man is not a professional recruiter when he joins the garden, high commission tends to make him into one. A man who may have been a *bona fide* labourer but who has been lucky in recruiting and has drawn a few hundred rupees in commission naturally looks with scorn on hoeing, and feels that recruiting is his vocation in life. So the professionals increase and flourish, and it would perhaps not be far from the truth to say that whereas in the old days coolies were bought from *arkatis*, managers in many cases now are buying them from their own sardars. This is not real sardari recruiting. The reduced commission would disgust the professional, but I cannot see that a *bona fide* sardar would require very large monetary inducements to go down and bring up his own connections ; and these make the best coolies."

In my inspections of local agencies, I very frequently find instances of garden sardars being sent down to recruit after spending a few days on the garden. Such

men are obviously professional recruiters and not genuine labourers. Not infrequently they are sent to districts other than their home districts. When I inspected Cawnpore agency I found that all the sardars were non-district sardars, i.e., they belonged to districts other than the district in which they were recruiting. In inspecting Basti local agency I found that a very large percentage of the recruitment was reported to have taken place at the railway station.

The break-down of the sardari system shows that it is inadequate to the needs of the industry. Employers are debarred from working through licensed contractors, so they are forced to employ inferior professional recruiters who have gone through the form of being recruited and sent up to Assam as labourers. In addition to being an inferior method of recruitment, this is an unnecessarily expensive one, as the recruiter has first to be brought up as a labourer and then his railway fares and expenses have to be paid to and from the garden, merely to comply with a legal formula which does not protect the recruit. That the system has not led to serious abuses is due, partly to the determination of the Tea Districts Labour Association to insist on clean recruitment, partly to the adequacy of the supervision maintained by the Assam Labour Board, and partly to the fact that professional recruiters of a low type have not as yet been employed to any great extent in the principal recruiting fields, such as Chota Nagpur.

What is needed is a more elastic system of recruitment which will admit other agencies than the garden sardar. It is in this direction that improvement should be sought. The subject is further discussed in paragraph 6.

(iii) *Public employment agencies.*—Public employment agencies have not yet been tried in India, and their suitability for Assam recruitment must be largely a matter for speculation. There is, however, one characteristic of Indian labour, viz., its great mobility which should tend to the success of employment agencies, if established. Labour, which would move through public employment agencies, would have a choice of fields of employment and would naturally select the more attractive. Accordingly, if Assam were to recruit through public employment agencies, it would have to rely on the attractions afforded by the conditions of employment offered, rather than on commissions to recruiters and other such adventitious aid to emigration. In the case of the Assam tea industry, which has been accustomed to spend money freely on the recruitment of its labour, considerable difficulties in the working of public employment agencies might arise from the competition of employers amongst themselves, but it should not be impossible to overcome these difficulties. It certainly would be for the benefit of the industry if a system of well-supervised public employment agencies could contribute to the solution of the Assam labour problem. It would greatly cheapen the cost of securing labour and would at the same time be a help and a safeguard to the labourer. On the other hand, in the absence of any experience of how they would work, public employment agencies could only be regarded as an experiment, and nothing would justify the staking of the supply of labour to an important industry like tea on the chances of such an experiment proving successful. At most, the experiment should only be tried in one or two selected centres as a test.

4. The disturbance to family life in the recruiting districts caused by Assam emigration is, I believe, negligible, owing to the care exercised in accepting recruits, especially minors and single females. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the conditions in Assam to express an opinion regarding the effects caused in the labour districts.

6. *Recruitment for Assam.*—(i) *Need of retention of control.*—The Assam tea industry is the only industry which is controlled in its recruitment of Indian labour. Other industries, and even the tea industry in the Dooars, Darjeeling and Madras Presidency, are free from governmental control. There are some who advocate that the Assam tea industry should also be free, but up to now the Indian Tea Association has not accepted this view; on the contrary, it has definitely urged that government control is necessary. The local governments have also insisted on the necessity of maintaining some form of control. The advocates of control fear that if recruiting were free, abuses would arise as they did in the past from the competitive spending of money to secure labour. I have no doubt that the unrestricted spending of money with the object of securing labour under a system of free recruitment would, in the absence of very efficient control, very quickly revive all the abuses which were associated with the *arkati* system of recruitment. If free recruitment is to be inevitably associated with lavish and uncontrolled expenditure on recruitment, then there can be no doubt that the continuance of control is essential. The labourer gets no advantage from the large sums spent on his recruitment. On the contrary, the greater the amount expended in securing his emigration, the less happy is likely to be his lot. Recruitment expenses swell the labour bill, and it may be assumed that, as no firm can afford to expend an indefinite amount on labour, high recruiting

expenses injuriously affect the wages and other conditions of employment. Furthermore, the large amount spent on the importation of labourers did in the past engender a tendency on the part of employers in Assam to restrict their free movement in the labour market.

Apart from abuses in recruitment which might arise from the competitive spending of money to secure recruits, another circumstance which differentiates the Assam tea industry from other industries is the great length and expense of the journey from the recruiting fields to Assam. Thousands of labourers are brought to Assam each year from far Bombay and Madras and from distant districts in the central and united provinces. Other industries draw their labour forces from regions much closer at hand and, consequently, the journey to and from their homes is neither so arduous nor so expensive as in the case of immigrants to Assam. The cost to a tea garden coolie of a journey from Assam to his home district would, in a very large proportion of cases, exceed the cost of repatriating an Indian coolie working in Malay or Ceylon. The remoteness of Assam from the recruiting fields has always been considered one of the justifications for retaining control over emigration to that province. Though communications with Assam have greatly improved since the passing of Act VI of 1901 there has, I think, been little, if any, decrease in the cost of a journey there from the recruiting districts.

(ii) *Administration of the present system.*—The present system of recruiting is controlled by Act VI of 1901, called the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, 1901, as amended by Act XI of 1908, Act VIII of 1915, Act XI of 1915, Act XXXVIII of 1920 (Devolution Act) and Act XXXI of 1927. The Act extends to the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Madras and Assam. The most notable innovation effected by the provisions of Act VIII of 1915 is the abolition of the system of recruitment by contractors and their recruiters, commonly known as *arkatis*. In all recruiting areas, therefore, in which the provisions of Act VI of 1901 are in operation, save and except the local areas in which recruitment has been prohibited by notification under Section 3, recruitment is carried out only through the medium of garden sardars, under the provisions of Chapter IV, working under a local agent duly licensed under Section 64 of the Act. The only recruiter now recognised is the sardar who must himself engage the coolies. Any arrangement for the direct supply of coolies to a tea estate by a contractor or for the supply to sardars of coolies, collected through the agency of a contractor or *arkati*, would be illegal and would render every person who is a party to such an arrangement liable to prosecution and punishment under Section 164 of the Act. Even an employer cannot himself legally engage labour in a recruiting district; he must do so through the agency of his garden sardars.

Act VI of 1901 is not in force in the native states, but, by the addition of an explanation to clause (*e*) of Section 2 (*1*) of Act VI of 1901, the recruitment of coolies from the native states has been brought within the provisions of the Act, once they leave the native state and enter a British recruiting district. The practical effect of this amendment is that a coolie, who has been engaged in a native state, must, once he enters a British recruiting district, be assisted to emigrate therefrom by a certificated garden sardar, and that such coolie cannot be assisted to emigrate from such British district except under the provisions of Act VI of 1901, or of any rule or order issued thereunder relating to recruitment by garden sardars.

Procedure regarding Grant of Certificates to Garden Sardars.—Under Section 56 (1) an employer can grant to any garden sardar a certificate authorising him, in such local area within the limits of a single recruiting district as may be specified in the certificate, to engage persons desirous of becoming labourers upon any estate of which the employer is in charge, and may cancel such certificate at any time. This certificate is to be accepted and signed by the garden sardar in the presence of the Inspector or of a Magistrate having jurisdiction over the place where the employer granting the certificate resides. Under Section 59 the Inspector or Magistrate, after being satisfied of the truth of the facts stated in the certificate, and also that the sardar is a fit person to hold a certificate, countersigns and dates the certificate. For any breach of any of the provisions of the Act or rules thereunder, this certificate may at any time be cancelled by any Inspector or Magistrate who countersigned it, or by the District Magistrate who countersigned the certificate under Section 61, or by the Superintendent of Emigration within whose jurisdiction the garden sardar is employed. The duration of this certificate is for a period not longer than one year from the date of its countersignature.

Local Agents.—The procedure for the grant of licences to local agents is given below :—

(i) The Local Government may authorize any Superintendent to grant licences to suitable persons to represent employers within a specified area and for a specified period, in all matters connected with the supervision of garden sardars under the Act.

All District Magistrates and Deputy Commissioners are authorised to grant licences to local agents under the provisions of Section 64 of the Act in their capacity as Superintendents of Emigration.

(ii) Any employer, or on behalf of an employer, any association or firm duly authorized by general or special order of the Governor-General in Council for the purpose of this clause, may apply for a license as aforesaid, to be granted to a specified person.

(iii) Every such application shall be made to the Board, and the Board shall forward it with its recommendation to the Superintendent, who may thereupon, if he thinks fit, grant a license to such person.

Cancellation of Licences of Local Agents.—Section 67 (i). The District Magistrate of any district within which a local agent acts as such, may, by order in writing, cancel the licence of the local agent if his employer or the association or firm which has applied in respect of such local agent under Section 64, sub-section (ii), so requires, or if the District Magistrate is satisfied that the conduct of the local agent has been such as to render him unsuitable to hold a licence.

67 (ii). The local agent may, within three months next after the date of any order of a District Magistrate cancelling his license under sub-section (i), appeal against the order to the Local Government, and the decision of the Local Government thereon shall be final.

Over 90 per cent. of recruitment for Assam is done by the Tea Districts Labour Association who have appointed local agents, under whom garden sardars work, in the different recruiting districts. Besides the Tea Districts Labour Association, there are four outside local agents, three in Ranchi and one in the Santal Parganas. The procedure to be adopted by garden sardars and local agents is given in the notifications issued by the different Local Governments, which are almost on the same lines. The conditions to be observed are quoted below :—

(i) The Association shall employ a local agent in each recruiting district or such larger area as may be prescribed by the Local Government in which garden sardars are employed under its control for the purpose of representing the Association in all matters connected with the supervision of such sardars.

(ii) Every local agent shall provide sufficient and proper accommodation in a suitable place for emigrants or intending emigrants engaged or assisted and their dependants, pending their removal to a labour district, and the provisions of clauses (ii) to (iv) of Section 62 shall apply to such accommodation.

(iii) Every local agent shall keep two registers, the one containing the names and descriptions of all garden sardars working under his control, and the other the names and descriptions of all emigrants or intending emigrants engaged or assisted by such sardars, together with the names and descriptions of the dependants, of all persons so engaged by the sardars. The said registers shall be open to inspection at any time by any Magistrate or any police officer above the rank of sub-Inspector, before the emigrants or the intending emigrants are despatched to the labour district. The local agent shall submit to the District Magistrate a copy of the entries in the second register, with the certificate in the form prescribed for the register.

(iv) Any local agent shall, if so required by a Magistrate or by a police officer above the rank of sub-Inspector, produce before such Magistrate or police officer any person engaged or assisted by a garden sardar working under the local agent's control, or any dependant of any person so engaged or assisted who is in a place of accommodation provided under clause (ii).

(v) Every local agent shall report for the orders of the Magistrate any case in which objection is made to the emigration of any person by any one claiming to stand in the relation of husband, wife, parent or lawful guardian of the emigrant or the intending emigrant.

(vi) If so required by an order in writing of the District Magistrate, the local agent shall not, until after the lapse of three clear days, remove or allow to be removed from the district or area any woman who is to proceed to a labour district unaccompanied by her husband or lawful guardian.

(vii) Every local agent shall satisfy himself that the names and addresses given by the garden sardars and by the persons engaged or assisted by them are correct and that the wages and other conditions of service are fully explained to and understood by the person so engaged or assisted.

(viii) Every garden sardar shall be bound to give the local agent to whom he is accredited a true account of every person engaged or assisted by the garden sardars under him, and to correct any mis-description of any such person given by that person which the sardar knows to be untrue or inaccurate.

(ix) Every local agent shall be responsible for preventing to the best of his ability all misconduct on the part of the sardars accredited to him and for bringing all illegal acts committed by them to the notice of the District Magistrate.

(x) The licence of any local agent who may be found not to have exercised due care in preventing misconduct on the part of the sardars accredited to him or to have failed to report any illegal act committed by any such sardar shall be liable to be cancelled by the District Magistrate of any district within which the local agent acts as such.

Medical.—All emigrants are registered by the local agent, and in most local agencies there are arrangements for the medical examination of coolies. Anyone found medically unfit to undertake the journey to the labour districts, or any labourer found incapacitated by reason of any obvious bodily defect or infirmity for labour in the labour district is not allowed to proceed. The Tea Districts Labour Association maintains a separate medical staff, dispensary and hospital at each of the principal agencies where sardars, coolies and relatives accompanying them are treated free of charge.

Clothing.—Clothing outfits in accordance with the following scale are given to the abourers and their dependants. :——

Adults (aged 12 and over)—1 *dhuti* or *sari*, 2 blankets, 1 brass *lota*, 1 brass *thali*

Children (4 to 11 years inclusive)—1 *dhuti*, 1 coat, 1 blanket, 1 brass cup.

Infants (below 4 years)—1 banian, 1 cotton *kurta*.

During the summer months (i.e., April to September inclusive) one blanket only is issued to adult emigrants.

Forwarding.—There are forwarding agencies of the Tea Districts Labour Association at the following places through which coolies pass on their way to Assam :—

(1) Goalundo ; (2) Gauhati ; (3) Amingaon ; (4) Naihati ; (5) Khargpur ; (6) Asanol ; (7) Chandpur ; (8) Purulia ; (9) Vizianagram ; (10) Lalmonirhat (11) Santahar.

There are feeding arrangements at each of the forwarding agencies. Coolies to Assam valley pass through Rangiya and Gauhati and also by steamer *via* Goalundo, and those to Surma valley pass through Goalundo and Chandpur. Emigrants are embarked as soon as possible after their arrival, and at every embarkation the embarkation agent or his assistant is required to supervise the embarkation as laid down in rule 70 of the rules relating to the transit of emigrants prescribed under Section 163 of the Act. If any emigrant is taken ill and is unfit to continue his journey, he is detained and sent to the authorised hospital. Besides the Tea Districts Labour Association, there are forwarding agencies of Messrs. Medland Bose and Company, at Naihati and Purulia, but the work of these two agencies is inconsiderable.

Inspection of Agencies.—Agencies are inspected by Magistrates, Superintendents of Emigration, Civil Surgeons, the Supervisors and the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board.

Cess.—Under section 116E, cess is levied by the Assam Labour Board on employers for the purpose of meeting expenditure incurred in carrying out its functions under the Act, and in particular for the payment of the salary of the supervisors, and of such portion of the salary of the Chairman as may be determined under Section 116B. Such cess is payable on every person deputed by an employer to engage or assist persons to emigrate and on every person assisted to emigrate to a labour district. The present rate of cess is Re. 1-8 annas on each sardar and emigrant.

Repatriation.—Sections 12, 13, 84, 89, 159, 161 and 162 provide for repatriation of persons wrongfully recruited or physically incapacitated.

(iii) *Composition and Working of the Assam Labour Board.*—This Board has been constituted under Section 5, Act VIII of 1915, " for the supervision of local agents and of the recruitment, engagement and emigration to labour districts of natives of India." It consists of 16 members, including the Chairman, who is a Government officer appointed by the Governor-General in Council. The remaining officers are elected by the following bodies :—

(*a*) 8 by the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, as representatives of that Association and of the Indian Tea Association, London ; (*b*) 4 by the Assam Branch, Indian Tea Association ; and (*c*) 3 by the Surma valley branch, Indian Tea Association.

There is an Executive Committee of the Board, consisting of 5 members, of whom one is the Chairman of the Board and the remaining 4 are elected as follows :—

(*a*) 1 by the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta ; (*b*) 1 by the Indian Tea Association, London ; (*c*) 1 by the Assam branch, Indian Tea Association ; and (*d*) 1 by the Surma valley branch, Indian Tea Association.

Three supervisors are employed by the Board, and these supervisors, as well as the Chairman, tour freely throughout the recruiting districts. All local agencies engaged in recruitment are inspected by these officers, who look to the reporting of offences and the general observance of the Act by local agents and sardars, and, when necessary, advise District Officers on matters connected with the administration of the Act.

As the Board consists chiefly of representatives of the tea industry, it is a means by which the industry is associated with Government in the administration of the Act and, as such, it has proved valuable in removing abuses previously connected with recruitment.

(iv) *Defects of existing Act and system.*—The chief defect of the existing Act is that it was passed to regulate a system of recruitment entirely different from the system now in vogue. Recruitment by contractors, sub-contractors and recruiters has been abolished, and all other forms of recruitment, except recruitment by certified garden sardars working under the supervision of licensed local agents, have been prohibited. Registration of coolies by Government officers has been abandoned, and labour contracts, together with the penal provisions for their enforcement, have been done away with. These changes have entirely altered the character of recruitment for Assam and the consequential changes in the Act have completely altered the Act itself. A fundamental consequence of the abolition of labour contracts and Government registration of emigrants is that the definition of "labourer" contained in the Act ceases to have any application. The repeals and alterations of the Act have, therefore, resulted in the peculiar position that an Act designed to regulate the emigration and conditions of employment of labourers has no application whatever to labourers, as defined in the Act. At the present moment, recruitment is regulated almost entirely by rules promulgated by notifications of the provincial Governments under Sections 3 and 91 of the Act, read in conjunction with the penal Sections 164 and 174. The system works simply because the tea industry endeavours to make it work. An overwhelming proportion of recruitment for Assam is conducted by the Tea Districts Labour Association, and it is the policy of this Association which represents the great bulk of the tea industry to carry out the system of legal control imposed by Government. Other minor recruiting agencies which are in existence also follow the same policy. Should the present system of control ever be seriously challenged, I am convinced that it would prove unworkable.

Though the tea industry submits to the present system of control, it cannot be said that it is satisfied with it or that the system is a good one. The restriction of recruitment to certified garden sardars imposes a serious handicap on the industry and renders recruitment unnecessarily expensive. On an average, each sardar recruits one coolie. In Ceylon and Malay, I understand that each recruiter secures, on the average, six to nine recruits respectively. The evils of the present Assam system in this respect have been aggravated by the strict interpretation which has been placed by the Courts, in at least one province, on the word "assist" in section 164 of the Emigration Act. Under this interpretation it is unlawful, for instance, for a missionary who is approached voluntarily by members of his congregation who desire to emigrate to Assam, to send them to a certified sardar or a licensed local agent for the purpose. It has also been held that general propaganda by Tea Districts Labour Association local agents setting forth the conditions of employment in Assam is inadmissible under the Act, inasmuch as it would constitute illegal assistance to recruitment.

A further instance of the rigidity and unsuitability of the present Act is found in the fact that it contains no provision whereby an emigrant who comes in of his own accord to a local agent with a view to emigration to Assam can be forwarded. The difficulty is at present overcome by the expensive method of getting a sardar sent down from the garden in Assam to which the coolie wishes to proceed, but even this course is open to objection, as at any time it may be held that the local agent is guilty of illegal assistance to recruitment in putting the sardar in touch with the recruit.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on technical defects, of which the Act is full. Enough has been said to show that the Act is unworkable.

The system of recruitment for Assam which has grown up under Act VI of 1901 is almost as defective as the Act itself. Recruitment is almost entirely under the control of the Tea Districts Labour Association which may be regarded as the recruiting department of the Indian Tea Association. So complete is the monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association that it is impossible for any employer, except in a few privileged cases, to recruit labour legally except through the Tea Districts Labour Association.

The most prominent defects in the present system of recruitment are :—(*a*) that it is a very expensive system ; (*b*) that it does nothing to promote the free flow of labour to Assam ; (*c*) that it is a monopolistic system.

I will consider each of these aspects of the system in turn. (*a*) It is difficult to ascertain exactly what the average cost of recruiting a labourer is, as I have not access to accounts which would show the cost. The impression I have derived from conversations with managers is that the average cost ranges from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 a head. In exceptional cases, the cost of recruiting a labourer may run well into four figures. The Indian Tea Association, in a pamphlet prepared for the United Provinces Government which was printed in 1926, estimated the average cost of recruiting a labourer as *not less than* Rs. 150. An estimate of the normal cost of recruiting a labourer from Ganjam agency, one of the nearest of the recruiting agencies to Lakhimpur district, is given as an apendix to this note, and it will be seen that the cost works out at Rs. 190–8 for a single coolie. It has been assumed that one sardar recruits one labourer, which is the normal average. The chief items which enter into to the cost of recruitment are :—(i) Tea Districts Labour Association commission and capitation charges and membership subscriptions ; (ii) forwarding charges, clothing and equipment, and bonus for labourers ; (iii) forwarding charges to and fro and feeding expenses for sardars ; (iv) salaries to recruiting supervisors outside the Tea Districts Labour Association, employed by various companies which recruit through the Tea Districts Labour Association ; (v) Assam Labour Board cess of Re. 1–8 on each emigrant and each sardar ; (vi) advances to sardars in the recruiting districts ; (vii) recruiting commissions to sardars paid in the gardens.

(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) are fixed and easily known quantities. Attempts have also been made from 1916 onwards to control the advances which are paid to sardars in the recruiting districts.

An annual return showing the average advance paid to sardars by local agents is published as an appendix to the Assam Labour Board report. It will be noticed from these returns that there has been a sharp decline in the scale of advances from 1926 when a very high average was reached. In that year we find average advances for each coolie recruited as high as Rs. 209 in Hazaribagh agency and Rs. 228 in Chhindwara agency. Since then there has been a great improvement, but the average is still considerably higher than in the season 1920–21 after which the rise began.

There is no hard and fast rule regarding the recovery of advances paid to sardars in the recruiting districts. Ordinarily, they are treated as a debt (rarely recovered) if the sardar does not return to his garden, but in the majority of cases when the sardar returns to the garden they are set off against the cost of maintaining the sardar on a scale allowing for a certain amount of display to impress possible emigrants and incidental expenses, such as hospitality, etc., during the time he spends in the recruiting districts. In most gardens recruiting commissions to sardars are in addition to the advances they receive from local agents.

It is not possible to say how much commission is paid for each recruit brought in. The amount varies from company to company, and may vary even under a single company according to circumstances. It is not possible for the Indian Tea Association or the Tea Districts Labour Association to enforce a limit on such commissions, which are paid in the privacy of a garden manager's office. All that can be done is for the various agency houses to come to a voluntary working agreement not to spoil the market by the payment of unnecessarily high commissions. There is a certain measure of agreement in this direction, and, normally, commissions vary from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 for each recruit with a slightly higher commission when married couples are recruited. I have, however, reason to believe that in certain cases higher commissions ranging to Rs. 50 and Rs. 60 for each recruit are being paid. Presumably, the rate of commission depends on the need of the garden for labour. The minimum commission for Assam is, however, so far as I know, Rs. 20, without recovery of advances paid in the recruiting districts.

The high cost of recruitment under the Tea Districts Labour Association system might, with advantage, be compared with the cost under the Ceylon and Malay systems. Under the Ceylon system the average cost of recruitment of an Indian labourer worked out at Rs. 20·77 from 1923 to 1927. This sum covered cost of transport, quarantine detention, feeding and housing of labourers *en route*, recruiting Kanganies' expenses, repatriation charges of the sick and disabled, cost of protecting and inspecting all Indian estate labourers in Ceylon, etc. (*vide* paragraph 29, Report of Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour for 1928). Under the Malay system, the average cost of importing an Indian labourer, *free of all debt*, works out at $38, i.e., under Rs. 60, at the present rate of exchange. This figure, like the Ceylon figure, includes a large number of services. Under the Malay system the recruiters' commission is limited to Rs. 10 a head. Under the Ceylon system Rs. 10 is allowed for recruiters' expenses, i.e., this amount is refunded to the employer from the Immigration fund for each labourer recruited, and it is meant to cover the recruiters' expenses. Both the Ceylon and the Malay systems have provided an abundant flow of labour to these colonies, where there was formerly a pressing scarcity, and, at the same time, they have effected an immense reduction in the cost of recruitment.

The salient feature which differentiates both these systems from the Assam system is that the importation of labour is a charge upon the general body of employers and not a matter for the individual employer alone, as in the Assam system. Every employer who employs Indian labour is required to contribute, on a fixed basis of assessment, to an Immigration fund instituted to meet the various expenses connected with the recruitment of a labour force. The recruitment of labourers remains an affair of the individual employer who deputes Kanganies (recruiters) for the purpose, but the costs of recruiting and forwarding the labour are defrayed from the Immigration fund. These costs are strictly controlled and the control is official. These systems practically eliminate financial competition amongst employers to secure labour. The interests of the entire industry and not of a single employer are considered. For instance, any *bona fide* labourer who is physically fit can secure a free passage to Malay at the expense of the Immigration Fund without incurring any obligation to labour for any particular employer on arrival.

A comparison might also be drawn between the cost of recruitment to tea gardens through the Tea Districts Labour Association and the cost of recruitment to the oil-fields at Digboi. When I visited Digboi last year, I made certain enquiries about how the labour force for the oilfields was recruited, and learned that no recruiting organization is employed and that the bulk of its unskilled labour flows there freely without any cost to the company.

A further instance of cheap recruitment of labour on a large scale was the recruitment for the Indian Labour Corps. I am unable to supply figures showing the exact cost, but, as well as I remember, the recruiting commission did not exceed Rs. 3 for each recruit and the total cost of recruitment must have averaged out at a very low figure.

As an illustration of how a reduction in recruiting costs would benefit the employer and the labourer, the following figures taken from the Assam Report on Immigrant Labour for the year ending 30th June, 1928 (the report for the year ending 30th June, 1929, is not yet available), and the Assam Labour Board Report for the year ending 30th June, 1929, are interesting.

Statement VII (Assam Reports on Immigrant Labour).

Average daily working strength, men and women :—

Assam Valley	243,066
Surma Valley	112,437
Total	355,503

Average cash earnings per mensem (Government Resolution on reports) :—

	Men.	Women.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Assam Valley	13 2 1	11 6 11
Surma Valley	10 4 7	8 6 4

i.e., average for men and women for both Valleys = Rs. 10–13 per mensem.

Total number of labourers recruited for Assam in year ending 30th June, 1929 (Assam Labour Board Report), = 73,198.

Cost of recruitment at Rs. 150 a head = Rs. 1,09,79,700, which works out at approximately Rs. 31 for each adult if distributed amongst the 355,503 adults on the average daily working strength of the gardens, i.e., an increase of 25 per cent. in their wages. It may be objected that this is purely theoretical and that it is inconceivable that the tea gardens could recruit their labour free of all cost. To meet this objection, let Rs. 20,00,000, i.e., more than Rs. 25 for each recruit and more than the average cost of importation under the Ceylon system, be allowed towards the cost of importation of the 73,198 recruits who came up in the year ending 30th June, 1929. Deducting this Rs. 20,00,000 from the total assumed cost Rs. 1,09,79,700 we get Rs. 89,79,700 which would be available for the increase of wages or other purposes. If applied to the increase of wages it would provide over Rs. 25 for each adult labourer on the average daily working strength, i.e., an increase of over 20 per cent. on the present wages.

If the case of short-term coolies is considered independently of the rest of the labour force, the results would be even more remarkable. If the cost of recruitment for a one-year coolie is taken as low as Rs. 100 and if he assumed to work 24 days in the month at 12 annas a day earning Rs. 18 a month, his wages could be increased by approximately 50 per cent. if the recruitment expenses could be saved. If short-term coolies knew they could earn Rs. 27 or even Rs. 24 a month of 24 working days I believe that labour would flow in freely without any cost to the employer.

(*b*) The second important defect which I have noted in the Tea Districts Labour Association system is that it does nothing to promote the free flow of labour to Assam. Recruitment for Assam tea gardens has now been in progress for over 70 years, and the industry is as far off as ever from the ideal of a free and unrecruited flow of labour to its gardens. It is a striking condemnation of the system that the planter has still, after 70 years' connection with the recruiting districts, to pay roughly Rs. 150 to get a labourer induced to take employment under him. The fact that the Assam Oil Company has secured a free flow of labour to the remotest district of Assam shows that the methods of the tea industry have not been the best that could have been adopted.

In the past, the tea industry's chief endeavour to attract labour has been in the direction of high recruiting commissions to recruiters. Recruiting expenses have been forced up to an unduly high level by the competition amongst employers for labour. So long as there is a scarcity of labour, competition to secure it is bound to continue. This competition may take one of two forms, i.e., payment of higher recruiting commissions and advances, or the offer of higher wages and more attractive conditions of service. As has already been observed, the Indian Tea Association has done nothing to limit the amount of recruiting commissions which may be paid to sardars on their return to their gardens, and the Indian Tea Association could hardly enforce such a limit if it were imposed. On the other hand, the other form of competition for labour i.e., increase of wages and the offer of better conditions of employment, is restricted by the control exercised by the circle committees of the Indian Tea Association. This being so, it is natural that competition should express itself chiefly in the uncontrolled channel, viz., competitive recruiting commissions.

The only class which has benefited by the recruiting commission system of attracting labour is the recruiters. The employers have not, I imagine, saved a pice on their labour bill, and they have done nothing to establish that free flow of labour which is so desirable to the industry. I believe that not only does the payment of high recruiting commissions not tend to establish a voluntary flow of labour to an industry, but it actually militates against it. Till wages find their true level, there will not be a free flow of labour to the tea industry. Once this level is reached, the scarcity of labour should automatically disappear and with it would go the competition amongst employers to secure labour and the necessity of paying recruiting commissions. In the meantime, employers should realise that the recruiting commission system cannot solve the problem of labour scarcity, that it does not save them anything, and that it deprives their labourers of benefits they would secure under the free play of the law of supply and demand. Temporary difficulties may present themselves in cutting adrift from a system which has been in vogue for so many years, but if the industry is solidly combined these difficulties should easily be overcome.

(*c*) The third defect of the present recruitment system is the monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association. It has been noted that it is not possible for an employer, except in a few privileged cases, to recruit legally without the assistance of the Tea Districts Labour Association. This is a great hardship on concerns which are not members of the Tea Districts Labour Association, and its effect tells most severely on poor Indian gardens which cannot afford to pay the high costs of recruiting which prevail for labour obtained through the Tea Districts Labour Association. The result is that such gardens are forced either to recruit illegally or to entice labour from their more fortunate neighbours.

The monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association is not a purely natural growth. It has been fostered by legal support and by the Assam Labour Board system. The Assam Labour Board, excepting its official Chairman, is nothing more than a Committee of the Indian Tea Association, and the Tea Districts Labour Association is practically identical with the Indian Tea Association and may be correctly regarded as the recruiting department of the Indian Tea Association. Local Governments have granted many valuable concessions to the Tea Districts Labour Association "and other approved associations," but the Assam Labour Board discourages other associations, so the Tea Districts Labour Association gets practically the entire benefit of the concessions and thereby it has secured its monopoly. This monopoly could not be maintained without legal backing. It does not exist in Dooars recruitment nor in recruitment for Assam from Bombay, where Act VI of 1901 does not apply. The fact that the Tea Districts Labour Association could not maintain a monopoly except through legal support under a controlled system is important, as this circumstance would open the door, under an uncontrolled system, for those who wished to recruit in a shady manner to choose some agency other than the Tea Districts Labour Association for the purpose. I am convinced that if, under present conditions, full freedom of recruiting were given, the number of those who would resort to shady methods of recruitment would be by no means negligible. I am equally convinced that the Tea Districts Labour Association would have nothing to do with such recruitment. There are few factors in the recruiting situation which

have impressed me more since I became Chairman of the Assam Labour Board than the honourable manner in which the Tea Districts Labour Association conduct recruiting. I say this to make it clear that in criticising the recruiting system now in vogue, I am not criticising the administration of the Tea Districts Labour Association but the system under which they work.

6. (*v*) *Possible substitutes.*—The foregoing criticisms of the present system of recruitment have indicated the lines on which an improved system should be framed.

(*a*) Recruiting agencies should not be limited to garden sardars as at present. I would allow employers to select their recruiters from any class of persons, subject only to the conditions that the recruiter must be duly authorised by a certificate from the employer who appoints him, that he be a person of good character, that he be registered as a recruiter in the office of the official in control of recruitment in the local area in which he is working, and that the District Magistrate should have power to cancel his authority to recruit for reasons recorded.

(*b*) There should be an Immigration Fund levied by legal authority on an acreage basis from all concerns employing imported labour. All the expenses connected with the recruitment of a labour force should be met from this general fund. The recruitment of labourers would remain an affair of the individual employer, but the payment of the costs of recruitment, at a fixed rate, would be made from the Immigration Fund. This would enable the industry to act as one body, instead of as a number of competing companies in the matter of recruitment expenses. The examples of Ceylon and Malay give rise to the hope that such a system would reduce the costs of importation of labour very greatly and thereby enable employers to improve the conditions of employment in such a way that, in the course of time, a plentiful flow of labour would be attracted to Assam, as has happened with Ceylon and Malay.

(*c*) Some system of official control would still be necessary for the reasons noted in paragraph 6 (i), and also because it is very unlikely that the tea industry would, by itself, be able to change over suddenly from the present system to a new system based on radically different principles, without some form of official assistance. I consider, however, that official control should be reduced to the minimum necessary to ensure the satisfactory working of the new system. The aim of any new system of control which may be set up should be to place the tea industry, as nearly as circumstances permit, on a level with other industries which are uncontrolled in respect of their recruitment. The Ceylon and the Malay systems provide a very detailed system of control, but in view of the clean record of the tea industry for the past fifteen years, I consider a lot, which is provided for by law in the Ceylon and Malay systems, may be left to the good faith of the industry. At the same time, I would stipulate that whatever official control is retained should be real and not fictitious. If control is needed at all, if the labourer needs protection to any extent in his recruitment, if the employers themselves are to be protected against past mistakes and pit-falls, then the control must not be a sham. The cat must not be set to guard the cream. My solution for providing an effective control which would bear as lightly as possible on the industry is as follows :—

(i) A Labour Department under an official controller should be created. The Immigration Fund should be collected and administered by the Controller. The fund would be a local fund like the Assam Labour Board Fund, and the controller would be responsible to the Government of India for the administration of the fund. He might be assisted in the administration of the fund by a committee consisting of representatives of the employers who provide the money, and of the local Governments in whose jurisdiction recruiting is carried on.

(ii) Registration of emigrants should be in the hands of officials of the Labour Department appointed *ad hoc*. Registration of emigrants was formerly in the hands of Government officials, but the duty was generally entrusted to over-worked officers, who had a multitude of other duties to attend to, and consequently the work was often delayed and carelessly done. All this would be altered if responsible whole-time officers were appointed for the purpose. At present, the work of registration with its attendant duty of reporting offences which come to light in the course of registration is performed by local agents who represent the employers. I propose the abandonment of this system for two reasons :—(*a*) Registration of emigrants is the stage in the recruitment process at which recruiting offences almost invariably come to light, and it is therefore desirable that the controlling authority should maintain direct contact with what is taking place in the process of recruitment, instead of being beholden to the employer's agent for his information. The present position of local agents is very ambiguous. They are at the same time representatives of their employers and agents of the legal authority (i.e., the District Magistrate) appointed by the Emigration Act to bring employers and their agents to book for offences against the Emigration Act. The local agent has frequently to prosecute a sardar in one capacity and to defend him in another. It is this incongruity of the

functions of a local agent, which necessitates such strict supervision of recruitment and the rigorous insistence on conditions which are often of a purely technical nature. (*b*) If registration were in the hands of the official controlling authority, the necessity for much of this supervision would vanish. The process of registration would of itself keep the control in touch with what was going on. In such circumstances recruiting could be made free except for the following very simple restrictions :—

(1) All emigrants to be registered by the Registering Officer appointed for the purpose. It should be an offence to recruit a labourer without such registration.

(2) All persons engaged in recruiting to register their names in the Registering Officer's office before engaging in recruiting operations. It should be an offence to recruit without satisfying this condition.

(3) District Magistrates to have authority to declare, for reasons to be recorded, that any person is not a suitable person to take part in recruiting operations, and thereupon it should be illegal for such person to assist or take part in recruitment. Such orders of a District Magistrate to be appealable to the Local Government. Excessive expenditure in recruitment should be a ground for cancellation of an authority to recruit.

(4) Registering officers to have power to reject recruits on the ground of undue influence, fraud or misrepresentation in their recruitment, or for physical unfitness, or, in the case of married women unaccompanied by their husbands and minors and young single females unaccompanied by their lawful guardians if there is reason to suspect that they are emigrating without the consent of their husbands or guardians as the case may be. The Registering Officer should also have power in such cases to detain minors, married women and young single females for a period not exceeding ten days, if necessary, to make enquiries regarding their recruitment.

(5) Beyond the provisions for registration of emigrants and recruiters (including sardars, contractors and all kinds of recruiters in the term) and the prohibition against recruitment by persons who have been disqualified by the District Magistrate, there would be no special recruitment offences. Cases of abduction, kidnapping, etc., would be dealt with under the Indian Penal Code. There would, however, be a set of regulations for accommodation, feeding, medical inspection and transport of emigrants, and officials of the Labour Department would be given powers of inspection necessary to carry out the purposes of the recruiting Act.

It may be asked what would become of the Tea Districts Labour Association under such a system. Apart from the registration of emigrants and the consequent duty of reporting offences and irregularities to the official authorities, which, strictly speaking, is not a legitimate function of a recruiting organization, the Tea Districts Labour Association could retain all its other functions. Its depots might still be used for the accommodation of labourers, its forwarding organization could still be used for forwarding emigrants, and its local agents would still be used for the promotion of recruitment, and, being freed from their dual role of representatives of the employers and watch-dogs for the District Magistrates, they would be in a position to devote themselves unreservedly to their employers' interests, which is not now the case. The Tea Districts Labour Association would act on behalf of the employer in all the stages of emigration up to the recruitment and registration of the labourer. Thereafter, in housing, feeding and forwarding the labourer they would act as agents for the Immigration Fund Committee, and consequently under its control, and would be paid at an agreed rate for the services rendered. For the expenses incurred in recruitment prior to the registration of the labourer a fixed sum, to be determined in consultation with the tea industry, would be paid for each labourer recruited.

It must be recognised that this system would not be so pleasant for the Tea Districts Labour Association as the present system. The Association would, however, be left absolutely free of external control up to the stage when the labourer is recruited and brought up for registration, but an effort would be made to restrict recruiting expenses and to make them uniform by paying only a fixed sum from the Immigration Fund for each labourer recruited. This sum would be intended to cover all the costs of recruiting the labourer and all the incidental expenses involved in bringing him to the centre where registration would take place. After registration, the emigrant would be in the care of the Labour Department or the Immigration Fund Committee till he was landed on the garden, but the Tea Districts Labour Association would be given the option of acting as forwarding agents for the Department or Committee. If the Tea Districts Labour Association did not accept this option, the Committee or Department would make its own arrangements.

These proposals follow the Ceylon system closely, but they reduce the all-pervading official control of the Ceylon system to a minimum. The Ceylon system lays down stringent regulations to govern the wages, housing, education, medical care, etc., of labourers. I omit all such regulations from my proposals, firstly, because I consider that they are quite distinct from the control of recruitment and should

not find any place in an emigration law, and secondly because it would, in my opinion, be unjust to single out the Assam tea industry for special legislation in these respects. The Assam tea industry has already suffered severely from discriminatory legislation, and it is time now that, as far as possible, it should be treated in the same way as other industries, so that if legislation on such matters should prove necessary, Assam tea alone should not be singled out for legislation, but should be dealt with along with other similar agricultural industries.

A further point should be noticed regarding my proposals. They do not commit the tea industry to permanent tutelage. When the new system is firmly established and working satisfactorily, the control of the Immigration Fund could be handed over to the industry. The industry already administers the Tea Cess Fund for objects common to the entire industry.

APPENDIX A.

Estimated Cost of Recruiting a Labourer from Ganjam Agency to Lakhimpur District.

	Rs.	As.
1. Assam Labour Board cess on sardar	1	8
2. Assam Labour Board cess on emigrant	1	8
3. Tea Districts Labour Association's commission (*vide* Supplementary Addendum to Tea Districts Labour Association Handbook for 1928–29)	12	0
4. Tea Districts Labour Association capitation fee on sardar (*vide* page 15 of Tea Districts Labour Association Handbook for season 1925–26)	5	0
5. Forwarding charges on emigrant :—Berhampur (Ganjam) to Gauhati, Rs. 19-12 ; Gauhati to Dibrugarh *via* Lumding, Rs. 7-4. (Pages 20 and 23 of Addendum to Tea Districts Labour Association Handbook, season 1925–26, for use 1927–28)	27	0
6. Forwarding charges on sardar (both ways) :—Dibrugarh to Gauhati *via* Lumding, Rs. 7 ; Gauhati to Berhampur (Ganjam), Rs. 14 ; Berhampur (Ganjam) to Gauhati, Rs. 15-12 ; Gauhati to Dibrugarh *via* Lumding, Rs. 7. (Pages 20 and 23 of Addendum to Tea Districts Labour Association Handbook, season 1925–26, for use 1927–28)..	43	12
7. Clothing, etc., to emigrant (page 10 of Addendum to Tea Districts Labour Association Handbook, season 1925–26, for use 1927–28)..	10	0
8. Bonus to emigrant	5	0
9. Advance to sardar (Column 7 of Appendix A to Annual Report on the working of the Assam Labour Board during the year ending 30th June, 1929)	51	12
10. Commission to sardar, say	20	0
11. Sundries, such as *khoraki* charges, hospital charges, etc., approximately	3	0
12. In addition a proportionate share of the following expenses have to be added :—Tea Districts Labour Association membership subscription, salary of company's recruiting supervisor, say	10	0
Total	190	8

Note.—The present railway fare from Berhampur (Ganjam) to Dibrugarh is Rs. 19-9-3, so that the Tea Districts Labour Association forwarding charge for each adult emigrant is Rs. 7-6-9 in excess of the actual railway fare, and in the case of sardars the excess on upward and downward journey is Rs. 4-9-6 for each sardar.

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APPENDIX B.

Copy of the tour notes of the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board on his last visit (4th October, 1929 to 6th November, 1929) to the coal mines at Margherita.

Ledo.—I inspected the coal mines here and was very interested in the labour arrangements of the company. There is a mixed labour force of about 3,000 to 4,000 labourers, including Nepalese, Makranies, Peshwaris, Chinese and Hindus from the United Provinces, Bihar and Central Provinces. The Makrani, Nepali, Peshwari and Chinese labour force is not recruited under the Emigration Act. Labour from the United Provinces, Bihar and Central Provinces is recruited through the Tea Districts Labour Association under the Act. Comparison of the cost of recruitment under the different systems is interesting. The Nepalese come voluntarily and their recruitment costs practically nothing. The Makranies and Peshwaris are recruited on commission from Karachi and Peshawar districts. They cost Rs. 55 a head. The Chinese are recruited from south-east China and cost Rs. 125 a head. The labourers from Bihar, the United and Central Provinces recruited

through the Tea Districts Labour Association cost on an average Rs. 100 a head. This figure is much lower than the ordinary average of Tea Districts Labour Association coolies. The lower cost is due to the fact that the employment offered by the Ledo mines is popular and each sardar recruits on an average 7 labourers against a little over one labourer recruited by each tea garden sardar.

The work in coal mines is harder than on tea gardens, and in consequence the wages offered are slightly higher but there is not a great difference. Coolies are allowed to return to their homes any time they desire to go and are repatriated at the company's expense if they have done 425 days' work for the company. Any cooly who becomes physically unfit to work is also repatriated free by the company.

On arrival coolies receive 14 days' free rations and an advance of Re. 1 each. Sardars receive Rs. 15 commission in addition to the advances they receive in the recruiting districts for each labourer brought in. The Company has also a labour force at Dibrugarh for loading coal on to the steamers. No recruitment has to be done for this labour force as a large number of labourers have settled there permanently and fresh recruits come voluntarily whenever a vacancy occurs. The company issues a statement setting forth the conditions of employment in the coal mines to its sardars. This statement is a model of clearness and precision. It would be an advantage if tea gardens could issue similarly precise statements.

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INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.

I.—Recruitment.

1. *Origin of Labour*—(*Assam*)—(i) *Extent of migration.*—A copy of the Tea Districts Labour Association recruiting map is attached showing the principal recruiting districts in colours.* Since the map was published, the whole of the Madras Presidency has been thrown open to recruiting, but the Tea Districts Labour Association has only one agency in the non-coloured area, viz., at Cuddapah, whence a little recruiting in the ceded districts of Madras is conducted. Generally speaking, labour from this area, which is very dry with a rainfall of about 20 inches per annum, is unsuitable for settlement in Assam. Act VI of 1901 does not apply to the Bombay Presidency and recruiting is accordingly free. The Tea Districts Labour Association has an agency at Igatpuri with sub-agencies at Surat, Thana and Dohad. The general statistics (Annexure A)—attached to this note, give the numbers recruited from these areas. Act VI of 1901 also does not apply to the Berar Districts of the Central Provinces but the Labour Association does not recruit therein. The Khond Mahals Sub-Division of Bihar and Orissa is also excluded. It is a Government estate and a very backward tract.

Act VI of 1901 applies to the western districts of the United Provinces, and by a Section 3 Notification, recruiting is permitted therein. Attention is called to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, paragraph 508. The Government of the United Provinces has not yet given effect to this recommendation, although their attention was drawn to it by the industry. The Act has not been extended to the Punjab, and the Tea Districts Labour Association does not recruit there. It extends to the whole of Bengal, although only a portion of that Presidency is coloured. The absence of colour here means that recruiting is not conducted in these tracts.

Native States and the Feudatory States of Orissa and the Central Provinces.—The position as regards these States needs elucidation. Most States prohibit recruiting for tea estates within their borders. Certain States of Behar and Orissa have accepted what are known as the "Model Rules" whereby recruiting is permitted. The State of Jashpur has entered into an agreement with the Tea Districts Labour Association permitting recruiting within the State on the lines of the "Model Rules." Even from the States which have not accepted the "Model Rules" and which prohibit recruiting for tea estates, however, large numbers of labourers seek out sardars and recruiters and migrate to tea gardens. The Government of India recognised the movement and altered the definition of the word "emigrate" in Act VI by the amending Act of 1915, so as to bring such subjects of Native States within the purview of the Act as soon as they entered British Territory.

Several tea gardens received recruits from the State of Bastar, one of the Chhatishgarh Feudatory States in the Central Provinces. The State is administered by the British Government on behalf of the minor Rani, but nevertheless recruiting for tea estates is prohibited within the State. The results of this prohibition are that thousands of immigrants from this State are now settled contentedly in Assam and are not allowed to visit the State, or to recruit their relatives.

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* Not reproduced.

Attached is the caste analysis statement*, which indicates very clearly the class of labour recruited, viz., Aboriginals and the " lower " Hindu castes.

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of migration.*—Facilities for obtaining work on tea estates constitute a real boom to the agricultural classes in several extensive tracts of India.

Attached is a series of graphs,* indicating the seasonal movement to Assam of labour over several years, together with a curve showing the average movement calculated over ten years from 1916–26. (The Tea Districts Labour Association year is from 1st September to 31st August). All these curves have a striking similarity. The maximum point is in March, when no rice cultivation operations are in progress, and as ploughing begins in May and June, the movement falls off owing to local demand for agricultural labour. The minimum point is reached in September–October when all available agricultural labour is absorbed in the urgent work of reaping the rice harvest. Abnormal conditions at any period of the year are immediately reflected in the curve as an irregularity, e.g., when in June, 1927–28, there was very little rain. So in 1928–29 when an exceedingly hot and dry May in Chota Nagpur, Sambalpur, and adjoining districts resulted in an increased movement to Assam owing to fears of a bad monsoon.

The annual height of the curve is governed by local conditions, but in order to study these, it is not possible to take the figures for all India, as every year certain areas are more or less in difficulties, while others have good harvests. There are therefore attached figures for the Chota Nagpur Division of the Province of Bihar and Orissa for the last twelve years—(Annexure B). This period has been selected so that the abnormal figures for 1918–19, the year of the last general famine, may be included.

The figures below show the movement from the recruiting districts to the tea districts in that year and in the following, when conditions were still unsettled :—

		Souls.
1918–19	Assam	118,097
	Dooars	28,136
1919–20	Assam	30,359
	Dooars	3,949
	Total	180,541

In those years the Tea Districts Labour Association was not handling, as it now is, practically all recruiting for Dooars estates. Many Dooars and Terai estates did their own recruiting independently and, at a conservative estimate, it may be stated that in those two years, something like 200,000 recruits found employment on tea estates in North East India. The total population of Chota Nagpur in 1921 was 5,650,028, so that over 3 per cent. of the population found refuge in tea estates. Pressure on the soil must have been considerably relieved, for in 1920–21 we find only 5,537 souls proceeding to tea estates, the figures dropping in season 1923–24 to 3,679. Since then there has been a steady increase, the figures for 1928–29 being 46,868. The total figures for the duodecennium are 313,539, or an annual average of 26,100 approximately, or about ·45 of the total population. This figure ·45 is slightly over-estimated since from the Gangpur, Jashpur and Sirguja Feudatory States certain labourers are received and appear as " Chota Nagpur " Labour.

It may be of interest to compare these figures with the Census of 1921 figures of those employed in coal and other mines, and the metal industries of Bihar and Orissa.

1921.	Bihar and Orissa mines	†127,000
	Residents of Bihar and Orissa employed in Bengal mines	69,000
	Metal industries, Bihar and Orissa	34,250
		230,250

These include large numbers from Orissa, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces and it is obvious that the Bihar and Orissa industries cannot provide the same facilities to needy agriculturists as does tea.

The services rendered by the tea industry to the Bihar and Orissa Provinces generally did not go unrecognised, as the following extract from the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Financial Department—Resolution No. 2837-Com. E., dated 14th October, 1920—indicates :—

" 6. As remarked last year, emigration serves to mitigate the rigours of scarcity and to solve the problem produced by the prevailing high prices of food grain."

* Not reproduced.

† This figure includes Natives of other Provinces employed in Bihar and Orissa Mines, details of whom are not available.

(iii) *Changes in recent years.*—The only changes of importance are the falling off of emigration from the districts of Singhbhum, Hazaribagh and Manbhum, and the Western districts of Bengal. In the case of Singhbhum, the cause is no doubt the growth of Tata's Steel and Iron Works, and the allied companies; in the other districts the factor has been the demand of the coalfields and the opportunities for casual labour afforded in the Eastern districts of Bengal in connection with jute and paddy cultivation. Extensive railway construction works have also absorbed large numbers of labourers in areas whence previously they used to emigrate to Assam. Important among these works are the Central Coalfields Railway through Hazaribagh and Palamau, the Raipur-Vizianagram Railway, the Vizagapatam Harbour Scheme and similar projects.

2. *Contact with villages.*—(*A*) *Assam.*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return.*—These statistics would be more readily obtainable from tea estates, but the sirdari system of recruiting is regarded as maintaining contact with villages. Every year between twenty and thirty thousand coolies are given sirdars' certificates (statistics could be obtained from the Assam Government) and it is known that roughly one-third of these do not return to their gardens. It is in fact a mode of repatriation. Sirdars' certificates are given in practically every case of a coolie proceeding to his home on leave, or because he thinks he wishes finally to sever his connection with tea. This is necessary, as according to the interpretation of Local Governments, the return of a leave coolie or a "name-cut" is looked upon as a fresh act of "emigration" necessitating all the formalities. If a man has a sirdar's certificate he may return and be assisted to return within a year.

"Short term" and "fixed term" recruiting, when repatriation at the expense of the garden is guaranteed, has been recently growing, particularly in the Ranchi and Santal Pergannas Districts. It is responsible for about 50 per cent. of the migration of these districts.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force.*—These statistics are not readily available.

(*B*) *Dooars, Terai.*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return.*—Annually a certain percentage of the labourers are sent back to their country to recruit new labour and return after two or three months. Others return of their own accord after working for a varying number of years, but a fairly large percentage have permanently settled on tea gardens and have more or less lost touch with their country.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force.*—Possibly at least ninety per cent. of the labour force can be considered permanent, but some castes return to their country more frequently than others, e.g., Oraons generally stay for much longer periods on the gardens than Mundas.

3. *Methods of Recruitment*—(A) *Assam*—(i) *Existing methods.*—For estates situated in the six labour districts of Assam recruiting must be done by a certificated "garden sirdar" working under the supervision of a duly licensed "Local Agent".

A garden sirdar must be an employee of the estate, and is given a certificate by his employer authorising him to recruit labour. He then appears before a magistrate within whose jurisdiction his estate lies, and if the magistrate considers he is a fit and proper person to recruit labour he countersigns the license. The sirdar is then consigned to the recruiting districts, usually his native district, where he comes into the care of the "Local Agent".

A local agent is licensed by the district magistrate of the recruiting districts to whom an application is made through the Assam Labour Board by the employer, or group of employers, who propose to retain his services. The Assam Labour Board, through its supervisors, makes enquiry as to the fitness of the candidate, and may either recommend that the license be granted, or refuse to recommend that the license be issued. All local governments with the exception of that of the province of Bihar and Orissa have agreed to respect the veto of the Assam Labour Board. In the case of the province of Bihar and Orissa, if the district magistrate wishes to grant a license despite the disapproval of the Board, he shall refer the matter to the Government whose decision shall be final.

Although any employee of an estate is eligible to work as a garden sirdar, Government express the opinion that the selection of garden sirdars should be limited to the labouring classes themselves. The result is that sirdars are themselves simple labourers whose chance of successful recruitment is to recruit in the vicinity of their own home, and among their own caste or tribe. The average success has been very low and has not since the famine years 1918–19, and 1919–20 exceeded 1·35 adults per sirdar employed. Even in the famine year 1918–19 the average success was only 2·97 adults per sirdar recruited.

The industry maintains a large forwarding department which takes charge of sirdars proceeding to the recruiting districts at the terminal forwarding stations of

Gauhati, Goalundo or Naihati, and escorts them to the local agency. Later, the forwarding department escorts sirdars and recruits to their respective gardens, arranging railway accommodation and feeding them en route.

The local agent keeps the sirdars in funds, limiting advances to what experience has shown to be requisite. The general instructions issued to local agents on this point are that sirdars are to be given sufficient money to pay for their own maintenance while in the recruiting districts, together with money sufficient to pay the expenses of bringing in recruits. Usually a sirdar is given a first advance on reporting at the agency, on receipt of which he proceeds to his home, returning after two or three weeks with his report as to recruiting prospects. His further advances depend on these recruiting prospects as ascertained by the local agent.

The sirdar must personally get into contact with recruits: no one who is not licensed under the Act may take any part in recruiting. It has been held that even a missionary advising a member of his flock to find a sirdar and emigrate to an estate in Assam known to him in time of need, transgresses the law. The local agent himself is not permitted to "recruit" even voluntary emigrants, e.g., persons who know of Assam and wish to go there, or who have already been in Assam and wish to return. In all such cases the local agent must refuse to accept the labour direct and inform them they are to find sirdars to "recruit" them. The Governments of the Central Provinces and Bengal have, however, made an exception in the case of an ex-tea garden labourer volunteering to return to his original estate; the local agent in these provinces may forward such labourers, making a special report of the circumstances to the district magistrate.

Many gardens are willing to take labour for short terms—six months, nine months, or a year—and to guarantee repatriation at garden expense to such. Even this class of labourer must be recruited by a licensed sirdar specially deputed for the purpose of recruiting labour; and all the formalities are to be followed.

On a sirdar bringing in recruits, the local agent is to ascertain whether they are willing to proceed to the garden, whether they understand the conditions of work and the terms offered; and he is particularly to satisfy himself that no individual has been induced to emigrate by fraud, misrepresentation, or undue coercion. On being satisfied that the recruit is a voluntary and suitable emigrant, he "registers" the individual. Copies of the register, showing all rejections, are sent to the district magistrate.

Emigrants are given an outfit of clothing and utensils, and a bonus of five rupees; they are inoculated against cholera and vaccinated for smallpox. Medical examination is optional, though very few gardens abstain from having recruits medically examined.

(ii) *Possible improvement.*—The defects of the system, together with other defects of Act VI of 1901 will be discussed in detail in replying to item I (6) (iv). The above description of recruiting methods will serve to indicate the reason why recruiting is so expensive. Obviously the larger the number of recruits an individual sirdar obtains, the less is the cost per coolie. The present system of recruiting, however, does not lend itself to a greater average success per sirdar than 1·35 adult recruits as a maximum, except in seasons of scarcity; and in this fact, and in the fact of the diminishing average cost when a large number is recruited per sirdar, is to be found the reason for the tendency to fill up a garden with labour in time of scarcity or famine.

(iii) *Public employment agencies.*—There are no such agencies, and these would not appear to fit in with Assam conditions, except that every local agent might and should be considered as a public employment agency, the local agent being empowered to send volunteer applicants to the gardens to which they wished to go, or to gardens which had intimated their willingness to take such labour.

(B) *Dooars and Terai*—(i) *Existing methods.*—Recruiting for the Dooars is free; no statute on the analogy of Act VI of 1901 applies.

The great fields for recruiting for the Dooars and Terai estates are Chota Nagpur and the Santal Pergannas, which were till recently the only fields. There is also a large population of Nepalese, a great number of whom were born on the tea estates and may be regarded as indigenous. No recruitment in Nepal for employment in this district is permitted by the Nepal Durbar; and any fresh additions to the labour force employed in tea consist of voluntary immigrants from Nepal or Sikkim, generally relations of those already in tea.

Statistics of recruiting from Chota Nagpur have already been provided in connection with Item 1. They indicate that after the big famine year 1918–19 pressure on the soil in Chota Nagpur was relieved to such an extent that the migration of labour to tea estates came almost to a standstill. The same was the experience in the Santal Pergannas. Simultaneously with the famine was an influenza epidemic,

which almost decimated the population, thus further relieving pressure on the soil In 1921, therefore, Dooars and Terai tea estates were compelled to look further afield than Chota Nagpur and Santal Pergannas for their labour, and began to recruit in Madras and the Central Provinces. The percentage of recruiting from the two last-mentioned districts is small.

With the recrudescence of migration from Chota Nagpur and the Santal Pergannas, recruiting has been more and more confined to these areas. The progress return, copy attached (*vide* p. 80) indicates the movement of labour; and the caste *statistics indicate the classes recruited.

The Indian Tea Association looks upon the history of recruiting for Dooars and Terai estates as indicative of the capacity of the industry to control itself and to ensure the absence of objectionable methods of recruiting, resulting in the exploitation of the Indian labourer.

The system of recruitment is mainly sirdari, generally supervised by the Tea Districts Labour Association, although some gardens have their own staff.

(ii) *Possible improvement.*—The system works well and it would be difficult to improve.

(iii) *Public employment agencies.*—There is no need of public employment agencies, the present system having been in use for a great many years and having worked on the whole smoothly. Labourers are voluntarily brought into central depots in the recruiting districts and are medically examined before being entrained. Peons in the service of the Tea Districts Labour Association accompany batches of labourers to their destination, besides which agents of the Tea Districts Labour Association are stationed at the principal junctions on the railway to look after their comfort, arrange for food, and see them safely on their journey.

4. *Extent and Effects of Disturbance of Family Life.*—The system allows of the least possible disturbance to family life, family parties being the almost universal rule, no married women or minor being accepted at the depot without the consent of the husband or guardian. Under the short term recruitment system, single men come up for a period of generally not more than twelve months, but they form a small proportion of migrants.

6. *Recruitment for Assam*—(i) *Need of retention of control.*—The Indian Tea Association is of the opinion that some mild form of legislation is necessary as a safeguard in the event of the removal of all the restrictions which are imposed by Act VI on the methods of recruitment for Assam. The Association does not favour the idea of uncontrolled and independent action by individual employers. While it believes that control should, and could with efficiency, be imposed and operated by the industry itself, the Association understands that local governments will not agree to the removal of all restrictions on recruiting methods, unless their district magistrates have power, if necessary, to step in and put a stop to malpractices and to prevent malefactors from recruiting. This stipulation of the local governments appears to the Association reasonable; and, if there is some safeguard against the arbitrary exercise or abuse by district magistrates of the powers granted, the existence of these powers will greatly strengthen the hands of whatever controlling staff the industry may put in charge of its free recruiting.

(ii) *Administration of present system.*—The present system, which restricts the recruiting agency to garden sirdars who must be of the labouring class, is admittedly full of anomalies. It works as well as it does simply because the industry as a whole desires to be law-abiding. Practically all labourers sent to Assam are recruited under the control of the Tea Districts Labour Association. The local agents of the Association discharge the following main functions :—

(1) They supervise and generally look after garden sirdars and register and forward all recruits.

(2) They have to see that the law is observed in recruiting both by garden sirdars and by others who may take part in it.

(3) They have to keep the district magistrate on the one hand, and the Assam Labour Board on the other, fully informed of what is going on so that these functionaries may be enabled to discharge their respective duties.

The district magistrates who, if not themselves Superintendents of Emigration, are always in a position to give orders to the Superintendent, have power to cancel the licences of local agents; and, in provinces where Section 63 has not been dispensed with by notification under Section 91, they can cancel garden sirdars' certificates also.

The Assam Labour Board was called into being in 1915 at the instance of Assam tea interests which required the assistance of Government to enable the operations of " arcuttis "—meaning professional recruiters—to be effectively suppressed. The constitution of the Board provides for the supervision of local agents and generally of the recruitment, engagement, and emigration to the labour districts of natives of India under Act VI. The Board annually reports to the Government of India.

* Not printed.

In its earlier days the chief function of the Chairman of the Board, and of its executive staff, was the suppression of arcuttis. In discharging this latter function, and in all other subsequent campaigns of the Board against evildoers, the reports of local agents have been the usual starting points. For a good many years undesirable recruiting practices have disappeared and the only blots on the escutcheon have been technical breaches of the Act, which have in general been regarded and treated with excessive severity, and referred to as " abuses " quite unjustifiably. With diminution of offences by persons engaged in recruiting, the officers of the Board have devoted more and more of their attention to the " supervision of local agents ", the first named function of the Board in Act VI.

(iii) *Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.*—The Assam Labour Board consists of 15 representatives of the tea industry presided over by a Government official appointed in this behalf by the Government of India. The Board has two ordinary meetings in a year, one to pass the budget, the other to pass the annual report. When necessary, the Chairman convenes special meetings. For the discharge of business there is an executive committee.

The chairman of the Board is assisted by three supervisors who travel round their appointed circles inspecting the local agents, and reporting to the chairman as they go. The functions of the supervisors comprise, also, enquiring into reports received and instituting proceedings when necessary.

The principal value of the Board to the industry is that it has afforded a liaison with Government and that the supervision exercised by its officers has been under the control of the industry itself. If the composition of the Board were so altered as to deprive it of those characteristics or to widen its personnel, a very important change in the administration of the recruiting system would be involved, a change entirely inimical to the industry's aspirations for the future of recruiting.

It is considered that the amount of technical and other crime amongst local agents, garden sirdars, and the public, does not justify the existence of the Assam Labour Board. If therefore there is any suggestion to alter the composition of the existing Board we should prefer its abolition, which would help in the reduction of the present very high cost of recruiting.

(iv) *Defects of existing Act and system.*—The principal defects in the existing Act are : (*a*) Owing to repeated amendments of a slipshod character much of what remains is legally meaningless. (*b*) It limits recruiting to one class of person only and allows no alternative method of obtaining labour even as a recruiting nucleus. (*c*) It deprives Assam employers of an important advantage enjoyed by all other employers, namely the right of their agents to assist and forward voluntary emigrants who may have been engaged by the employer personally or otherwise induced to go to a particular estate. (*d*) It makes no discrimination possible between labour emigrating with a view to colonizing and short term labour going up with a guarantee of repatriation on a definite date. (*e*) It makes no provision for relaxations or experiments other than the sweeping action of Section 92. (*f*) It is not possible to relax the strict procedure of the Act to meet emergent conditions such as arise in seasons of severe scarcity or famine. This fact, besides handicapping the Assam employer, militates against the scarcity-affected labourer, who desires immediate employment. By the time he reaches the garden under present conditions, he is usually emaciated and in need of medical treatment. (*g*) It is not possible under Act VI to remove restrictions from the methods of recruitment while retaining power and prevent evil-doers. (*h*) The gravest defect of Act VI is that it provides local governments with a means of stopping or restricting Assam recruiting, whereas they have no such powers with regard to other industries.

In addition to the defects, which are so conspicuous in the Act itself, the industry has grounds for complaints against the severity with which, in some places, the letter of the law is enforced even when no ethical wrong-doing or moral turpitude is involved.

A grave defect of the present system is the limitation imposed on the powers of a local agent. His function of registering labourers places him in the most important position in the administration of the Act and in the control of recruiting. Naturally he must be supervised ; but, having provided adequate supervision, he should not be restricted in his activities as he now is by the Act and the rules of local governments. In three directions he should have a free hand : (*a*) Propaganda and assistance to sirdars in their work. (*b*) Assistance to voluntary emigrants. (*c*) Arranging for short term labourers, or providing recruiting nuclei to employers who have no connections.

(v) *Possible substitutes.*—There are two possible directions from which a substitute system can come : (*a*) New legislation free from the defects of Act VI, whereby the system adumbrated in sub-paragraph (i) above might be operated without imposing any handicap on Assam, territorial or otherwise, as against other provinces or industries. There is no reason why an efficient control should have the effect of

handicapping Assam as the existing notifications under Section 3 of Act VI do. (*b*) Agreement amongst Assam employers, resulting in the framing of a system of self-controlled recruiting, which would satisfy the Government of India and local governments. This could be introduced at once by the cancellation of all existing Section 3 notifications whereby Section 92 would become fully operative, without putting Act VI bodily out of action.

Whichever line of action be taken the result presumably will be very much the same. There will be a system under which the industry will be free from legal restraints on the methods of recruiting, and can decide for itself what methods and agencies it will employ ; the active control and supervision will be exercised by the industry's own officers ; the district magistrates will have ultimate powers to put a stop to undesirable practices or persons. The Government of India will thus have an agency watching how it works. The industry looks forward to the repeal of all recruiting legislation which handicaps Assam against all other industries. The free movement of labour has been indicated by the Government of India as the ultimate goal to be attained.

7. *Unemployment.*—There is no unemployment in connection with tea estate labour.

8. *Labour " Turnover ".*—(i) *Average duration of employment.*—It is impossible to strike an average duration of employment. A large proportion of the family groups which go to tea estates settle permanently on the estate, some, on attaining economic independence, moving to Government land as tenants of Government. Others, particularly single males, go to tea estates merely as casual labourers and return to their homes when stress there is alleviated.

(ii) *Extent of casual employment.*—The extent of casual employment varies each year.

The indigenous Kacharies, to the extent of some five or six thousand, find employment during the rains on tea estates ; during the cold weather large numbers of Nunias from Bihar and the united provinces find their way to Assam and take up casual employment. Nagas, and other indigenous hill tribes in the Assam Valley, are afforded employment in clearing jungle during the cold weather. In the Surma Valley a large number of Sylhet Bengalis are also employed.

(iii) *Absenteeism.*—The principal cause of absenteeism, which is seasonal in character, is the necessity of granting leave to the permanent labourers for the cultivation of their own lands. It has been estimated that only 65 per cent. of the total labour force turns out to work daily so that the average number of days worked in a week is 4·5. The time lost in a six-day week is therefore 1·5 per worker per week or 78 days per annum.

II. Staff Organization.

11. *Selection of Managing Staff.*—The managing staffs of the British-owned gardens in the membership of the Association are comprised almost entirely of Europeans recruited in Great Britain and consist of a manager or superintendent with one or more assistants according to the size of the garden. Preference is given, as a rule, to men with training in agriculture or engineering, the qualification demanded being dependent on whether the assistant recruited is intended in the first instance for work in the plantation or in the factory. Men with degrees in agriculture are favoured and numbers have been recruited in recent years.

For Indian-owned gardens the managing staff is recruited from the educated classes. Promotion in all cases depends strictly on merit and skill in the handling of labour.

12. *Recruitment and Training of Subordinate Supervising Staff.*—(i) *Methods in force.*—It is convenient for the purpose of this question to divide the supervising staff of a tea garden into two classes, upper and lower subordinate. The upper subordinate staff would include :—(*a*) Indian assistants of education and experience who are frequently placed in charge of outlying divisions of an estate or who receive training in the manufacture of tea. (*b*) Clerks who are engaged locally as young men and trained in accounting and clerical methods in force on the particular estate and trained in accounting and clerical methods in force on the particular estate. (*c*) Doctor Babus. These are still frequently recruited locally but estates are gradually being staffed with qualified men with the L.M.F. degree or its equivalent. Such men are usually engaged in Calcutta, Dacca, and elsewhere, through one of the training hospitals.

The lower subordinate staff would include :—(*a*) " Duffadars " or sirdars who are foremen of gangs and who are, wherever possible, recruited from the rank and file of the garden labour force, according to capability, efficiency and the influence which they show over their fellow workers. (*b*) " Jamadars ", " Mohurris " or " Munshis ",

who are in subordinate charge of the outdoor work of the estate or of several sections. These are selected and experienced men and require some degree of literacy, as well as character, influence and experience in the control of labour. (*c*) Teahouse sirdars, who are in direct subordinate charge of the work within the factory.

(ii) *Facilities for Training and Promotion of Workmen.*—So far as work on the plantation is concerned, no great training is required. Skill is obtained in the course of actual employment by the efforts of the worker himself, assisted perhaps, in the first place, by demonstration of the correct methods either by a member of the subordinate-supervising staff or by a relative of the worker. Similar conditions apply in the factory where training is acquired by means of experience, beginning with the less important posts and advancing as vacancies occur.

As already mentioned, promotion from the rank and file to the subordinate supervising staff is strictly by merit and is effected by the manager or by a senior assistant.

13. *Relations between Staff and Rank and File.*—(i) *Relations generally.*—Relations between the staff, European and Indian, and the rank and file of the workers are, as a general rule, harmonious and cordial. In most cases, subordinate supervisors have members of their own families, their relations, or those of their own caste, working directly under them. No rigid or irksome discipline is enforced and disputes between the subordinate staff and the workers are rare. Where trouble does arise, this is usually of a personal nature or it may be due to injudicious handling by inexperienced staff. All grievances brought to the notice of the management are carefully investigated by the manager who is readily accessible for the hearing of complaints which he settles himself or with the assistance of a Panchayat or small committee of influential employees.

(ii) *Works committees : their constitution, extent and achievements.*—Works Committees are unknown ; and no necessity for them exists.

15. *Contractors and Intermediaries.*—(i) *Extent and character of work given on contract.*—The aim of all tea estates is to be self-contained and, where practicable, to give the benefit of any contracts to the people resident on the property. It is only when the labour force is short of requirements that outside contractors are engaged and the works on which they are generally employed include :—(*a*) Building and equipment of factories and bungalows. (*b*) Carriage of heavy materials, fuel, etc. (*c*) Cutting of firewood, timber, thatch and bamboos. The employment of contractors is becoming more general in the Assam and Surma valleys.

A distinction should be drawn between " piece work " and " contract work ". The former is sometimes loosely referred to as " contract work " but is carried out by the settled garden labour—occasionally with casual outside help—and is not contract work in the usually accepted meaning of the term.

(ii) *Extent of sub-contracting.*—Sub-contracting is not recognized by the gardens.

(iii) *Control exercised over working conditions.*—The conditions under which contracted labour works are very similar to the normal estate conditions. The extent of control will vary from garden to garden but, generally speaking, no special control is required ; it is sufficient for the management to ascertain by inspection that adequate progress is being made with the work against the advance payments given to the contractor.

(iv) *Effect.*—The contracting system, so far as it is employed, works smoothly and satisfactorily and there are no special facts to be noted. Contracted labour is ordinarily employed on a " piece work " basis and the work is usually done more expeditiously and more satisfactorily than by time paid workers, though less direct supervision is exercised by the garden staff. Contracts given to outsiders do not affect the resident labour force.

III. Housing.

16. *Extent to which Housing is provided.*—(i) *By employers.*—Housing is provided entirely by employers except in cases where the labourer resides outside the garden lines when he erects his own house with material supplied free by the estate.

(ii) *By Government or other public agency.*—Nil.

(iii) *By private landlords.*—Nil.

(iv) *By workers themselves.*—Labourers residing outside the garden grants build their own houses.

18. *Nature of Accommodation provided in each class.*—(ii) *In relation to best type from health point of view.* There is an increasing number of iron frame, brick walls and corrugated-iron roof houses, known as *pucca* houses, being erected on tea estates, but a large proportion of the houses still consist of *kutcha* structures, i.e., thatch roofs with mud and plaster walls. The majority of the labourers prefer the latter type of building although there is an increasing inclination towards the *pucca* building . A great deal depends on the type of labourer.

There is a difference of opinion among medical officers regarding the two types; many consider the modern house is not so healthy.

(iii) *Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.*—There is no provision for lighting and, as regards conservancy, little progress is recorded (*see* 26 (i)). Adequate supplies of water are available at all estates.

20. *Rent rates in various classes.*—No rents are charged.

21. *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of Housing*, e.g., *Sub-letting.*—Occupation of employers' houses by tenants in other employ: Eviction. Questions of sub-letting do not arise, nor is the labourer evicted.

(As the Royal Commission will be visiting the Tea Districts, an opportunity will be afforded members of inspecting the housing provided for tea garden labour.)

IV. Health.

23. *General Health Conditions of Workers* (*A*) *Assam.*—(i) *Figures of mortality.*—The following are the death rates per thousand during the last five years for tea estates in the Assam and Surma Valleys, as abstracted from Government returns:—

	Assam Valley	Surma Valley.
1923–24	22·51	23·90
1924–25	23·91	21·24
1925–26	21·79	18·04
1926–27	21·16	19·23
1927–28	20·61	18·66

(ii) *Birth-rate and infant mortality.*—The birth-rates in the two above districts per thousand are as follows:—

	Assam Valley	Surma Valley
1923–24	31·11	30·80
1924–25	30·41	30·18
1925–26	30·62	32·49
1926–27	31·64	33·70
1927–28	32·41	31·73

Returns of infantile mortality are not shown separately in the Assam Government Returns. There is increasing attention given to this important problem of infantile mortality, but unfortunately the idiosyncrasies of the labourer retard more marked advance.

(*B*) *Dooars.*—(i) *Figures of mortality.*—The following are the death-rates per thousand for the past five years for tea gardens in the Dooars, abstracted from the annual reports on the working of the Jalpaiguri Labour Act for the years specified:—

1923–24	29·21
1924–25	26·27
1925–26	23·19
1926–27	22·91
1927–28	22·40

(ii) *Birth-rate and infantile mortality:*—(*a*) *Birth-rate.*—The undernoted birth-rate figures for tea estates in the Dooars are also quoted from the annual reports on the working of the Jalpaiguri Act:—

1923–24	44·09 per mille
1924–25	43·34 ,, ,,
1925–26	42·90 ,, ,,
1926–27	40·94 ,, ,,
1927–28	39·73 ,, ,,

(*b*) *Infantile mortality.*—The following figures, taken from the same source, show the number of deaths, under one year of age, per thousand births:—

1923–24	108·22
1924–25	98·37
1925–26	90·60
1926–27	91·16
1927–28	80·05

(iii) *Working conditions.*—It is difficult to find more congenial agricultural conditions than on tea gardens. Work is so arranged that a minimum wage is obtainable for a matter of three hours work per day, thus leaving ample leisure for private cultivation and relaxation such as fishing, woodcutting, etc. Work is obtainable throughout the year and is not seasonal, though cultivation is more intensive during the wet season and opportunities for earning money greater.

Casual leave is readily given and absences due to *bona fide* illness are usually counted as attendances. Labourers do not have to travel far to the scene of their work from their homes.

(iv) *Dietary.*—The staple food of the tea garden labourer is generally rice and pulses, but this is supplemented by fruits, vegetables, and meat. The estates provide the labourer as far as possible with plots of land for the cultivation of rice and vegetables for which no rent, or in some cases nominal rental only, is charged.

(v) *Physique.*—It is contended that the physique of all acclimatized labourers compares more than favourably with that of their caste in the recruiting areas.

(vi) *Relation between housing and mortality.*—Statistics of birth and death rates been given above. The best way to estimate the effect of tea garden conditions is to compare those statistics with the provincial statistics available from Government. In their resolution on the Report on Labour Immigration for the year ending 30th June, 1928, the Government of Assam remarked :—

" In both valleys the birth-rate was again higher, and the death-rate lower than the provincial rates."

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities provided.*—(i) *By employers.*—Medical facilities are provided by employers for which no charge is made. It is customary for a group of gardens to employ a European Medical officer who has under his charge on each estate an Indian medical officer and compounders. There is also a hospital or dispensary on each garden fully stocked with such drugs as are required. The industry has in particular directed efforts towards reducing the incidence of malaria, kala-azar, hookworm, etc., and contributes towards the Tropical School of Medicine, Calcutta, etc.

(ii) *By Government.*—Nil.

(iii) *By other agencies.*—Nil.

(iv) *Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.*—An effort is being made to attract trained midwives, and attention is being directed to the training of dais. Owing to the idiosyncrasies of the labourer progress is slow. It is difficult to obtain midwives with the necessary qualifications.

25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are Utilised.*—(i) *Generally.*—The labourer takes full advantage of the medical facilities provided by the employers, although there are still difficulties found in obtaining the confidence of the aboriginals.

(ii) *By women.*—It is found that women generally more readily avail themselves of the medical facilities offered, except in cases of childbirth where, owing to caste and ceremonial prejudices, there is frequently a preference for a midwife of their own caste.

26. *Sanitary Arrangements.*—There is a disinclination on behalf of the labourer to use latrines. At certain estates some progress has been made, but such successes are isolated. *Vide* also in this connection, 19 (iii).

27. *Extent and Nature of Official Supervision.*—(i) *Work of Boards of Health in special areas.*—There are no Boards of Health in the Tea Districts.

(ii) *Inspection of plantation.*—The tea estates are inspected periodically in Assam by the Magistrate and, if an estate is unhealthy, also by the Civil Surgeon. In the Dooars occasional inspections are carried out by the Civil Surgeon only. The Government of Assam reserve the power to classify gardens as " unhealthy ". The success of the measures taken by tea estate managers in this direction is indicated by the fact that in the year ending June, 1928, only one garden was classified as " unhealthy " in the Assam valley and no garden in the Surma valley was labelled with this stigma.

28. *Suitability of Existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules.*—(i) *Control of temperature in factories.*—The system of tea manufacture necessitates the temperature in the factory being kept as low as possible.

29. *Disease.*—(i) *Prevalence of industrial diseases.*—There is no industrial disease.

(ii) *Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm, and other tropical diseases.*—All new labourers imported into Assam are vaccinated against small-pox and inoculated against cholera.

Cholera is endemic in Assam and there are occasional outbreaks, which are however quickly controlled. In the Assam valley for the year ended June, 1928, out of a population on tea estates of over 696,000 there were only 352 deaths from cholera. Malaria is prevalent, but everything possible under the circumstances is being done to mitigate its ravages. Hookworm is also prevalent but is being extensively treated. Kala-azar was prevalent in certain districts, but with the assistance of Government its incidence has been seriously restricted.

31. *Maternity Benefits.*—(i) *Extent and working of existing schemes (includes allowances given before and after childbirth.)*—The expectant mother is allowed leave on full pay, the time varying according to the state of her health. Until the

child is three or four months' old it may be accepted that this pay will be allowed; and at most estates a bonus of Rs. 5 is allowed at birth with a further Rs. 5 if the child is produced in a healthy condition a year later. The mother and child are kept under frequent medical observation and everything possible is done to assist her with advice, etc.

(iii) *Possibility of Legislation.*—It is not considered that the time is yet ripe to legislate in such matters for tea garden labour.

The foregoing remarks under "Health" refer both to factory and outside labour. The statistics kept by tea gardens do not provide for separate figures, except where these are required under the Factory Act.

V. Welfare.

32. *Extent of Welfare Work.*—(i) *By employers.*—Welfare work on a garden takes the form of providing light, and in many cases unnecessary work, for the purpose of giving debilitated individuals a means of livelihood.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—Nil.

33. *Employment of Welfare Officers and Workers.*—Nil.

36. *Provision of Educational Facilities by Employers.*—Schools are provided when there is a demand for them.

VII.—Safety.

The Indian Factories Act applies to tea garden factories in Bengal and Assam, but owing to these being seasonal and subject to weather vagaries, exemptions from Sections 21, 22 and 26 of Chapter 4 with certain provisions have been allowed. As children are not employed in the factory proper, Section 23 is also of more or less hypothetical application. As the Royal Commission will be visiting the tea districts they will have an opportunity of inspecting tea garden factories. Accidents are fortunately few.

VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. *Workmen's Compensation Act*—(i) *Extent of use.*—The position of the Indian tea industry, so far as workmen's compensation is concerned, is somewhat peculiar in that one part of its labour force—the factory labour—at present comes within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act, while the other section, namely, the plantation labour, is excluded. The experience of the Association in regard to the working of the Act is accordingly limited as compared with the experience of what might be termed the purely industrialist employer; and it is further limited by reason of the comparative paucity of accidents resulting in either death or disablement, which have occurred during the period for which the Act has been in force.

(ii) *Comparison with extent of possible claims.*—In cases of temporary disablement liberal sickness allowances, usually exceeding the amount which could be claimed under the Act, are paid to the injured worker; while in cases of death and permanent disablement the compensation is similarly generous.

(iii) *Effects on Industry.*—There are no special effects to be noted.

(iv) *Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.*—In view of the comparatively small number of accidents which occur in tea factories, it is not generally the practice of tea companies to insure against the risk. The workers are themselves safeguarded by the sickness allowances provided for them, and they do not suffer in any way by non-insurance on the part of the employer.

(v) *Desirability of Compulsory Insurance by Employers.*—So far as the tea industry is concerned, the Association considers that any scheme designed to make insurance compulsory would be superfluous.

52. *Desirability of extending the Act to other Occupations.*—The Association has previously had under consideration the question of the extension of the Act to cover workmen employed in tea plantations. Towards the end of 1928 the Government of India, in discussing the question in their letter No. L.1125, addressed to all local Governments, said that "no great difficulty would be created by the inclusion within the Act of workmen engaged in branches of industry which are not particularly hazardous and which are organized, e.g., to workmen employed on plantations"; and they argued that "the mere fact that an occupation cannot be described as hazardous is hardly sufficient justification for denying compensation to those who suffer from the rare accidents which occur." The Association accepted the statement and admitted the argument. The suggestion that tea plantation labour should be brought within the Act would not be opposed by the industry; but it should be noted that conditions of work on a tea garden are such that they almost preclude the possibility of death or incapacity through accident, and to that extent it may be considered that the inclusion of tea plantation coolie labour is superfluous. And in the more probable event of the temporary disablement of a plantation worker, it

is at least questionable whether the disabled coolie would be better off under the Act than he is under present conditions ; for, as has already been pointed out, provision is made by tea companies for the payment of liberal sickness allowances.

As regards the possibility of providing against insolvency of employers, the Association's views on the point are implied in the answer given to Question 51 (v).

53. *Suitability of Provisions relating to :—*

(i) *Scales of compensation.*
(ii) *Conditions governing grant of compensation.*
(iii) *Industrial diseases.*
(iv) *Machinery of administration.*
(v) *Other matters.*

In view of its very slight experience of the operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Association has no comments to offer on points detailed under this heading.

IX.—Hours.

A.—*Factories.*

55. *Hours Worked per Week and per Day.*—The hours worked in tea factories in North India vary very considerably, tea being a seasonal crop, but in no case do the hours exceed the maximum laid down in the Factory Act and the rules framed thereunder.

56. *Days Worked per Week.*—Six days, but at the height of the season during a very heavy flush it is occasionally necessary to work on Sundays.

57. *Effect of* 60 *Hours' Restriction.*—Nil.

60. *Intervals.*—Under Section 21 the Act requires that definite intervals for meals and rest be fixed for all employees during working hours, but tea garden factories in North India are exempted from the observance of this requirement, on condition that the number of workers on a particular job is at least 25 per cent. greater than the number required to do the work at any given time. This exemption is essential owing to the peculiar circumstances attaching to the process of tea manufacture, which is greatly dependent on climatic conditions and makes the working hours vary from day to day.

61. *Day of Rest.*—Owing to the circumstances attaching to tea manufacture, tea factories are exempt from the provisions of Section 22 of the Act enforcing the observance of a weekly holiday, subject to any person not being required to work continuously without a day's leave for more than 14 days at a time.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made for them.*—The exemptions have already been dealt with in the foregoing. It should be stated, however, that adult male persons employed solely on maintenance work are also exempt from Sections 21, 27 and 28 of the Act, on the condition that the average weekly hours of work in any one week do not exceed 66 hours.

D.—*Other Establishments.* (a) *Plantations.*

78. *Hours Worked per Week and per Day.*—The hours worked per week vary considerably, entirely according to the individual necessities of the labourer. For instance, the head of a family which possesses land will seldom turn out to work, but a new arrival who wishes to make money turns out more frequently. The average daily attendance on gardens is not more than 65 per cent. of the numbers on the roll. During the cold weather the average working hours may be taken as 5 per diem, but during the plucking season it may work out about 8 hours per diem. There is no question of exceeding the hours laid down for factories.

79. *Days worked per Week.*—It is questionable if the average exceeds four. There is no necessity for an enactment dealing with working hours so far as the tea industry estate labourer is concerned.

80. *Desirability of Regulation.*—If a regulation could be enforced to ensure workers turning out regularly it would solve the shortage of labour from which the industry suffers, but it would mean the end of a system which has a special appeal for the agricultural worker, who under the present system becomes a sort of feudal tenure-holder, holding land rent free or at trifling rent, with opportunities to cultivate it.

X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

A.—*Factories.*

81. *Effect of* 1922 *Act on Employment.*—Nil. There is always a demand for employment in a tea factory, where work is congenial for women and not onerous.

82. *Admission of Infants to Factories.*—This is one difficulty that has had to be contended with, as the mother endeavours to take her children into the factory or its outhouses.

85. *Double Employment of Children.*—Does not arise in tea factories.

87. *Extent of "Blind Alley" Employment.*—There is no "blind alley" in the tea industry, as if employment is not available in the factory it is available on the estate.

The foregoing replies to 81, 82, 85 and 87 refer to employment in tea factories only and not to labourers employed in the outbuildings of a factory where no machinery is used.

C.—*Other Establishments : Plantation.*

92. *Need for Regulation.*—It is not considered that regulation would assist in any way. As already indicated, women employed on tea estates are well housed, do not work excessive hours, and receive every assistance as regards medical relief, etc.

XII.—Wages.

96. *Prevailing Rates of Wages (Time and Piece) and Average Earnings*—(i) *In industry.*—It is expected that the Commission will desire information from the up country associations and branches as, owing to the difference in different districts, it is impossible for this Association to give details of the prevailing rates. Generally it might be stated that the family and not the single worker only is the bread winner, and employment is offered to men, women and children on all tea estates. This employment obtains throughout the year and is not confined to specific periods, as in the case of other agricultural industries.

(ii) *In surrounding agricultural areas.*—The wages of agricultural labour in the surrounding agricultural areas are not readily ascertainable, but its measure may perhaps be found in the fact that some five or six thousand Kacharies seek and find work in the Assam Valley, and Sylheti Bengalis in the Surma Valley, from April to October on tea estates under their own duffadars. This period coincides with their rice cultivation season, and the inference is, therefore, that the rate of wages on tea estates is attractive to residents of the surrounding areas. In the cold weather very large numbers of "Nunias," an earthworking caste from Bihar and the United Provinces, pay their own way up to Assam and take up work on tea estates. Mention has already been made of the hill tribes, who also apply for work.

(iii) *Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.*—Many estates in Assam still retain the practice of giving cheap rice to labour, i.e., at a rate cheaper than the market rate. This is an inheritance from the old labour contract days when the rate at which rice would be sold to the coolie was included in the contract. But the practice differs from garden to garden, and this Association is unable to generalize on the subject.

97. *Movements in Recent Years*—(i) *Increases and decreases.*—Earnings have increased appreciably ; some gardens have increased the rate of pay for the standard task, others have reduced the task. The labourer earns more, and in this connection and for the sake of getting actual figures the Royal Commission will no doubt examine the records of the Government of Assam. We quote the following from the Resolution on Immigrant Labour for the year ending June, 1928 :—

> "The Governor in Council has noticed with pleasure the further increase in the wages of men, women and children in both valleys. . . . . The average cash earnings, calculated on the average working strength, were Rs. 12-11-4 for men, Rs. 11-0-6 for women, and Rs. 6-13-4 for children in the Assam Valley, and Rs. 10-4-7, Rs. 8-6-4, and Rs. 5-4-0 respectively in the Surma Valley. When it is remembered that these figures do not represent the total earnings of the labourers, and that many have also land to cultivate, it cannot be said that the economic condition of the labour force is unsatisfactory."

Twenty years ago (*vide* Report for the year ending June 30th, 1899) the minimum wage on a tea estate was Rs. 5 for men and Rs. 4 for women for a definite task throughout the month.

(ii) *Reasons for variation.*—The principal reason for the increased wages is undoubtedly the increased cost of living and the upward trend of the wages of labour throughout India. With the present facilities for transportation, and the readiness with which Indian labour will migrate, tea is in competition with all other industries, literally from Calcutta to Colaba, and from Madras to the Himalayan foothills.

(iii) *Relations to prices and cost of living (pre-war and post-war).*—Wages have risen in a greater proportion than has the cost of living. It may be claimed that the average labourer has long since passed the line of bare subsistence and is earning a surplus which might be, and often is, expended on improving his status. In their Resolution of Immigrant Labour for the year 1927–28 the Government of Assam wrote :—

> "What is now needed is a gradual and steady improvement of the standard of living and the amenities of life to accompany the gradual and steady increase in wages."

Indian labour of the class from which the tea industry draws its supplies is, however, more concerned with the improvement of status than in the improvement of the standard of living. It is their great aim to become landholders, and the Government statistics of land held outside tea garden grants by ex-tea garden labourers support this view. It was admitted by the Census Commissioner in 1921 that one-sixth of the population of Assam had found its way to Assam *via* tea. Similar remarks apply to the tea gardens in Bengal.

(iv) *Relation to profits.*—Nil.

98. *Amounts sent to villages.*—Statistics of these amounts can be obtained from the Post Office, as the money order system is largely employed. This Association has no record. Large sums are also remitted through recruiters.

99. *Payment in kind and allied problems.*—Actual wages are never paid in kind, but there are amplifications in kind such as free housing, water, firewood, sick pay, medical attendance and medicines, advances free of interest to a very considerable amount, free grazing and land for vegetable cultivation. Land for rice cultivation is provided free or at a nominal charge. These constitute a large increase to the money wages.

100. *Extent and effect of payment through contractors, sub-contractors or headmen.*—This system is only employed in Assam in the case of Kachari and Nunia labour, and may generally be stigmatized as unnecessary. Personal contact of the labourer with the manager is to be preferred.

101. *Methods of fixing wages.*—(i) *By negotiated agreements.*—There are no such agreements in existence in tea. Generally, however, each district endeavours to decide on definite basic rates, in accordance with local conditions.

(ii) *Other means.*—Tasks are fixed by managers according to the nature of the soil or work and supply of leaf. These tasks even vary in gardens in the same company.

102. *Basis of Payment for Overtime and Sunday Work.*—On the few occasions when this occurs, smaller tasks or increased rates of pay are given.

103. *Extent of Standardization.*—Owing to the varying conditions, even on adjacent estates, standardization in the strict sense does not seem possible. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee recognized this point.

104. *Effect of Wage-changes on Labour Supply.*—More attractive wages increase the supply of labour, particularly of labour which may be regarded as casual. For instance, during the past two or three years short term labour engaged for six months up to a year have been attracted to tea estates, particularly from the Ranchi district and from the Santal Pergannas. But experience has shown that there is a definite relation between the supply of labour and economic conditions obtaining in the recruiting districts. This fact has been emphasized by the graphs* submitted in connection with a previous question. In times of severe scarcity it is safe to say that a recruit seldom thinks of the rate of wages offered. The experience of 1918–19 established that fact.

105. *Minimum Wages—Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.*—As so few labourers work the full number of days it is considered that the statutory establishment of a minimum wage is unnecessary and would be difficult to enforce.

It must be borne in mind that a large percentage of a labour force cultivate land of their own, and are in a different position from industrial labour, which are dependent on their earnings for their livelihood.

106. *Deductions*—(i) *Extent of fining.*—Fining of labourers is rare, and is only done by the manager personally. It is only resorted to as a punishment in cases of deliberate damage to property.

(ii) *Other deductions.*—Nil.

(iii) *Utilization of fines.*—Proceeds of fines are generally used for the benefit of the labourer.

(iv) *Desirability of legislation.*—Legislation is unnecessary.

107. *Periods of Wage Payment (Day, Week or Month)*—(i) *Periods for which wages paid.*—These vary in different estates; some pay daily, others weekly, and some monthly. In the case of weekly payments, payment is made without any time elapsing; but with monthly payments, payment is made within ten days. Where monthly wages are paid, advances are freely given.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation.*—It is not considered that there is a case for legislation. The existing system is elastic and suitable.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—These are paid to next of kin.

108. *Indebtedness.*—Advances without interest are given to the labourers to purchase cattle for marriage ceremonies, etc. These are repaid in easy instalments. Such advances to some extent prevent the labourer having recourse to moneylenders

109. *Bonus and Profit-sharing Schemes.*—There are no profit-sharing schemes but bonuses are frequently paid to labourers who turn out regularly to work.

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* *Vide* I. (l) (ii)—graphs not reproduced.

110. *Annual or other Leave.*—The labourer is allowed leave to work his own khets, and generally leave can be obtained to visit relatives in the district or go down to their homes. There are also the usual religious festival holidays. In many cases full pay is given.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. *Comparative Changes in Efficiency of Indian Workers in Recent Years.*—There is a greater inclination for leisure.

115. *Effect on Production of* (iii) *Expenditure on health and sanitation.*—There is no doubt that the expenditure on health and sanitation (as far as the latter is possible) results in an improvement in the effectiveness of a labour force. This has been before the tea garden employers, as witness the campaigns carried out against malaria, kala-azar, hookworm, etc.

(iv) *Housing.*—It is not possible to say whether the improvement in housing conditions of recent years has had any effect on production.

(v) *Alterations in methods of remuneration.*—The methods of remuneration vary so considerably throughout the tea districts that this Association finds it impossible to give any useful criticisms.

(vi) *Movement in wages levels.*—It is considered that increased earnings result in a lowering of efficiency.

(vii) *Legislative enactments.*—It is considered that the tea industry in Assam has suffered owing to the restrictive nature of Act VI on their recruiting operations. This question is dealt with in detail herein ; and meantime, it is only necessary to state that had freer recruiting been possible, there is no doubt that the production of tea could have been appreciably increased.

(viii) *Dietary.*—This is bound up with caste questions, with which it is undesirable to interfere.

(ix) *Alcohol and drugs.*—The employers have co-operated with the authorities in restricting the consumption of alcohol or drugs. There is no doubt that over-indulgence in these does impair the efficiency of the labourer. It must be borne in mind, however, that brewing and consumption of rice beer is closely associated with religious ceremonies.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. *Extent of organization of*—(i) *Employers.*—There is no definite organization of employers, other than the Indian Tea Association and its Branches or affiliated associations in the various tea districts. These Associations and Branches are directed towards furthering the interests of, and deal with all problems which arise in connection with, the industry.

There are labour agreements between employers in existence in the various districts, to which the great majority of the estates are signatories. These agreements are designed to prevent enticement of labour and operate by penalizing the employer only ; in no case is any penalty incurred by the labourer.

(ii) *Employed.*—There is no organization representing the employed on tea estates, as it is the established custom for the worker to represent his grievances to the manager.

XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. *Extent of strikes and lockouts.*—The strike and lockout as understood in industrial countries are unknown. Occasionally the workers on the gardens refuse to work if the tasks are larger than they should be but a strike seldom lasts more than a day or so, and is generally amicably settled. This does not of course refer to the strikes which took place a few years ago in Assam, which were the outcome of political propaganda. Having consideration to the large number of people employed on tea estates, the industry has been particularly free from strikes and this is attributed to the tactful and sympathetic handling of their labour forces by the managers. As labour is free to move at will it is necessry for managers to exercise tact.

124. *Conciliation and arbitration machinery.*—There are no conciliation boards existing in the tea districts.

XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. *Effect of repeal of Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, and* 128. *Types of Contract commonly in use.*—This has had no effect so far as tea gardens labour is concerned. It is still customary on most estates in Assam to pay the usual bonuses which were provided for under Act XIII, but these are not recovered from the labourers. These bonuses are useful for purchasing cattle, and for many other purposes, and are greatly appreciated by the labourer, so much so that it was considered inadvisable to withdraw the concession when the enactment was repealed.

129. *Extent to which* (i) *Civil,* (ii) *Criminal Law is available and used for enforcement.*—Nil.

132. *Employers and Workmen's Disputes Act : Is it used ?*—No.

The following Abstract shows the progress of recruitment from 1st September, 1928, to 31st August, 1929.

Detailed particulars are given below.

	Season 1928–29.			Season 1927–28.		
	Sardars consigned.	Coolies recruited.		Sardars consigned.	Coolies recruited.	
		Souls.	Adults.		Souls.	Adults.
Assam ..	30,474	59,684	49,568	25,867	35,662	30,008½
Cachar ..	1,420	2,562	2,064	1,314	2,046	1,712
Sylhet ..	3,782	10,709	8,296½	2,946	4,387	3,665
Chittagong ..	87	112	95	82	33	27
Dooars ..	—	32,260	27,616	—	29,871	26,038½
Total ..		1,05,327	87,639½		71,999	61,451

The following table shows the number of short-term labourers (one year or under) sent to Assam, Cachar and Sylhet included in the above Abstract :—

Agencies.	Assam.	Cachar.	Sylhet.
	Adults.	Adults.	Adults.
Bombay	9	—	5
Ranchi	8,852½	5	181
Cuttack	5	—	—
Bihar	633½	3	69½
United Provinces ..	—	—	13
Total	9,500	8	268½

The following table shows the number of short-term labourers (less than one year) sent to Dooars estates included in the above Abstract.

Agencies.	Adults.
Lohardugga	206
Dumka	720½
United Provinces	162½
Total	1,089

SEASON 1928–29 UP TO 31st AUGUST, 1929 (EXCLUDING CHITTAGONG).

Agencies.	Season 1928–29.					Season 1927–28.
	Sardars received during the Season 1928–29.	Last two Seasons Sardars reported.	Returned to Gardens.	Total Current Sardars.	Last two Seasons Sardars not reported.	Number of Sardars received.
Bilaspur	2,320	162	1,603	879	633	1,628
Raipur	1,529	135	1,098	566	942	1,588
Chanda	527	73	249	351	896	914
Bombay	643	51	513	181	145	568
Sambalpore ..	6,601	456	4,199	2,858	4,237	4,805
Jubbulpore ..	1,721	72	1,383	410	452	1,131
Ranchi	5,103	259	3,829	1,533	1,192	3,341
Palamau	897	54	672	279	214	619
Hazaribagh ..	396	16	377	35	27	326
Singbhoom ..	1,396	78	1,123	351	419	1,246
Manbhool ..	422	19	373	68	49	519
Ganjam	2,642	262	1,650	1,254	3,969	3,759
Waltair	1,147	57	881	323	644	1,216
Koraput	2,635	355	1,344	1,646	1,557	1,876
Cuttack	900	46	742	204	366	1,054
Midnapore ..	457	41	418	80	153	688
Bihar	2,807	439	1,782	1,464	855	2,015
United Provinces	2,001	124	1,709	416	338	1,534
Angul	1,221	59	943	337	250	1,007
Cuddapah ..	163	11	120	54	64	132
Guntoor ..	148	11	88	71	63	161
Total ..	35,676	2,780	25,096	13,360	17,465	30,127
Of the above from :						
Assam ..	30,474	2,469	20,862	12,081	16,032	25,867
Cachar.. ..	1,420	84	1,141	363	363	1,314
Sylhet ..	3,782	227	3,093	916	1,070	2,946

Agencies.	Coolies Recruited.											
	Season 1928–29.						Season 1297–28.					
	Assam.		Cachar.		Sylhet.		Assam.		Cachar.		Sylhet.	
	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.
Bilaspur	4,513	3,974½	82	71	74	66	1,801	1,585	101	92	66	57
Raipur	1,445	1,244½	14	10½	92	83	1,503	1,307	4	4	94	77½
Chanda	284	240½	—	—	97	93½	1,036	883½	—	—	16	13½
Bombay	2,195	1,629	208	150½	452	329	2,598	1,950	385	289	191	144½
Sambalpore	10,621	8,989	40	33⅓	284	243	4,819	4,102	43	31⅓	95	76
Jubbulpore	3,062	2,479½	559	456½	1,195	967½	1,296	1,137½	269	228½	212	185
Ranchi	17,205	13,690½	40	35	637	471½	6,132	4,996½	22	18½	169	142
Palamau	1,262	1,045½	4	3	127	107	724	599½	—	—	126	121
Hazaribagh	367	291	24	17½	69	54½	212	159	14	12	15	12½
Singhboom	1,881	1,584⅓	26	15⅓	39	30	1,077	904	9	6½	8	5
Manbhoom	167	135	15	13½	3	2	213	181½	12	11	23	19½
Ganjam	1,561	1,292	7	7	157	119	1,852	1,525½	8	4½	184	138
Waltair	757	664	69	63	265	216½	780	673	76	63½	195	156
Koraput	4,574	4,146½	13	11	1	1	2,810	2,497	3	3	7	5½
Cuttuck	596	523½	115	101½	92	84½	555	483½	69	61	102	94
Midnapore	276	214½	17	13	20	17½	295	240½	8	5	25	18½
Bihar	4,788	4,059	351	298½	387	329½	5,341	4,512½	530	463⅓	413	337
U.P.	2,808	2,210	870	671	6,506	4,890½	1,551	1,362½	306	263⅓	2,337	1,972½
Angul	882	784½	13	13	106	91	441	395½	13	10⅓	69	58
Cuddapah	259	203⅓	66	57	31	28½	303	236⅔	125	103⅓	4	4
Guntoor	181	167	29	22½	75	71½	323	276½	49	41	36	28
Total ..	59,684	49,568	2,562	2,064	10,709	8,296½	35,662	30,008½	2,046	1,712	4,387	3,665

DOOARS RECRUITING.

gencies.	Season 1928–29.		Season 1927–28.	
	Coolies recruited.		Coolies recruited.	
	Souls.	Adults.	Souls.	Adults.
Bilaspur and Raipur	667	596½	394	354½
Ranchi	3,034	2,436½	1,414	1,178
Lohardugga	20,955	18,047	12,880	11,536
Singhboom	998	849	444	392
Dumka	1,238	1,143	3,081	2,935½
Katikund	938	759½	5,228	4,381
Amrapara	1,121	898		
Simultollah	437	348	505	410
Barharwah	762	523	3,674	2,847½
Vizianagram	1,920	1,762½	2,045	1,823½
Cuddapah	8	6½	—	—
Guntoor	1	1	12	12
United Provinces	190	181	116	108
Hazaribagh	3	2	6	6
Palamau	33	19½	64	46½
Ganjam	45	43	8	8
Total	32,260	27,616	29,871	26,038½

COOLIES RECRUITED FROM CHOTA NAGPUR AGENCIES.

Assam :—	1917–18. Souls.	1918–19. Souls.	1919–20. Souls.	1920–21. Souls.	1921–22. Souls.	1922–23. Souls.	1923–24. Souls.	1924–25. Souls.	1925–26. Souls.	1926–27. Souls.	1927–28. Souls.	1928–29. Souls.
Ranchi	5,939	72,469	18,050	2,208	1,650	780	586	835	1,117	3,736	5,966	17,882
Palamau	—	—	2,191	1,230	669	308	145	295	228	476	832	1,393
Hazaribagh	352	11,137	2,022	135	71	54	81	33	101	125	247	474
Singhbhum	1,573	11,227	3,838	361	338	281	207	229	589	907	1,052	1,946
Manbhum	454	23,264	4,258	193	92	44	85	107	150	226	247	186
Total	8,318	118,097	30,359	4,127	2,820	1,467	1,104	1,499	2,185	5,470	8,344	21,881
Dooars :—												
Ranchi	5,689	27,938	3,924	1,410	1,400	238	228	335	491	1,060	1,388	3,034
Lohardugga	—	—	—	—	—	3,033	2,294	3,062	6,627	9,697	12,692	20,955
Singhbhum	13	198	25	—	—	33	53	75	201	447	430	998
Total	5,702	28,136	3,949	1,410	1,400	3,304	2,575	3,472	7,319	11,104	14,510	24,987

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY, DARJEELING PLANTERS ASSOCIATION, TO THE SECRETARY TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR IN INDIA, CAMP, DELHI, dated the 30th October, 1929.

With reference to the memorandum submitted by the Indian Tea Association to the Royal Commission on behalf of the Tea Industry in Northern India, I have to advise you that a draft of this memorandum was submitted to this Association for approval, and whilst approving generally of the memorandum as submitted, the committee of this Association pointed out that conditions in this district are somewhat different to other districts, and it was felt that the views of this Association should be incorporated in the memorandum as an annexure.

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ANNEXURE.

I.—Recruitment.

The whole of the labour employed on tea estates in the Hill District of Darjeeling is Nepalese, immigrants or descendants of immigrants within the last 80 years or so from the neighbouring country of Nepal. The vast majority of the present workers were born on the tea estates of this district, and may be regarded as a permanently settled population, engaged in a hereditary and congenial occupation. No organized recruitment in Nepal for employment in this district is now permitted by the Nepal Durbar; and any fresh additions to the labour force employed in tea, for many years past, have consisted of quite voluntary immigrants from Nepal or Sikkim, generally relations of those already in tea; and such additions form a very small percentage of the numbers employed, which are really kept up by the natural reproduction of the settled labourers.

4. As practically all immigration from Nepal has been by complete families, there has been no disturbance of family life; and families have settled complete on a tea estate, and there multiplied and prospered, and in many cases have been subsequently joined by other families and relations from the same village in Nepal.

Although the Nepal Durbar is opposed to further emigration from that country, there is still a certain drift (especially in seasons of scarcity) into the Darjeeling district for work on tea estates—and this may be taken to indicate that conditions of life on the latter are considered preferable to those in their native villages. Families once settled in tea very rarely return to Nepal. There is a certain amount of movement from garden to garden within the district, generally for purely personal reasons, to join relatives on another estate, or because it is thought that climate and altitude may be more suitable, to escape a debt, or to obtain a fresh advance of money; but such movements from garden to garden are now appreciably less than 20 years ago.

8. There is little casual employment on tea estates. A few labourers may come in from neighbouring villages for temporary work, but the proportion of such casual labour is probably never as much as 10 per cent. of the labour permanently employed.

II.—Staff Organization.

11. *Selection of Managing Staff.*—It is noted that the General Committee of the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, intend themselves to deal with this point. It may be mentioned that of the 86 tea estates which are members of the Darjeeling Planters Association (practically the whole of the tea concerns in the district) approximately 9 per cent. are owned and managed by Indians. Of the remaining 91 per cent. the great majority are owned by companies, and controlled either by managing agents in Calcutta or by boards of directors in London; but there are a few privately-owned estates controlled directly by their proprietors, and in some cases also managed by the latter.

12. The subordinate supervising staff may be said to be composed of (*a*) "duffadars," or foremen of gangs; (*b*) "chuprassies" or supervisors of several gangs or a section of work; (*c*) "munshis" or "jamadars," or supervisors of the whole outdoor work, or at any rate of several sections; (*d*) native assistants, generally in charge of outlying divisions of an estate; (*e*) head tea-makers, or tea-house sirdars, in direct charge of work within the tea factory. There is no separate system of recruitment of the above. Duffadars are selected from workers who show intelligence, trustworthiness, or influence over others.

Chuprassies are generally promoted from competent duffadars, who have some vernacular education and technical knowledge.

Munshis are also generally appointed from selected experienced men and require to have some literacy, as well as character, influence and power of handling labour.

Native assistants are men of such better education (generally English speaking), and are sometimes selected from those with clerical training and experience.

It may be said that actual experience and proved intelligence in actual work on tea estates is the main recommendation for promotion.

13. Relations generally are very satisfactory. Many of the subordinate supervisors have members of their own families, or their relations, or those of their own caste, working directly under them. No rigid or irksome discipline is enforced, and quarrels between supervisors and workers are rare. Cases of dispute between the employees over religious or caste matters, or personal quarrels (generally over family affairs) are heard and settled by the manager often with the assistance of a Panchayat or small committee of influential men. Similarly the manager and assistants are generally on very good terms with their subordinates and the workers. While a reasonably good standard of work must be insisted upon, this is generally done with tact and discretion, and allowances are made for inexperience and individual deficiencies. On estates with an experienced and competent staff and a well-settled labour force, relations between the two may be fairly said to leave little to be desired. Where troubles have occasionally arisen (and of late years these have been rare in this district) they can almost always be attributed to injudicious handling by inexperienced staff, or to workers having been previously spoilt by slovenly management, or to interference by interested agitators.

(ii) Works committees are not known in this district, nor are they required. It must be remembered that the whole of the labour force is free to move elsewhere whenever they desire, and no manager can afford by unreasonable methods to cause an exodus of his labour.

15. There is little work given on contract on tea estates, almost all the normal work being carried out by permanently settled workers under the direct supervision of the manager. Piecework is very general, and is sometimes loosely referred to as " contract " work, but this is carried out by the settled garden labour (with occasional casual additions from outside) under the permanent staff, and is not contract work, as usually meant by that term. Contracts are only made for special works, such as erection of factories or other buildings, and carriage of heavy materials, machinery, or firewood, etc., and are generally carried out with casual labour not belonging to any estate, and are of a temporary nature. There is practically no sub-contracting in such cases. The conditions under which such contract work is carried out do not differ from those of ordinary labour in the district, and no special control is required, nor are there any special effects to be noted.

III.—Housing.

Houses are provided and maintained for all labour on tea estates by the employers, free of all cost to the employees. In this district the nature of the houses varies, some being stone-built with iron roofs, some of timber or iron frame with thatch or matting roofs, and some of iron frame with iron roofs, and lath-and-plaster walls. Some of the employees prefer one type, some another. It is remarked that the last type mentioned above appears to be becoming the most popular. These have the advantage that the walls are easily renewable, when desired ; also that the houses can be moved to a fresh site if necessary, and re-erected.

It may be said that all housing is at least as good, generally better, than that of similar cultivators in Nepal or in the non-tea area of the district ; and the standard has generally improved steadily of late years. Nearly all houses have verandahs attached, which are much appreciated. As far as possible houses are provided varying in size to suit the numbers of the family occupying them.

Accommodation is made available for all permanent workers, and is fully utilized by them. There are no rents paid by permenent workers. No special problems arise in this connection.

IV.—Health.

Figures of mortality and birth rate, etc., are reported weekly by all tea estates to local police Thanas, and will be obtainable from the Deputy Commissioner's office. Working conditions may be said to be ideal for an agricultural people as regards field work on gardens, while work inside factories (in which less than 10 per cent. of the labour force are employed) is well-organized and by no means arduous.

The labour force is generally well fed, their staple food stuffs being makai (or maize), rice and vegetables. The increase in cost of these in recent years has been more than counterbalanced by the increase in earnings. In times of scarcity and dearness, most estates have arranged for imported supplies for their labourers, and distributed them at a less than cost price.

24. Most estates have now their own hospitals and Doctor Babus, and there is a district medical association maintained entirely by tea estates which employs two

British doctors who supervise the work on gardens. The services of the civil surgeons of Darjeeling and Kurseong are available for advice as regards larger measures of disease prevention, and the hospitals at Darjeeling and Kurseong deal with serious cases from tea estates. Within recent years an anti-hookworm campaign has done much to counteract this prevalent disease. Vaccination is well maintained.

Medical facilities on gardens are thus considerably in advance of those available in other agricultural areas of the province.

25. A considerable improvement is noticeable in the easiness with which tea garden employees now avail themselves of medical relief of all kinds; and this applies also to the women, who in the case of the Nepalese are less difficult of approach than most Indian races in this respect.

26. Sanitation is backward, owing to the conservatism of the labourer, but improvement is being steadily made, and latrine arrangements are gradually coming into more effective use. Water supplies are well looked after, and piped systems are being extended.

28. The existing factories rules are suitable, and provide all the safeguards that are required for the simple working of tea factories.

Control of temperature is not required in this temperate climate.

29. There are no industrial diseases connected with tea production.

31. It is usual on tea estates to give a bonus of Rs. 5 to the mother on birth of a child, with a further bonus when the child is one year old, and sometimes also at two years of age, etc., if the child is in good health and condition. Mothers are given light work before and after child-birth, and while absent for this cause are given full pay. When required, milk, etc., is provided by the estate. Medical attendance is available either at hospital or at home; but there is still difficulty in overcoming conservative prejudices and primitive methods regarding child-birth.

V.—Welfare.

Welfare officers and workers are not employed or required on tea estates, where the manager is in direct and close touch with the general conditions of his labour force.

There are primary schools on or near most estates, generally under the control of the Scots Mission, and these provide for as much educational facilities as seem to be required at present. Compulsory primary education is not considered to be a practical proposition as yet.

IX.—Hours.

In the plucking season (April to November) about eight hours per day are actually worked, i.e., from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with an hour's rest at mid-day.

In the non-plucking season, when field work consists chiefly in pruning and cultivation, the day's work can usually be completed in about six hours, exclusive of a mid-day rest—and the workers have generally all finished and gone home by about 3 p.m. Where labour is sufficient for the working of the garden there is little or no overtime done, but where labour is short of requirements, inducement is offered to work overtime, always at a higher rate than the normal, and within reasonable limits. One day a week is a complete holiday (usually Sunday); and it is only rarely, during periods of very rapid growth of leaf, that any field work is done on this holiday. The workers often voluntarily take another day or two off work during the week, when their earnings are sufficient to keep them comfortably without working the full week of six days.

There is little hard and fast regulation about hours and days of working, and the labour force has a good deal of latitude. It is considered that any official regulation of hours would be quite unnecessary, undesirable, and very difficult to put into practice, as with all agricultural employment.

XII.—Wages.

As is usual in India, the family, and not the single worker only is the bread-winner. Regular employment is afforded to men, women, and children on all tea estates. As the supply of labour is hardly equal to the demand there is no unemployment. It is impossible to state exact figures of wages and earnings, as these vary to some extent on different estates and in different parts of the district, in accordance with local conditions and customs.

In August, 1928, an attempt was made to compute the average money wage earnable by workers in tea estates, and it was calculated that the minimum average wage of ordinary workers would be about: men, 7 As.-6 pies per day; women, 6 As.; children, 2 As.-9 pies. Most workers would if industrious easily earn more than the above; since throughout the plucking season, extra " Leaf-pice " is given

for plucking more than a standard quantity of leaf per day, and the standard is varied with the amount of leaf easily available, so that good workers can easily earn double (or more) the daily wage. Much work is done on the "piece-work" system, throughout the year, and it is quite usual for good workers to earn a rupee or more per day. In addition to the money wage, all workers are housed entirely free of charge; on nearly all estates plots of garden land are allotted to families free of charge, on which they cultivate "makai" (or maize, the staple food-grain) and vegetables, some of which are sold in the bazaars by the labourers. These garden plots are much appreciated by our Nepalese labour, who are all keen cultivators. Poultry, goats, pigs, and cattle are often kept by the workers, and are a source of considerable income.

Free supplies of firewood are made available to all. On some estates clothing is given periodically; but it is generally found better for the labourers to provide their own clothes, for which their earnings are adequate. The people are generally well-clothed, and ornaments of considerable value are worn by the women. There is noticeably less rough home-spun cloth used, and more imported substantial materials.

It is the general practice to give bonuses of different kinds, e.g., for child-birth and maintenance of babies, as mentioned above; for an unbroken week's work of six days, etc. Orphan children are maintained till old enough for work, and aged and disabled workers are provided for. Advances are constantly given for expenses of weddings, funerals, and other festivals, free of interest, to be recovered by small instalment from subsequent earnings.

It is estimated that the average earnings of tea labour at the present time are about double those of 15 years ago—while the cost of living has increased by considerably less than that ratio. The supply of labour is approximately the same as it was some 15 years ago, and (as previously stated) is somewhat less than the demand —almost all gardens would willingly employ more settled labour than they now have. The tea industry in this district employing a force free to come and go as it pleases, has to compete to an increasing degree against the attractions offered to its labour by outside employers in the district, and even at times against organized recruitment for far-distant jobs which are generally wholly unsuitable for hill-bred labourers.

105. It is considered that the statutory fixing of minimum wages is in these conditions unnecessary and inadvisable.

106. Fining of labourers is rare, and is only done by the manager personally. It is only resorted to as a punishment in cases of deliberate damage to property, e.g., for felling and stealing forest trees, or for serious breaches of discipline or good order.

Proceeds of fines are generally used for the benefit of the labourer generally, such as for sports or entertainments.

107. Wages (except for subordinate staff) are generally on a daily rate, and payments are made weekly. The period elapsing before payment of wages earned varies from 2 days to about 10 days. It is considered that legislation in this connection is quite unnecessary.

Unclaimed wages are practically unknown.

108. The Nepalese labourer is very prone to run into debt. Efforts to counteract the evil effects of this are constant, and good results have accrued from the system of prompt payments of wages; the daily, as against the weekly or monthly, rate which is more readily understood and checked; the system of advances (without interest) by estates (rather than by bazaar lenders) for customary requirements, the restriction of such advances in amount, the insistance upon gradual repayment and prevention escape from such debts by absconding from garden to garden.

109. Bonus and profit-sharing arrangements are generally only in use as regards the more important of the subordinate staff, such as native assistants, munshis, or head tea-makers. They would not be practicable or understandable to the labour force generally.

110. Leave is only taken to a small extent by the workers individually, but is freely allowed whenever it seems to be desired for adequate reasons. There are certain poojahs or general holidays in the year, when work on tea estates is suspended entirely.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112 to 115. It is difficult to estimate any changes in efficiency of the workers generally in recent years.

General health is certainly better, owing to measures of disease-prevention, increased expenditure on medical facilities, and a readier recourse to these by workers.

Physique shows little change, except that the women appear to be generally more robust. Education has spread, but many garden-bred men after acquiring some education, leave the tea gardens for better paid employment outside. Standards of living seem to be slowly but steadily rising, and the workers are generally less primitive in their ideas and habits. There is no excessive use of alcoholic drink generally; but on holidays and festivals there is a good deal of convivial drinking.

116. It is considered that the only practical method of obtaining increased efficiency of the labour force is by :—(*a*) Further measures for disease prevention, and reduction of temporary sickness. (*b*) Improvement of water supplies, sanitation, and ventilation of houses. The two latter are chiefly a matter of the gradual education of the people in hygiene—towards which the constant efforts of the medical establishment are directed. (*c*) Cultivation of a higher standard of efficiency and trustworthiness in the subordinate staff.

XIV.—Trade Combinations.

There is a Darjeeling Planters' Association, of which practically every tea estate in this district is a member. There is a labour agreement of which the great majority of estates are signatories. This is a simple agreement designed to prevent undue competition between estates to secure labourers and to regulate matters arising on the movement of labourers from one estate to another. There is no recognized organization or union of tea estates employees.

V.—Industrial Disputes.

Industrial disputes are fortunately almost unknown in this district. If there is an occasional strike, it is almost always confined to a single estate, and is due to purely local and temporary causes, and is generally very quickly adjusted.

The only approach to any general unrest among the labourers in our district during recent years was in 1921, when paid agitators were sent by the Non-co-operation Organization in Bengal, with the specific object of stirring up the workers in tea against the managers and proprietors. In spite of very wide-spread and energetic propaganda by agitators on almost all tea gardens, and in spite of the pathetic gullibility of the labourers, the surprising inertia of the Government, in face of a seriously threatened outbreak of disorder in a particularly law-abiding district, little effective result was achieved, thanks to the loyalty and good sense of the great majority of the tea garden labourers, and to the influence and tact of the managers in charge. This attempt collapsed completely as soon as the Government permitted adequate measures to be put in force against the disturbers of the peace.

In conclusion my committee venture to think that the conditions under which tea garden labour is now employed in this district compare very favourably, as regards earnings, housing, medical and sanitary measures, elementary education, and general welfare, with those of any agricultural labour in any part of India, they consider that where (as in our case) the continued prosperity and even the existence of the industry is entirely dependent upon the maintenance of a contented and sufficient labour force, and where that labour force is entirely free to work or to move elsewhere as it chooses, there can be little justification for official or legislative interference with the conditions under which that labour lives, and that more harm than benefit to the labourers as a whole is likely to ensue from any such interference with the close personal touch and friendly relations which have always existed between the Darjeeling Planters and their excellent labour.

THE TERAI PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN LABOUR—PER FAVOUR OF THE INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.

Dated Lohaghur, Panighata, P.O., the 4th November, 1929.

The members of my Association desire to associate themselves with the statement submitted by the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta.

Conditions in the Terai with regard to labour and recruiting are practically the same as those in the Dooars.

The few gardens on the foothills employing Nepali labour may be classed in the same category as those which are included in the statement submitted by the Darjeeling Planters' Association.

Mr. W. L. TRAVERS, C.I.E., O.B.E., M.L.C., BARADIGHI TEA ESTATE, JALPAIGURI.

Tea Garden Labour in the Dooars.

. . . . . .

Before that terrible scourge, the influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919, struck India, the labourers on the tea gardens of the Dooars hailed from Chota Nagpur, from the Santhal Parganas and from Chaibassa, with a large contingent of Nepali people, who came chiefly from the borders of Bhutan and Darjeeling.

But the influenza took so heavy a toll of the people in Chota Nagpur that the Dooars planter was obliged for a while to go further afield and to recruit some Madrassies and a few others. These are not very numerous in proportion even now, and the majority of the labourers are families of the Oroan, Munda, Kharia, and Santal races from the provinces of Bihar and Orissa. There are some of what one might call the semi-Hindooize castes of the same districts, Lohas and the like, and perhaps 30,000 to 40,000 Nepalis. Apart from Assam, there are probably 300,000 workers and dependants upon the tea gardens of North Bengal, in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling.

The large majority of the people are agricultural. That is to say, they are employed upon work in the fields. The men hoe the land and drain it, and the women pluck the leaf from the bushes which becomes the crop. A small percentage, about one-tenth of the working force, is employed in the factory, in changing the raw green leaf into the black tea which is packed into the box.

Before discussing the life of a tea garden labourer, there is one marked difference between that life and the introduction to the life and conditions in other industries, to which attention should first be drawn. For our labourer not only lives and has his being upon a large estate belonging to his employer, but he is conveyed and brought to that estate, in the initiative, from his home district right to his work, at no cost to himself at all. For this important purpose of recruiting the tea industry maintains a large and widely extended organization. There is an agent, whose special job it is, in every district where there is a surplus population, to recruit those willing to work with their hands, and to emigrate, perhaps only for a year though it may be longer.

The system is called " Sardaree Recruiting " and it is entirely upon a voluntary basis. A sardar or a recruiter leaves the estate with credentials, and journeys to his native district and village. There, where the population presses hardly upon the land and the people are poor, the sardar tells his relations and friends of the wages, and life and conditions upon the tea garden. Everything is discussed in detail which would surprise his manager, the Saheb. You may be sure that his idio-syncrasies and personality, from the point of view of his labourers, are discussed in many villages. There are probably a number of recruiters from different estates and districts. The younger people, those whom the land cannot support, listen to the accounts of the new life which is to be theirs, and finally they decide to accompany some recruiter, generally a relation or connection, to Assam or to Bhutan, as they still call the Dooars. They are taken to a depot where the agent of the recruiting organization sees them and enquires. No married girl or woman is accepted unless her husband is with her. No minor is accepted unless it is certain that his parents approve, and a full register is kept for inspection by officers of Government. All care is taken and then the recruit is given a money bonus, clothes, and a little outfit. He is placed in charge of a peon, constantly thus employed, who takes a little squad of recruits right through to the garden, seeing that his charges are fed and looked after on the way. The recruit arrives and is given more money to keep him until he earns ; he is given a house and finds himself generally amongst relations and friends who have been on the estate for some time. Thus our new labourer begins the tea garden life, fair and square, with no debt, unless indeed he has applied to the agent, and been given money in his country to pay a Mahajan or to leave with his people. A labourer can, if he wills, and many do, send money to his parents, almost immediately. Lacs of rupees, many lacs, are sent from the tea districts to Chota Nagpur and other recruiting districts every year. The money is sent to pay the rent of the ancestral plot of land, to pay the money-lender of the village, for the family support, or for marriage of brothers—for a thousand purposes it aids the family and the villages from whence comes the tea garden coolie.

The whole of this recruiting system for tea gardens is under the inspection and supervision of Government, under rules and regulations, watched by the provincial administrations. For the Dooars there are a few regulations, though even to there recruiting is now supervised. There were none, because the Dooars tea garden labourer has always been free and under no contract or agreement. In Assam there used to be an agreement for work, but now that has been eliminated too. Indeed the Linlithgow Commission expressed the opinion that restrictions upon tea garden

recruiting in the movement of labour should be done away with altogether. No other industry is thus handicapped, and officers of the Government of Assam and of Bengal inspect gardens and see that the labourers receive good treatment. Besides, the people are free to come and to go, and competition insures that treatment.

But the tea industry itself desires a measure of supervision of recruiting. To prevent abuses, to prevent enticement, it wishes to have simple, clear regulations by which it can itself supervise, in co-operation and consultation with the Governments of the provinces from which come its labourers. The tea industry knows full well that clean recruiting is a great asset. With its employees well treated as they are in the gardens, free to come and to go to their homes if they desire, the men who run the industry know that they can always obtain a sufficiency of labour. But irksome, expensive regulations harm both employer and the employed. What is required is a Board with representatives of each Government concerned, to sit with the nominees of the industry, and thus to manage this great recruiting organization of a great industry. The Government officers, each from his province, would watch the interests of the labourer, and the industry itself would pay their salaries. But what the industry does not desire is the inclusion of politicians or outsiders, who know nothing or little of the industry, and who would interfere in what is entirely a willing and voluntary movement of free labour, too poor to pay for transport to a distant field of work. It should not be forgotten that the tea industry is a great asset to the provinces from which its labourers are drawn, and that not only in the continuous stream of rupees which the people send. For in times of famine and scarcity, thousands and thousands of people go off to the gardens, far more than they require for their actual work. The coolies in the estate clamour for permission to go: "My relations are hungry, Sahib, do let me bring them here." The tea managers' labourers are *his* people—he feels that he must provide. And when there is real famine the poor recruits cannot do much work, often for weeks. They have to regain their strength and health. Thus is Government relieved of much expenditure and the people gain. For after a while, when prosperity returns in their home village, they return and not empty handed.

Next for the labourer's life in the tea garden itself.

The labourer and his wife (like anyone else he is not much good without her) are generally happy and contented persons. Their earnings are ample and good. They suffice for twice the food that was consumed in their country. Plenty of clothes and household goods and chattels; cows, goats, and fowls are bought. If thrifty, the labourer and his wife can quickly buy jewellery, and three or four years' savings will be enough for purchase of land. Many, many thousands have settled as ryots in Assam and in the Dooars. They still like to be near a garden so that the children can work there. And the children swarm with a huge birth-rate. On the estate the labourer is housed free. He has a convenient and excellent water supply, and firewood for the gathering and fetching. If sick, he is paid until he is well, and often his wife is paid too to attend upon him. There is a hospital for serious cases, with an Indian doctor, generally qualified, in charge, supervised by a British or Indian medical man of home qualification. The wife receives pay for three months when the periodical baby arrives, and the baby, too, is watched. If the mother be ailing the child is fed properly and supervised.

Then, on many estates, there is land. The householder labourer has a plot of land at a nominal rent and the rice helps the family on its way. Moreover, if he wants money for the marriage of a son, to buy a cow, for a Pooja or for any real want it is advanced to him, free of interest, to be recovered gradually. This is the "Ma Bap" system where the manager cares for his people, knows them well, attends to their wants, and tries his best to keep them happy and contented. He must do so. The garden has to bring its workmen from hundreds of miles away. They will not come naturally unless the life is good. The manager has to provide for the wastage of the force, to replace those who return or go to the bustees. Moreover, if he is not kind and sympathetic, the coolies will quietly arrange to go elsewhere and disappear. Many absconders would bring to the manager the loss of his billet, and perhaps of his livelihood. Thus it is to his own self interest to study the wants and content of his labour force.

But there is much more than self interest. For living years amongst kindly, simple people from Chota Nagpur or elsewhere, the normal British manager or assistant becomes very fond of them. Perhaps, and it often happens, the Sahib lives many years upon one estate. So do many of his labourers. He watches a new generation grow up from childhood to manhood and womanhood. He helps with their marriages and a thousand of their family affairs. Naturally there is affection between the coolie and the Sahib. The hard task-master now-a-days is hardly known in tea. Personality and sympathy count for so much. The good planter generally has a good labour force, unless he is, unhappy man, on one of those estates which have so many disadvantages for the labourer, that even sympathy, justice, and knowledge are outweighed.

To return to the labourer and his life, in a garden. He lives in a village or cluster of houses. His neighbours are relations, connections and friends of his own race. Perhaps they all come from the same village in Chota Nagpur or elsewhere, or from villages not far away. That helps the life. They really know each other. There is a Sirdar or elder to turn to for advice. A house can be left without fear of theft, though this is rare for there is often some old grandfather or dependent, and children, with the cattle and goats grazing not far away. The hours of work are not lengthy. A man hoeing, finishes his task in six hours. Plucking takes longer, but it is easy work, not arduous, with plenty of time for talk and laughter, and extra pay for all the leaf over a fair task. Moreover, the labourer has his amusements—relaxation, shikar ; the dance and the song in the longer evenings ; visiting and seeing his friends and people on other gardens ; the weekly bazaar, a good gathering for gossip and a little business and shopping. The younger boys and men are taking to football, and the occasional touring cinema for the estate is a great delight. A few progressive and large gardens have installed their own cinemas. It pays for the husband who takes his wife to see the pictures on leave day, keeping away from the drink.

The Chota Nagpur and Santal races are Animists in religion, and this brings us to one of the managers' greatest difficulties in his health and welfare schemes, for these people are intensely superstitious. Lingering illness, sickness out of the normal (especially pneumonia), the sudden death of the tropics. To them when such a case begins, thought turns not to the doctor and to medicine and treatment, but to the eviction of the evil spirit, that some witch or wizard has brought into the sick one. An " Ojga " may be sent for to discover indeed, who is the witch or wizard, and terrible results sometimes follow. A wave of superstitious fear will also occasionally sweep through a whole country side. It is whispered that evil ones from the west are stealing children. Mothers gather the little ones early to their houses. The men are uneasy and fractious, suspicious of strangers. Woe befalls any stranger who may quite unwittingly enter Munda or Santal lines in the evening at such a time. If he speaks, or laughs to a child he may be attacked, and even killed. Such superstition, interwoven into their whole being, makes the task of the manager difficult and hard when fighting against pestilence and epidemic. It is useless to tell the Oroan or the Kharia that there are no evil spirits or " Bhuts." They know better and say amongst themselves that the Sahib is ignorant of this country. Labourers are free. They cannot be dragooned into health and sanitation measures. Patience, tact, sympathy are the only weapons. These and persistance will gradually raise the standard. The health upon many tea gardens, those with an old settled force, is wonderful. The author inspects several such estates in Cachar every year, places where the people have been for generations, and now look upon as their homes. Upon one garden in the past eight years the total death-rate has only once been over 15 per thousand. Generally it is about 12 per thousand—as healthy as an English city. Epidemics are provided for. The water is good, and the only cholera is introduced from bustees outside the garden, with an occasional case from bad fish or food. But now the vaccine soon defeats an epidemic. The great evil still to fight is malaria. Cachar and parts of Assam have little of it. But in parts of the Dooars, and especially the Western Dooars, in some years it takes a distressing toll. Spraying is now being done upon most estates to fight the mosquitoes. An expert has been called in, and has advised, but more is yet required. As it is, each tea district is divided into circles of 10, 12 and 15 gardens under a British medical officer, with an Indian doctor resident on each. The first object should be to obtain qualified Indian doctors for this position trained in the medical school, upon *every* estate. With the increasing number of medical schools, qualified men of this status are now ready and willing to work upon the estates. Secondly the charge of the British doctor is much too large. Five estates are quite sufficient for his supervision. As it is, he is only a consultant. ' He has not time to advise the manager upon the many health problems which confront him.

. . . . . .

He ought to visit with the Indian doctor the whole of the lines of each estate once a week, to work among and get to know the people, just as the staff on the tea-producing and making side do. These many schemes of prevention could be initiated, with a general rise in health. Lastly each tea district of 50 gardens should have a Board of Health, with a qualified scientific research worker to map out general policy, and the special policy in co-operation with each circle's staff. These proposals are what the progressive planter, who loves his people, most earnestly desires. If only the tea industry will return to stable prosperity so that there may be the money available for such schemes of health and welfare and amenities for the labourer, the better will be the health, the more contented and happy be the people, the better the work to be obtained. One looks forward to the time when health is so improved that the large sums of money required for recruiting new labourers will be lessened almost to nothing, for many labourers settle altogether on the tea garden. They have more comfort and amenities than in their home village, and the younger sons and brothers have to make good somewhere away. The land cannot support the increasing population for it is poor.

APPENDIX.

A Short Note upon Primary Education and the Dooars Tea Garden Labourers.

The population of any tea garden in the Dooars contains, as a rule, people not from one, but several, of the races of Chota Nagpur. Upon one estate there will be a number of Oraons, of Mundas, of Kharias, of Santhals, and of other races and semi-Hindooized castes. The Oraon tribe is the largest, and upon a few estates they are in a considerable majority, forming perhaps 90 per cent. of the population. There one of the many difficulties of education is less, but on a great number of gardens the varying proportions of different tribes, speaking a language entirely different, is a serious problem. It is true that all the people learn to speak the lingua franca, more or less, but the real secondary language of the Chota Nagpur peoples is the Gwawali dialect, with a Deva Nagri sorip, while that of the Santhals is Bengalee.

Two teachers, therefore, are required in many schools—one to teach the Chota Nagpur people and another those who wish to learn Bengalee. Upon gardens to the north a further complication is introduced because upon them the Nepalese are resident, and they have to be considered. And there the number of teachers may be taken to three. It is very difficult to find a suitable teacher. Upon the grant allowed by the educational department it is only possible to secure a Duffadar or headman of the garden, who will teach for three hours or so in the evening as a subsidiary occupation. I have known some of that class to be quite efficient at teaching the three " R's." To secure a man of even moderate efficiency, however, a tea garden has to pay his salary. The whole question of the supply of teachers requires investigation and arrangement. It has been suggested that educated Oraons should be secured from Chota Nagpur.

The aboriginal labourer does not at present approve of the education of his children. In Chota Nagpur the standard of literacy amongst the people is very low, and the percentage would be lower still if it were not for the devoted services to education of the several Missionary Societies and organizations. Even with encouragement from the manager, it is usually only possible to persuade a small proportion of the boys to go to school. An evening school is more successful than the all day school. Parents do not mind the attendance then so much.

On every tea garden under British control there is I believe a small school where the rudiments of primary education are available, boys being taught to read and to write and simple arithmetic. But the whole system now requires overhaul and rearrangement, with a special inspector and a central school to give more advanced education. The Dooars Planters' Association has not advanced the matter, because a draft bill has been before the Bengal Legislative Council. If the bill were enacted there would be a District School Board, and it remains to be seen how the special organization which is required for a backward people, labourers in an agricultural industry, could be created. If the bill, which has been through a council committee comes before the council, I shall bring the matter forward.

INDIAN TEA PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION, JALPAIGURI.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Almost the whole of the labour force in Dooars tea gardens is recruited from Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas excepting only some paharias and a few meches.

(ii) Better earning prospects and congenial nature of work as well as want of sufficient arable lands in their native districts.

(iii) Less recruitment and migration because of gradual development of recruiting districts and availability of local labour from amongst settlers in this part of the district and also perhaps due to decrease of population in the recruiting districts owing to epidemics in 1918. Nowadays more short term (6 monthly and 9 monthly) labourers are available.

2. (i) About 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. of the recruits visit their native provinces once a year and some return, but others (though few) resettle at home.

(ii) Of the labour force employed 70 per cent. to 75 per cent. are permanent dwellers on the estate. Some jat of labourers like to return more frequently to their native places than others.

3. (i) Sardari recruitment (free labour).

(ii) Perhaps propaganda work may improve. But the present system is quite a success.

(iii) Public employment agencies are unnecessary and are also undesirable as same would smack of indenture and may cause practical difficulties and give rise to distrusts in the mind of the immigrants.

4. Generally families migrate the system in vogue does not cause any disturbance of family life. Under short term system the recruits return after 6 or 9 months to their own family hearth and home.

8. (i) Labour force living on the estate are employed throughout the year.

(ii) 10 per cent. of total labour employed are casual " basti " labourers from neighbouring villages. Some " Nunia " labourers visit periodically for making roads, etc., on contract system and also some Nepalese and Bhutias come down in cold weather for contract work of sawing, thatch cutting, etc.

II.—Staff Organization.

11. The managers and garden officers are appointed from head offices or managing agency offices. Some of the lower grade subordinate staff are appointed from labourers.

12. Competent labourers are employed as headmates or daffadars. Literate and intelligent labourers are promoted to responsible subordinate supervising posts as Baidars, etc.

13. Relation generally is good and cordial.

15. Labourers are never placed under contractors and intermediaries. But contract works are given to outside temporary contractors for such works as cutting of firewood from forests, cutting of thatch grass, etc.

III.—Housing.

Free house accomodation is provided to all the labourers by the employers. Generally one fair sized house accomodation is provided according to the labourers' requirements, a cookshed and a cattle shed to a family are also provided. The houses are on open ground conformably to their habits. No rent charged or taken.

IV.—Health.

23. (i) Figures of mortality. From report on the working of Jalpaiguri Labour Act during 1927–28—22·40 per mille.

(ii) Birth rate 39·73 per mille and infant mortality roughly 80 per 1,000 births.

(iii) Working conditions : (*a*) At work places—working conditions are good and favourable for labourers. They work freely and when they feel disinclined they do not have to work. A small number work in the factory under factory regulations. (*b*) At home—they do food crops cultivation and cattle rearing on their own accounts on lands provided free of rent by their employers.

(iv) Rice, pulses, vegetables, occasionally meat and fish in turns at time of high prices. Rice is supplied by the employers at below market rates.

(v) Good.

(vi) No mentionable disturbance of sex ratio in tea garden.

24. (i) Free service of medical officers (doctors permanently employed on tea estates) and free supply of medicines and sick diets are provided. Amongst Indian gardens an Indian Planters' Medical Board has been established and group medical officers recruited from medical graduates (M. B.s) of Universities are placed in charge of a group of 6 to 10 gardens.

25. Freely utilized by the labourers and they are being gradually educated up to come to and stay at garden hospitals when seriously ill.

26. Latrines and urinals are often provided for factory labourers near factories but the labourers do not like to use them. Labourers are averse to use latrines being against their habits and they prefer waste lands for such purposes.

27. No board of health in Duars gardens. Plantations are occasionally inspected by the district civil surgeon.

28. The major portion of work is agricultural. The existing factory rules are difficult to observe owing to aboriginal labourers working there.

(i) No abnormally high temperature in tea factories and so no artificial cooling is necessary. The hot exhaust airs fanned out are often utilised in witherings of tea leaves.

29. *Industrial Diseases.*—Nil.

31. (i) Under existing scheme maternity allowance is given for sometime before and after confinements. The existing system is working well and the labourers are quite happy and contented.
(ii) and (iii). None necessary at all.

V.—Welfare (other than Health, Housing, but including Education).

32. (i) Primary schools are provided in many gardens. Sports and shows on festival times and entertainment by jatras and cinemas are occasionally provided.
(ii) Practically none.

33. There are no special welfare officers other than the garden staff. They help the labourers in their wants and difficulties.

34. (i) Jatra and theatre and bioscope shows are provided occasionally.
(ii) Nil.

35. Some improvement among the workers. They enjoy these very much and they always live a happy contented life with dancings, singings, etc., after the days' workings.

38. *Co-operation.*—The employers often advance moneys to labourers for purchase of carts, buffaloes, etc., free of interest. At times of high prices of food crops and specially during famine years paddy and rice are supplied to them at rates much lower than the market rates.

IX.—Hours.

(*c*) In factory and for other works five to seven hours. They work on contract work system about 6 hours with 2 hours rest at midday.
(*d*) Other establishments.

78. The working days are generally six days in the week excepting special festival holidays which are very few. The hours worked per week vary considerably. It depends entirely on the inclination of the respective labourer. Those who work regularly every day, whose number is very very few indeed may work for 36 hours weekly.

79. Working days are generally six days in the week. The hat day being a holiday on special festival occasions, viz. : during Dolepuja time and Durgapuja time there are holidays.
But the average working day of the labourer may be said to be only three days.

80 Not desirable. As any regulations for compulsory work may be attended with great difficulties and troubles.

XII.—Wages.

96. A good working adult male labour earns from 12 annas to Rs. 1 and sometimes even Rs. 1-4 annas to Rs. 1-8 annas. A good working adult female earns from 9 annas to 12 annas during off season and from 15 annas to Rs. 2-4 annas during plucking season. Good working children labourers earn from 4 annas to 6 annas per diem.
The rates of work (haziri) are on piece work or rather contract work system, viz. : so much amount of work for the first haziri so much for second haziri and so on. The amount of piece-work to be done for the second and third and fourth and fifth are smaller and smaller from the respective previous one. The rate of payment for each haziri is 4 annas for a male, 3 annas for a female and As. 1-6 pies for each of the children.

97. No special movements in tea areas are perceptible, but rate of work of each haziri have come down much lower owing to competition of haziri work rates in neighbouring gardens. In some gardens where the labourers are very short, 5, 6 even 7 haziries are allowed daily to working labourer to attract more labour from neighbouring bustees and neighbouring gardens.

98. Amount should be considerable. It is not possible to ascertain this. But when a labourer returns home after a few years' stay and work, he takes a good deal of money with him.

99. No wages are paid in kind. But many free gifts such as free housing, free water, free firewood, free medical attendance and medicines, free advances, free grazing and agricultural lands have to be paid which really go a great way in helping them to be well provided.

101. (i) No agreement with the labourers but the system of rate of work in vogue in each subdistrict is generally followed by all.
(ii) The rates of haziri works are fixed by manager giving due consideration to the system in vogue in the neighbourhood.

103. Throughout the Duars and Terai a standard rate is fixed with the quality of work to be done with the approval of the several Planters' Associations.

104. *Effect of Wage Changes on Labour Supply.*—Present larger earnings have beneficially affected migration. But change of wages during normal times have a tendency to bring in discord and animosity between neighbouring gardens.

105. *Minimum Wages.*—Absolutely unnecessary.

106. *Deductions.*—(i) Practically nil.
(ii) Nil.
(iii) Nil.
(iv) Quite unnecessary.

107. (i) Daily wages are paid weekly or monthly. Daily extra works are paid for generally weekly but extra leaf plucking prices are paid daily. Weekly advances on wages earned are freely given.

(ii) The monthly payments are generally made during first or second week of the month. But monthly advances for purchasing food and necessaries are made on hat days.

(iii) Absolutely unnecessary. The system is working very satisfactorily.

(iv) Unclaimed wages extremely rare.

108. Not much indebtedness. In case of advances for purchase of carts, bullocks, etc., these are realized very slowly and gradually.

109. There is no profit sharing scheme in use. But bonuses generally at five to ten rupees varying with regularity of attendance and satisfactory workings are paid.

110. No annual leave except to those who want to return to their native districts with promise of coming back and this is usually three months. Leave not generally taken by workers. But they absent themselves from works whenever it pleases them.

(ii) Labourers who want to return to garden are paid their travelling inward.

XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. *Comparative Changes in Efficiency of Indian Workers in Recent Years.*—Efficiency increased a little for tea garden workers.

. . . . . .

The REV. TANURAM SAIKIA, M.L.C., Golaghat, Assam.

1. *Origin of Labour.* (With reference to the tea industry in the Assam Valley).—The great majority of coolies on the gardens are immigrants, or descended from immigrants. On some gardens, however, Kacharis, Nagas, Mikirs and other hill peoples of Assam are employed. Men of the Assamese race are employed as mistris and overseers.

Recently many Oriyas and Telegus have come to work on the new railroads, but on the whole there are not as many immigrants coming as formerly.

6. *Recruitment for Assam.*—Government control is most helpful for the welfare of the coolies. At present there are many inequalities between the methods and practices of the larger companies and smaller private gardens not only with regard to recruitment, but in matters of wages, sanitation, housing, etc. These methods should be standardized and regulated.

16. It is the custom on all gardens for the company or private manager to provide houses for the labourers.

22. Conditions are much better than they once were, and on the whole much better than in the villages, but there is room for improvement on many of the gardens.

37. On some gardens there is no provision for orphan or dependent children or for old and disabled men. These are left to go about begging, and there is no help for them in case of illness.

40. Primary education is essential to the welfare of the labouring classes. It is the foundation for improvement along every line. The children should be given opportunity to learn various kinds of crafts as well as to read and write. I agree with Lt.-Col. W. D. Smiles as he is quoted in " The Assam Review " for July, 1929 :—

" At present we have too many high schools and not sufficient primary schools, and ' the ryot is paying for the education of the Babu's son.' After all, agriculture is the backbone of our province, and we ought to make it possible for the ryots and the tea garden coolies as well to have a sufficient education to save themselves from the grip of the moneylender, to encourage thrift, and to appreciate and be able to make use of the savings bank and the co-operative society".

Mr. C. S. MULLAN, M.A., I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, Jorhat.

I have the honour to submit the following note on vital statistics in tea gardens (item 143 of the schedule of subjects), with special reference to this district, which is one of the largest tea districts in Assam. This note may be read along with paragraphs 181 and 182 of Chapter VI of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921–22.

2. The official figures of vital statistics on tea gardens are compiled *districtwari* from the annual returns submitted by managers under Rule 61 of the rules made by the Government of Assam under Act VI of 1901. These figures are then consolidated in the offices of the Commissioners of Divisions, and are published in the annual reports on immigrant labour. In addition to the annual returns, managers are also required to submit a monthly return of vital statistics. These returns are sent to the Sub-divisional or District Magistrate and are forwarded by him to the civil surgeon of the district, who uses the figures for the compilation of his district public health returns, and these are finally consolidated and published in the annual reports on public health. There is really no check in the case of any of these returns. The real check is made at the time of the inspection of the estate by the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer, who examines the registers of vital occurrences and calculates the death and birth rate since last inspection, comparing them with the previous figures and drawing the attention of the manager to any irregularities or points of importance.

3. The entries in the Garden Registers of Births and Deaths are invariably entered by the Doctor Babus of the gardens, who, except in the case of events which take place in the garden hospital, generally receive information from the line choukidars. The entries are in many cases initialled by the visiting European medical officers, who, as a general rule, make weekly visits to the individual gardens in their group. Correct registration, therefore, depends almost entirely on the Doctor Babus. Managers as a class are quite eager that their registers should be correctly kept, but they look to the Doctor Babu and the visiting medical officer to see that this is done, and few pay any personal attention to the matter.

4. The following are the death and birth rates (1) for the Assam Valley division, (2) for Sibsagar district for the last five years for which figures are available. The year is for the year ending on the 30th of June annually.

	Assam Valley.		Sibsagar District.	
	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.
1923–24	31·11	22·5	33·6	20·5
1924–25	30·41	23·91	33·1	22·06
1925–26	30·62	21·79	34·5	20·62
1926–27	31·64	21·16	35·1	19·52
1927–28	32·41	20·61	35·6	19·03
1928–29	Figures not available.		33·2	22·25

The figures for tea gardens in the Sibsagar district given in the Public Health Report are as follows :—

	Births.	Deaths.
1923	30·77	22·2
1924	30·63	20·33
1925	29·0	17·32
1926	31·18	17·09
1927	32·01	16·50

It will be noticed that even allowing for the fact that the figures in one case are for calendar years and in the other case for years ending on the 30th June, it is difficult to see how the figures can be reconciled, although both sets of figures are based on the same information, namely on the managers' returns.

The provincial figures for birth and death rates are as follows. The figures for Bengal death rates are also given.

	Assam.		Bengal.
	Births.	Deaths.	Deaths.
1923	28·82	23·54	25·5
1924	31·04	27·30	25·8
1925	29·08	22·52	24·9
1926	30·82	23·02	24·74
1927	30·25	23·47	25·6

I am afraid that any comparative study of any of these sets of figures would be useless, as there can be no doubt that they are all quite unreliable and more or less worthless. The following extracts from inspection notes recorded by me in April

to June this year may be of interest. Of the examples given two are gardens managed by Europeans with European visiting medical officers, and two are Indian gardens without any visiting European medical officer. I could give other examples of a similar nature.

Garden " G."—Population over 800; all settled. Men 227, women 215, boys 178, girls 152, infants under 2, 61.

" For the last 26 months the death rate works out at 10·8 per mille. For the 28 months before that, i.e., from October, 1924, to April, 1927, the death rate was the same, viz., 10 per mille. This is, of course, less than the death rate in England. . . . . My opinion is that the figures shown are incredible, and that deaths must have taken place which have not been entered into the register."

Garden " S."—Population over 1,500. Sexes equally distributed. " The death rate works out at 10 per mille in 1927 and 19·4 per mille in 1928. The 1927 death rate is a complete impossibility. The reason is that out of the 53 births in 1927 not a single child is shown as having died. This, of course, is impossible in this country, where the rate of infantile mortality is so high. It is clear that the deaths of infants in this garden are not being properly recorded."

Garden " M " (Indian).—Over 400 coolies. Sexes equal. Death rate works out at 18 per mille. " There was only one death in 1927. I should regard this as an impossibility. I questioned the Doctor Babu on the subject of reporting deaths in the garden. He told me it is the line choukidar's duty to report. Apparently when the Doctor Babu gets no report he does not bother. . . . It is incredible that out of 21 children born in 1928 and 1929 not a single one has died."

Garden " R " (Indian).—About 400 coolies. Sexes equal. " Death rate 14, which is exceedingly low. Of the 35 children who were born in the last 26 months only two died."

5. The main inaccuracy in the figures of vital statistics in tea gardens lies, in my opinion, in the non-recording of infants' deaths. There are no separate registers for showing infants' deaths prescribed by the rules, and infants are included along with children (up to 15 years) in the Children's Death Register. Hence in the District or Divisional Immigrant Labour Reports no separate figures for infantile mortality are given. My general conclusions are that the statistics for births in tea gardens in the district are fairly accurate, but the figures of the district death rate are quite unreliable. This does not mean that the figures of all gardens are unreliable. In certain gardens the figures are very accurate, and most excellent graphs of birth and death rates are maintained.

6. There is, of course, no reason why accurate figures cannot be maintained in tea gardens. Everything depends on the Doctor Babus, and any improvement in accuracy must depend upon their realization of the value of such statistics as a guide to the health of the garden. Official courses of instruction to garden Doctor Babus in vital statistics and graphical methods of representation, with a diploma to those who had passed the course, might effect a considerable improvement.

Mr. F. A. S. THOMAS, I.C.S., REGISTRAR OF JOINT STOCK COMPANIES AND TRADE UNIONS, ASSAM.

Question 51.—When I was Deputy Commissioner, and *ex-officio* Commissioner for disputes under the Workmen's Compensation Act, for the district of Lakhimpur, I dealt with a fair number of cases. I believe I am right in saying that none originated in tea garden factories. Practically every case was the result of action instituted by the Assam Oil Company or the Assam Railways and Trading Company, both of which concerns, whenever an appropriate accident occurred, made a practice of depositing in court the full sum due under the Act, according to their interpretation of the facts. If I agreed with the assessment, I called in the payee to receive payment. Otherwise I first of all cleared up the point in doubt by a court hearing in the usual way. The policy of these two companies, in fact, which I endeavoured to assist, was to familiarize their labour with the law even though it involved them in unnecessary trouble, and often in payments which they would never have had to make had they left the initiative to the workmen. There was, I think, only one case (or possibly two) in which the workman disputed the assessment of his own motion.

Question 123.—I have never known of a lock-out in Assam. Strikes, however, are on the whole infrequent considering how ignorant and easily led are the labour forces on the tea gardens.

(i) *Causes.*—The ostensible cause of strikes is almost invariably a demand for an increase of pay. I have very often found, however, that the real cause is something quite different—some real or fancied grievance arising from lack of supervision or oppression by the subordinate staff; some rumour often wildly impossible, of concessions made on other gardens in the matter of wages or tasks; or quite often simply a desire on the part of a section of the labour force to leave the garden and settle elsewhere. With regard to this last, the coolie knows quite well that he is entitled to go when he likes, but prefers to put a good face on it by making up some financial grievance. I have never, I think, found real economic need at the back of a coolie strike. Other causes are contagion from strikes on other gardens, when the coolies have no real idea why they have struck work; an unpopular manager or simply a desire to " try it on " with a new manager or assistant. The most extensive series of strikes with which I have ever had to deal, which quickly involved the labour forces of about eighteen distinct estates was (like most strikes) due to a combination of causes. A young manager had been transferred from one estate to another of the same company very shortly after a minor assault had been committed on him. Unfortunately the company's superintendent who lived on the garden to which he was transferred went on leave quite soon after his arrival. The opportunity was too good to miss, and the coolies struck for a large increase of pay (about 100 per cent. I think). They quite obviously thought that they had to deal with a young manager who had been driven away from one garden, and who would be ready to give way to them. After two days I was called in to settle the strike. I consulted the leaders, and after about an hour's investigation I found that the genuine grievances of the coolies (which affected only a very small number of them) were two only—(1) that two or three lads who were doing the tasks usually given to women were still getting wages as " children." This was of course rectified as soon as it was pointed out, (2) that one of the jemadars was making 16 men do the work of 20, and taking the other 4 to work on the repairs of his house. This also was rectified at once, and the entire labour force then returned cheerfully to work without again mentioning the general increase of wages for which they had ostensibly gone on strike. My opinion of this case was that it was simply a " try on," and that the minor (but genuine) grievances had nothing to do with it. I do not believe that they were the subject of discussion at all before my arrival. Their settlement simply gave the coolies a chance to withdraw gracefully from the contest which they saw had been a mistake.

The consequences of this in itself unimportant and easily settled strike were, however, serious. It occurred at the very end of the dry season when there was little *ticca* (overtime) to be earned, and when the weather was hot. The leaf was unusually late in coming (*ticca* is plentiful once the plucking begins) and the coolies were generally ripe for trouble. The rumour of the minor concessions made on the first garden spread and multiplied until it was generally believed that a large increase of wages had resulted. Other labour forces followed suit, and as I have said, before it was over, the epidemic had spread to eighteen gardens and police had to be sent out to keep the peace and protect property. Some of these strikes were settled by the managers themselves. Others were referred to me. I found in every case to which I was called for intervention that the demand for an increase of wages was simply a slogan, and that the real grievances (where any at all existed) were something entirely different. The root causes being the weather and the rumours of concessions elsewhere. With the break of the rains and the coming of the leaf the trouble disappeared at once.

An altogether different cause of " strikes," and one of which I have had considerable experience, is the recruitment of an unsuitable class of coolies. With the expansion of the industry the old sources of labour proved insufficient, and many experiments were tried with new castes and communities. In such cases the new coolies simply left the garden bag and baggage and no argument or persuasion had the slightest effect.

(ii) I have discussed the character of the strikes in Clause (i) above. They usually lasted one or two days, or rarely in extreme cases, five or six days. I do not of course refer to cases of exodus.

(iii) My invariable method was to ascertain by careful enquiry what were the genuine grievances of the strikers (if any) and to suggest concessions if these seemed desirable, to the employer.

Question 124.—(ii) I have heard of no non-official conciliators in Assam. I was myself often called in as Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer by the manager or by the strikers, or both, when a dispute could not be settled at once. I imagine that my methods and the results achieved are similar to those of other officers.

(iii) Not used at all to my knowledge.

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Volume VI

Part II

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Labour in India.

ASSAM.

Forty-fifth Meeting.

SILCHAR.

Friday, the 3rd January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN ..	.. *Lady Assessor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. ..	.. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN ..	.. }

Mr. J. S. MERCER, Arcuttipore Tea Estate.

F-1. *The Chairman*: How long have you been a planter here?—Since 1918.

F-2. What was your previous experience?—I was for nine years in Sylhet.

F-3. We understand that here you get the labour that you require without sending out any *sardars*?—Yes.

F-4. Why are you able to get labour so easily?—I put it down to the fact of the garden being such a very healthy one.

F-5. It is known to be a healthy garden?—Yes.

F-6. And many of the people here have been born on the estate? Yes, most of them were born on the estate.

F-7. I understand that you have not required any recruited coolies for the last eleven years?—I have not done any recruiting here at all.

F-8. What advantages do your people get in the way of land?—As far as possible we divide up amongst them the rice land which we have, for their own cultivation.

F-9. How much rice land have you besides your tea land?—About 300 acres.

F-10. Do nearly all your people cultivate the rice land?—The large majority of them do. Some of them also rent rice land from the *busti*.

F-11. And they have cattle as well?—Yes.

F-12. I understand that the birth-rate here is high and that the death-rate is low?—Yes.

F-13. What is the total population on the estate?—1,685.

F-14. How many of those are workers in the tea garden?—838.

F-15. Is that an average, or is that the total?—The total. The daily average is 615.

F-16. What are the average earnings; taking October and November?—Rs. 13 per man; Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 per woman, and from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 for children.

F-17. As a rule do the people work in families?—Yes.

F-18. What will the family income be?—Well over Rs. 20 a month.

F-19. How many hours' work does that represent?—Not half a day. They do a certain amount of *ticca* work in the afternoon.

F-20. That is extra?—Yes.

F-21. For the rest of the time they are working on their own land or looking after their cattle?—Yes.

F-22. Does their work on their land provide them with a large part of their requirements?—Quite a large part.

F-23. On your garden the people really are all settled, many of them having been born on the place?—Yes. There has been no recruiting for 25 years.

F-24. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can you give us the total acreage of your garden; how much of it is under tea, how much is under *khet* and how much is under jungle: also how many men, women and young children there are?—I will send you the figures in a day or two.

F-25. *Mr. Cliff*: Are all the houses in which the people live here together?—No, we have three sets of lines, and there is another group in the out-garden.

F-26. Are the houses built under your supervision?—Yes.

F-27. How many houses have you got?—550 altogether.

F-28. How old is the youngest worker on the estate?—Ten years.

F-29. What is the rate at which you employ them on piece-work?—For hoeing we pay them 4 annas for 30 *nals*.

F-30. What do you pay for pruning?—I have to shift that about. In one place we are doing 150 bushes and in another place we are only doing 30.

F-31. Have you a set rate for different classes of work?—No. I give to them what I think is fair.

F-32. Do you vary the rates between the people hoeing and pruning?—No.

F-33. Do they get the same rate?—Yes.

F-34. How do you pay them for plucking?—So much a lb.

F-35. Is it the same rate for a woman?—A woman very often goes out taking her child, and probably the child does plucking for her, and it all goes into the same basket. Children do not pluck as a rule.

F-36. What do the children work at?—Different sorts of jobs. They carry manure and do hand-forking.

F-37. Are they on piece rates?—More or less.

F-38. If they are on time rate, what do you pay them?—We give them their day's pay.

F-39. How much a day do you pay them?—From 2 to 5 annas.

F-40. What do you call a day?—Generally they go out working at about 9 o'clock and come back at about 1 o'clock.

F-41. Is there a school on the estate?—Just on the borders. We keep it up.

F-42. Do all the children go to school?—No, very few of them.

F-43. How many are there going now?—Ten.

F-44. Does the planter insist on their going to school?—No, I do not.

F-45. *Miss Power*: How do you know the age of a child who comes to work? Is there any check on it?—No.

F-46. You say they do not come to work under ten years of age. How do you know?—I am afraid we cannot tell. No mother can tell you the age of her child. They cannot tell you their own age.

F-47. How long does it take to do the ordinary standard piece of work?—They are all finished by 1 o'clock.

F-48. Their hours are from 9 to 1, are they?—From half-past eight.

F-49. Anything they do after that is extra, is it?—Yes, they are paid extra.

F-50. Is the extra included in the figure you gave for the average earnings?—Yes.

F-51. That is taking the good and bad seasons, all round?—Yes.

F-52. So that the average earnings per month for a family, including the extra, is Rs. 20 a month?—Yes.

F-53. *Mr. Ahmed*: We saw a woman here, a widow with three children, who said she was getting 3 annas a day, working from 6 o'clock in the morning until 2 or 3 o'clock?—She did not tell you the amount she gets from the garden towards the upkeep of those children. She is also living with her son-in-law, and as for going to work at 6 o'clock, she cannot know at what time it strikes 6 o'clock. No coolie in the garden goes out before 9 o'clock.

F-54. Some children told me they were getting from 9 to 12 annas a week, working from morning till 2 or 3 o'clock?—They may be absent for 2 or 3 days in the week.

F-55. If your workers fall ill, do they get anything?—Yes, they get a sick allowance.

F-56. Do the people living outside the garden get anything except the wage they work for?—They only get the wage they work for.

F-57. Four annas a day for a man and three annas for a woman?—Yes.

F-58. With regard to maternity benefit, you do not keep any check of the births taking place outside your garden?—No.

F-59. *Mr. Clow*: For how long in the year does this casual labour work?—From 9 to 10 months.

F-60. What is the strength of it? About 100 in busy times.

F-61. You said that out of the total population on this estate, numbering 1,685, only about half are actually workers? Are the other half all unable to work?—The infants cannot work, and the old people are past work.

F-62. Nevertheless, half is a big proportion of non-workers?—They can work if they like, but they do not want to.

F-63. How many are unable to work because they are infants or too old, and how many are simply idle?—I cannot say straight away.

F-64. Do you compel everybody who is on the estate, and who is able to work, to do his *hazira*?—No, we cannot compel them.

F-65. The *hazira* is not a compulsory task for workers on the estate?—A great many of them do not come out to work. I do not go round and chivy them out. Sometimes I get a big lot out; on other days I get much fewer. Tomorrow, for instance, being Saturday there will be very few out. There are very few out on Monday, the day after pay day.

F-66. What day is market day?—Sunday.

F-67. Why are there few out at work on Saturday?—I do not know. They seem to be collecting their money and getting ready to go to the market. They generally use that day to wash their clothes in order to go to the market on Sunday, and on Monday they are generally unable to come back to work.

F-68. You have no means of compelling your people to come out to work if they do not want to come?—No. They work as long as they want to work.

F-69. Are the piece-work rates the same in all the gardens in this district?—As far as I know, yes.

F-70. So that if their earnings are lower on one garden than on another it means they do not do so much work there?—That is so.

F-71. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see from your books that there are roughly 1,860 acres altogether on the estate, of which only 860 are under tea cultivation and I notice that in the last return you show the permanent garden labour as 651. You sub-divide the 80 outside labourers into 30 permanent and 50 temporary. Why do you say that 30 of the outside labourers are permanent and 50 are temporary?—Thirty of them come down here practically every day.

F-72. You have 651 permanent workers on the garden out of a total population of 1,685?—Yes.

F-73. I notice that in the return which you give for the month of September you show that the average wage per head of the daily working strength comes out in the case of men to Rs. 10-5 per month, in the case of women to Rs. 7-8 per month and in the case of the working children to Rs. 5-1 per month. The "extras" bring up those figures to Rs. 11-4, Rs. 14-10 and Rs. 5-10, respectively. Do these figures represent the total which you think each of the working men, women and children get?—Yes.

F-74. You said a little while ago that Rs. 20 were the average earnings of a family, but according to the figures I have just quoted the average earnings seem to be Rs. 30?—I said that the average earnings were well over Rs. 20.

F-75. *The Chairman*: I see an item here of "time expired coolies re-engaged." What does "time expired coolies" mean?—That refers to the time when agreements used to be given.

F-76. Why do you make any entry there? Every coolie here gets a bonus after doing so many days' work. A man gets Rs. 10 and a woman Rs. 8. It is the survival of an old custom. Our forms have never been changed. There used to be an agreement before; now there is a bonus given at the completion of a year's work. We retain the old labour forms.

F-77. As a matter of fact the coolies are under no engagement form?—No.

F-78. I gather from what you told us that a much larger number than 86 out of 288 men had been here for more than one year?—That is what they have got during the month.

F-79. These items refer to the number who have been paid a bonus over and above their earnings?—Yes.

F-80. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that bonus included in the figures which I just now put to you?—Yes.

F-81. How much leave do you give for child-birth?—Three months.

F-82. You give the woman three months' leave with full pay, do you?—Yes.

F-83. *Colonel Russell*: How many births were there last year?—There were 60 births for the calendar year 1929.

F-84. Out of a population of 1,685?—Yes.

F-85. What was the number of deaths?—16.

F-86. *Mr. Ahmed*: You do not keep a record of the number of births and deaths among the people living outside the garden?—No.

F-87. *The Chairman*: I see another item here of "absconded during the month" and "discharged during the month." I take it from what you have said that practically no coolies leave the garden?—Very few. Sometimes a coolie runs away because he has got into debt, and sometimes there is a family row and the man goes away for a month or two and comes back again. There is no return to their original districts; they regard themselves as permanently living here.

F-88. *Colonel Russell*: What medical arrangements have you here?—There is a hospital outside the lines; it has two bedrooms, one for the males and one for the females.

F-89. Are they ever occupied?—Never.

F-90. What can a man earn here if he comes in the hoeing season?—Sometimes Rs. 14 a month.

(The witness withdrew.)

PHUL BIASAI, daughter of Jaglal Ahir and a woman worker at the Arcuttipore Tea Estate.

F-91. *Mrs. Ataur Rahman*: How old are you?—I do not know.

F-92. How long have you been working here?—Since I have been married, that is, about 10 or 12 years.

F-93. Have you been working in the garden during that time?—Yes.

F-94. How much do you earn?—Three annas a day. I go to work between 8 and 9 in the morning and come back between 12 and 2.

F-95. What sort of work do you do?—Pruning.

F-96. Have you had any children whilst on the estate?—No, my husband is dead.

F-97. Does your father live with you?—Yes.

F-98. Does he receive a pension from the garden?—No.

F-99. Do you work as long as you can, or do you not want to do any extra work?—After 2 o'clock I cannot work any more as I am too tired.

F-100. How long do you work during the plucking season?—I work from 9 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon with an interval of an hour for lunch.

F-101. Who lives with you in the same house?—My sister, my brother and my father.

F-102. Do they all work?—My brother does not work in the garden except occasionally, but my sister does the same work as I do.

F-103. Have you any lands to cultivate?—Yes, we pay nothing for our rice land. The garden gives us rice land. This year we got 32 maunds of paddy from our rice land, but this year has been an abnormal one. For the last three years I have not been having very good harvests, but this year is a bumper year.

F-104. What do you earn in the rains?—From 4 annas to Re. 1 according to the number of hours I put in.

F-105. What happens when you fall sick?—I get a sick allowance of 9 annas a week.

F-106. Are you in debt?—I incurred a debt of Rs. 100 in connection with my brother's marriage. I borrowed it from my cousin.

F-107. Could you not have got that advance from the manager of the garden?—We can get advances from the manager, and we sign the agreement with our thumb impression.

(The witness withdrew.)

ASSAM.

Forty-sixth Meeting.

SILCHAR.

Saturday, the 4th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
REV. THENURAM SAIKIA	} *Assistant Commissioners.*
MR. A. B. BEDDOW, URRUSBUND TEA ESTATE, CACHAR	}
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN ..	.. *Lady Assessor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. ..	.. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN ..	.. }

Dr. G. C. RAMSAY, O.B.E., M.D. (Edin.), D.T.M.&H. (Eng.), Medical Officer to the Labac Medical Practice, (examined at the Labac Central Hospital, Dewan P. O., Cachar.)

F-108. *The Chairman*: How long have you been engaged in this anti-malaria work in the tea gardens?—During the past four years I have been investigating the factors responsible for the varying degrees of malarial incidence on the tea estates in the Labac Medical Practice and during the past two years in conjunction with the Managers I have been actively engaged assisting in the control of malaria on the gardens in this Practice.

F-109. We should be glad to know with what success your work has been attended?—I will quote as an example the results on Bandu Tea Estate as I have just been informed the Royal Commission intends to inspect this garden to-day. Bandu Tea Estate was a very unhealthy garden until malaria was controlled there. Since I took over medical charge of this garden in October 1919 the death-rate was always higher than the birth-rate and the sick-rates were always extremely high. I have prepared a graph to show the results of malaria control there. This graph does not merely indicate the reduction in the sickness rate due to malaria only, but includes the figures for all diseases. The common sense reason for including all diseases in a graph is that it eliminates any diagnostic errors on the part of my medical establishment and above all if malaria is such an important factor as we believe it to be in the sickness rate and if we succeed in controlling malaria the result must be a reduction in the total sickness. The graph shows clearly the effect of malaria control, i.e., a reduction in the total sick-rates during the past two years. Further during this period the birth-rate has at last exceeded the death-rate. I would mention here that actual field control of malaria, i.e., oiling, etc., on the tea estates in this Practice is carried out under the supervision of the Managers and Superintendents. I personally only act in an advisory capacity. The credit for the reduction of sickness at Bundoo is therefore due to the efficient control of malaria by the Garden Manager. I herewith submit the total sick-rate figures on this garden for the years 1927, 1928 and 1929 and the cost of malaria control likewise for Labac Tea Estate, the garden now being inspected.

F-110. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Was there any difference in weather conditions?—That is immaterial as our climatic conditions in Cachar are much the same annually. It is mainly a question of physical geography. In Assam, high lying tea estates like Bundoo are usually very unhealthy, that is, highly malarious, whereas low lying land like Labac Bheel Garden here is usually very healthy. I have recently published, through the medium of the Ross Institute, London, articles recording the results of our researches on this subject. These Papers are entitled, respectively—(1) "The factors which determine the varying degrees of malarial incidence in Assam Tea Estates and the fundamental principles governing mosquito control of malaria in Assam" and (2) "The Solution of Assam's Malaria Problems." In connection with the Ross Institute, London, I would mention that Sir Malcolm Watson there is doing a great service to the tea industry by giving a course of instruction on malaria control to tea planters. The tea planters from my experience here is the medium by which malaria in Assam will in future be controlled. The tea planter at present controls the insect pests which damage and destroy his tea bushes so why should he not control the dangerous insects, which breed in his drains and streams around his lines and which damage and destroy his labour force? Let me revert to my main object. I shall illustrate here the main points relating to factors responsible for the varying degrees of malarial incidence in Assam and the solution of our problems.

For instance, it is well known that in the Federated Malay States malaria has been efficiently controlled. This was due mainly to the pioneer work of Sir Malcolm Watson who demonstrated the principles by which malaria could be controlled there. In that country you have a more or less even distribution of rainfall throughout all the months of the year and the breeding areas of the anopheline mosquitoes which carry malaria are perennial. The problem in the Federated Malay States resolved itself into controlling these perennial breeding places. In Assam we have an uneven distribution of rainfall, we have a dry season and a monsoon season. In Assam during the dry weather the majority of the drains and streams on high lying land dry up. The result is that mosquitoes migrate to breeding places on the low lying land where water is still available At the beginning of the rainy season the mosquitoes, at any rate our dangerous malaria mosquitoes migrate back again to the clear water in the drains and streams, etc., on high land. The malaria season is mainly the warm monsoon or rainy season, hence the reason for the unhealthiness or the high incidence of malaria on high lying lands. During the cold weather when the night temperature drops to 60° F. the malaria parasite does not develop in the mosquito. When the night temperature rises above 60° F. the malaria season begins. The solution of the Assam malaria problem therefore resolves itself into a study of the breeding places of anopheline mosquitoes during the season of the year when malaria is being transmitted in Nature. Unfortunately in Assam most previous investigations were caried out during the cold dry season of the year and not during the monsoon or malarious seasons. In the course of our malaria studies here we have found that there are twenty species of anopheline mosquitoes in Assam. During approximately the past three years we have dissected about 40,000 anopheline mosquitoes caught in Nature and have discovered anopheles minimus is practically entirely responsible for transmitting malaria in Assam. Practically speaking all the other species can be disregarded—they feed chiefly on cows and other animals whereas anopheles minimus is a human blood lover. We have studied the bionomics of anopheles minimus very carefully.—

(1) We find it will not breed in Nature in contaminated water: by that I mean muddy or silty water or water contaminated with iron oxide bacteria or covered with a scum of surface algae.

(2) It will not breed in water which has a high velocity of current. It will however breed in the clear still water of pockets at the banks of a fast flowing stream.

(3) It will not breed in dense shade.

We find the conditions under which this dangerous mosquito breeds are—

(1) Clear water.

(2) A certain degree of sunlight.

Reverting to physical geography and the effects of rainfall in creating breeding areas, when rain falls on the earth's surface we know that the resultant effects on the water, viz., evaporation, transpiration, percolation and run off

are dependent on vegetation, the physical features, soil composition and strata of a district. These factors determine the formation of seepages, springs, streams, rivers and swamps. A comparison of the incidence of malaria on various types of terrain shows that on low lying land where the water in the drains and streams runs silty or muddy during the malaria season these areas are practically malaria free, whereas plateaux and high lying land where the water in drains and streams is crystal clear are highly malarious. It is on these malarious plateaux and high lying land that tea is in its natural environment, i.e., where there is natural soil aeration. On low lying swampy or floodable land tea is in an unnatural environment and the land has to be drained to create that natural environment, viz., soil aeration. Fortunately the majority of these low lying drains run silty and are therefore safe during the malaria season. It should be noted that during the cold dry weather when the dangerous mosquitoes have migrated to the now undisturbed clear waters at low levels the temperature factor comes in. Under 60° F. the mosquito cannot become infected with malaria and in any case anopheles minimus at this time of the year is rarely seen in the adult stage, i.e., the chance of transmitting infection is greatly limited. During the cold dry weather mosquitoes pass the greater part of their life history in the larval stage, i.e., in water. Studying the subject further we find ravines or re-entrants may be safe or dangerous —this depends on their angle of inclination, i.e., velocity of flow or on the soil composition of these ravines. Swamps in their natural state, that is densely shaded with swamp vegetation, are absolutely safe. Most of the malaria in Assam has unfortunately been unwittingly created by mankind. In their natural state, that is, when the plateaux and hills in this province are covered with virgin jungle, i.e., under dense shade the dangerous anopheles minimus is absent. When the jungle is felled and cleared, i.e., when streams are exposed and drains dug, anopheles minimus and malaria are introduced. It is interesting to note that the pioneer tea planters in Assam after clearing away the jungle in order to plant tea described the fever which they unwittingly created as "clearance" fever. The exposed clear water in streams, streamlets and man made drains on malariogenic land was the source of this clearance fever not the emanations from the soil after burning the jungle as originally believed. The same condition has been going on for hundreds of years amongst the hill tribes who *jhum*, that is, cut down and burn the jungle to grow hill rice.

The study of the bionomics of anapheles minimus leads us to a study of the bionomics of man. On malarious land a vicious circle is established. Through ill health the earning capacity of the worker is reduced, deaths and sickness in his family or amongst his friends and relations are liable to make him discontented. Again rarely is rice land, which coolies much appreciate, available on highly malariogenic terrain as rice grows best in its natural environment on low lying healthy land. On this malariogenic terrain it is the children and the non-immune imported recruits who chiefly suffer. Those who survive develop a partial immunity, i.e., become to a certain extent salted. Compare the conditions on healthy gardens with plenty available rice land where we see highly contented labour forces. There are gardens in this district which have never recruited for over thirty years owing to being practically malaria free, and where there has been a natural increase in the population. We have at last after much patient research got down to bed rock facts, and the planters on the unhealthy gardens in this district have rapidly appreciated the importance of controlling malaria as they are well aware that a healthy labour force becomes a happy labour force; also from an economic point of view they realize that the high expenditure incurred on drugs, diets and concessions to the sick can more profitably be spent in providing increased facilities for earning to the employees to the mutual benefit of labour and capital. At present in my district malaria is being controlled mainly by oiling, that is, killing the larvæ of anopheles minimus in their breeding places. An organization consisting of a malaria surveyor and larva catchers was created for each garden in this Practice. Through this medium the dangerous breeding places have been located. The larvæ were sent to this Central Laboratory and classified here. We are now going back to Nature for safety and intend finally to substitute oiling by biological control, that is, we are growing dense shade, such as privet hedges over dangerous clear water drains and streamlets, replanting cleared dangerous undrainable swamps with swamp vegetation and converting drainable swamps into land which will be available for rice cultivation by means of contour drainage, these contour drains again being covered with dense shade. We are also rectifying as far as possible by appropriate measures the errors whereby malariogenic areas were unwittingly created in the past, e.g., by *bunds*, etc., in road construction or by filling in dangerous borrow pits and by

substituting piped water supplies or *pucca* wells for dangerous tanks and *kucha* wells. But in the meanwhile we are continuing control of anopheles minimus by larvicides until biological control is established.

F-111. *The Chairman*: Is this mosquito peculiar to Assam?—No, it is found in Bengal, Burma and other parts of India.

F-112. Is it the female mosquito which does the mischief?—Yes, the male does not bite, although recently Macgregor at the Welcome Bureau of Scientific Research has succeeded in making male mosquitoes bite by smearing the skin with honey.

F-113. *The Chairman*: Have you the results of your work in 1929?—I have not so far gone into the complete details of our 1929 results as this is only January 4, 1930. Also I do not believe in rushing to print before I have assessed the true value of our work, although as the result of their investigations here Dr. Williams (America) and Prof. Swellengrebel (Holland) of the Malaria Commission of the League of Nations, who recently visited me, have asked me to publish at an early date a paper on the practical benefits of malaria control in Assam. This in my opinion could be better done by many of the planters in this district who could probably express more clearly than I could the practical benefits which have accrued to their labour forces and their gardens from malaria control. However, authorities on public health such as Col. Russell here demand a five-year period on which to assess the value of any public health measures on a community.

F-114. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you send reports to your Agents?—I do not as a rule send special reports on my researches, but I write a general report on the health of this Practice annually and submit recommendations.

F-115. *The Chairman*: What reduction is shown by your graphs during the last three or four years since you began your work?—We take as our unit, days of sickness of patients (outdoor and indoor) under medical care. On December 31, 1929, our figures show 39,130 days less sickness on all the gardens in the Labac Medical Practice for the year 1929 as compared with the year 1927 when malaria was not being controlled.

F.-116. What population is that?—About 18,000 souls.

F-117. *Col. Russell*: I think you told me the malaria spleen-rate on this garden (Labac Tea Estate) has been reduced from 28 per cent. to 1 per cent.?—Yes. The Manager and the Superintendent have efficiently controlled malaria on this garden. This spleen-rate was checked a few days ago by Dr. Bentley, Director of Public Health, Bengal, who is a well-known malariologist, and by Dr. Bruce Mayne, a distinguished American Malaria Research Worker, when over 300 children were examined. On Durganagar Tea Estate Mr. Brown, the Manager, has reduced the spleen-rate from 67 per cent. to 7 per cent. This spleen-rate was checked by Sir Malcolm Watson last year when found it to be 32 per cent. and this year by Dr. Bentley. On Bandu the spleen-rate in December 1926 was 72 per cent. When checked recently it was found to be 11 per cent.

F-118. Do you deal with hookworm?—We did some years ago, but have done practically nothing in this direction for over four years. The reason is that after much research in this district we found that the incidence of hookworm infection, which is approximately 100 per cent. in the adult population, was a common factor on healthy and unhealthy estates and that the real factor undermining the health of the labour forces on my unhealthy estates was malaria. In my early days here it was the popular belief among my own profession that hookworm infection was the main factor in causing the anæmia and ill health among the labour forces. I accepted this belief until I conclusively proved to my own satisfaction that there is the same degree of hookworm infection amongst the coolies on healthy estates as there is on unhealthy estates. In Cachar the condition can be described generally as hookworm infestation but not as hookworm disease. What used to be classified here as hookworm disease in days gone by, we found on investigation to be the after effects of malaria or dysentery. During these researches on hookworm I found pigs were able to transmit hookworm infection through swallowing human fæces containing human hookworm eggs, the hookworm larvæ subsequently hatching out from the undestroyed human ova. A research worker in Calcutta did not agree with me, he said it was impossible that human ova could survive passage through the pig owing to the high temperature of their bodies which varies from 102 to 104°. In order to deal with that point I hatched out hookworm larvæ from the fæces of coolie patients suffering from pneumonia where there was a sustained temperature of 105° for a week. My work on pigs was subsequently confirmed by Professor Chandler at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and by others.

F-119. *The Chairman*: To what extent have you succeeded in reducing the incidence of malaria during your four years work?—I have not the available time to check individually 18,000 people, i.e., examine their blood for malaria parasites, but I herewith submit the spleen-rates in children born in the gardens of this Practice which are a very true indication of the reduction of malarial incidence.

F-120. From what you have told us am I right in saying that the total sickness rate has been reduced to 1/5 of what it was four years ago?—Over the whole Practice it is about 1/5, but of course the reduction has been greatest on highly malarious gardens as will be seen from the Bandu sick-rates which I have submitted. I am fortunate in this Practice in having some very healthy gardens, i.e., with very little malaria.

F-121. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In the Immigration Returns the principal disease is stated not to be malaria but dysentery and respiratory diseases?—In a highly malarious garden in which the constitutions of the people have been undermined by malaria they fall a ready prey to diseases such as dysentery, pneumonia and tuberculosis. We find that the incidence of dysentery, pneumonia and tuberculosis is much less on land where the constitutions of the people have not been undermined by malaria.

F-122. *The Chairman*: I take it that malaria is really the main factor causing these other diseases: it is not a question of the number of people who die from malaria but of the number who are weakened by malaria?—That is the whole point.

F-123. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But tuberculosis and other diseases exact a heavier toll than malaria?—In the Labac Medical Practice during the five-year period (1922-1926) 393 coolies died from malaria while 258 died from tuberculosis and 457 from pneumonia.

F-124. *Col. Russell*: Yes, but that is because those who have suffered from malaria are more susceptible to respiratory diseases.

F-125. *The Chairman*: The important thing is that in recruiting districts there is a prejudice in many cases against Assam because the people have heard of the heavy mortality in years gone by in Assam. It is very important that we should have figures which plain people can easily understand to indicate what has been achieved in removing this blot from many of the tea gardens?—I herewith submit the statistics for my Practice for the five-year period (1922-1926) and the death and birth-rates for the various gardens in my Practice during 1928. Let me reiterate, it is mainly the malarious gardens which have to recruit hence the reason I have specially investigated the subject of malaria control. Low lying or healthy gardens here do not want recruits. On these healthy gardens it is not the type of coolie who was originally recruited which has been the factor in maintaining the natural increase in the population it is type of terrain on which they first settled.

F-126. But in a recruiting district you will readily understand that it is not the good gardens that are heard of so much as bad ones?—Yes, the unhealthy or malarious gardens.

F-127. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you get kala-azar?—Yes, it is occasionally imported from the Sylhet district, but I have never found a case where the infection was contracted in my own Practice.

F-128. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the cost of this anti-malaria work?—The cost is trivial compared with the benefits obtained. I herewith submit the cost of malaria control on the two gardens, Labac and Bundoo, which are being inspected by the Royal Commission to-day, also the cost to date of the malaria research work in this Laboratory which has been borne by Messrs. Macneill & Co., Agents to the Labac Medical Practice.

F-129. How far can a mosquito travel?—We find that there is a species of anopheles here called anopheles gigas which breeds in the hills above 3,000 feet during the rains. This species migrates to our gardens here 14 miles away from the hills during the cold weather. In this connection I would mention that I carried out investigations on the flight of mosquitoes in Transjordania (Asia Minor) and found that at over 500 yards away from a pool breeding anopheles it was extremely difficult to catch a mosquito. In our gardens here we control the breeding areas of the dangerous anopheles minimus up to a half mile from the coolie lines and this we have found to be quite efficacious.

The truth of the matter is the breeding places of anopheles minimus on highly malarious tea estates in my Practice might for practical purposes be described as peri-domestic. We have a garden which had before malaria was controlled a 76 per cent. spleen-rate not ¾ of a mile away from a low lying village with a spleen-rate of 3 per cent. which shows the peri-domestic nature of malaria in Assam.

(The witness withdrew.)

PATCHOO, a returned *sardar,* at Bundoo Tea Gardens, (Mr. S. Lall interpreted).

F-130. *The Chairman*: Where do you come from?—Bihar.

F-131. When did you first come to the tea gardens?—I came here when I was quite a boy.

F-132. Have you a wife and children?—Yes, my family is here.

F-133. Did you go as a *sardar* to bring some of your own people to the tea gardens?—I went last year. I work here as a *sardar,* that is in charge of a gang, and I went to my own country last year recruiting. I have done so three times. I went in 1910 and brought back five labourers; on another occasion I brought back one labourer and last year I brought back none.

F-134. Are you more happy and comfortable than you were before you came to the tea gardens?—I prefer this; I have all my family and cattle here.

F-135. Why were you not able to bring more people back with you?—When I went there last year it was a good year for the crops; there was a lot of rain and there were good crops and consequently the people did not want to leave.

F-136. Did you tell them that you were happier and more prosperous here than you had been before you came?—No, I did not say anything like that.

F-137. How long did you stay in your own country?—Three months; I only went to the *thana* round about my own home.

F-138. Have you relatives in your country?—Yes, I have a brother but he was not willing to come.

F-139. Were they afraid of coming here for any reason?—I cannot say why they do not come.

F-140. *Mr. Cliff*: May I take it that you have been on this garden for thirty years?—I came here as a boy.

F-141. Were you married on the estate?—No, I came out with my wife.

F-142. Are you a *sardar* now?—I work on my land; I do not do any work on the tea gardens now.

F-143. *The Chairman*: Who lives with you in your house?—I have four sons of whom two are married; I have two more sons; I had a daughter who was married, but she is dead now.

F-144. *Miss Power*: What bonus did you get for each recruit you brought out?—Rs. 25 a head.

F-145. *The Chairman*: How many of your family are working on the tea gardens?—The rest of the family.

(The witness withdrew.)

BONAMALI, a returned *sardar,* at Bundoo Tea Gardens.

F-146. *The Chairman*: How long have you been working on the tea gardens?—I came here from Bihar in 1910.

F-147. Are you better off here than you were in your own country before you came here?—All my interests are here; what could I do in my own country now?

F-148. Have you your wife and children here?—I married at home and brought my wife with me.

F-149. Have you any children?—I had a boy, but he died.

F-150. When did you last go as a recruiting *sardar?*

Mr. Healy: In 1928.

F-151. *The Chairman*: How often have you gone as a *sardar* recruiting?—Twice. I brought five labourers on one occasion, but the next time I got none.

F-152. Why did you get none the second time?—There were many whom I asked to come but they were not willing to come with me.

F-153. Why were they not willing to come with you?—I do not know.

F-154. How long did you stay there?—One and a half months; I have plenty of relatives there.

F-155. Do they live comfortably in Bihar?—I did not go to my own village because that is too far from the railway; my relatives have got their *khet* land in their own country.

F-156. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What pay did you get last week?—Last week I was working on my own land, but since last month I have been working on the tea garden.

F-157. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you saved any money?—It is all I could do to get enough food to eat; how could I save?

F-158. Are you in debt?—I am in debt to a very small extent to various *banias;* I am in debt for paddy seedlings and so on.

F-159. Have you any cattle?—I had a bullock but I sold it.

F-160. What did you sell it for?—Rs. 50-8.

F-161. Have you still got the money?—I am keeping it because I want to buy another bullock.

F-162. Have you goats and chickens?—Yes, I have goats and chickens.

F-163. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How much *dal* have you in your house?—I have mortgaged my crop; I have 2/3 of an acre of land.

F-164. To whom is it mortgaged?—To the *banias*. I lost three head of cattle by rinderpest and two were killed by tigers or leopards. I borrow small amounts of money from my own people and they take the crop.

F-165. *Mr. Cliff*: Why did you do that if you were working regularly?—I could not work on the tea garden because I had to work on my own fields; I could not go to work in the factory and earn money so that I had to borrow money.

F-166. *The Chairman*: Can you get advances from the company if you want to?—Yes I can get advances and I have had advances without interest. I had to get temporary advances for seed.

F-167. *Mr. Cliff*: In the past have you taken advances from the gardens?—Yes. I cannot get seed, so I go to the *bania* and get seed from him.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. L. A. Healey, Manager of Bundoo Tea Estate, and Mr. J. K. Cullinan, Superintendent, Diwan Division, Tarrapore Tea Company Limited.

F-168. *The Chairman*: On what principle do you select the men whom you send as *sardars* to recruit?—(*Mr. Healey*) We usually send people with relatives in their own country.

F-169. Do they come and ask to be sent?—Yes.

F-170. Do you satisfy yourself that there is a reasonable chance that they will bring back recruits?—Yes. We also send coolies who are about to retire from work.

F-171. You have no means of judging whether a man is likely to bring back recruits?—They often receive letters from their relatives in their own country saying they want to come to Assam and asking for money.

F-172. Do you see those letters?—Yes, I see them here; I had one the other day asking for money and saying they were poor.

F-173. Do the coolies send money from here to the people in their own country?—Sometimes; and sometimes they ask me to advance a few rupees to send to their relatives. At the moment the total amount of advances is Rs. 255.

F-174. What is the biggest advance you have given to any one coolie?—Some men would come up and often get Rs. 20.

F-175. Is there a big call for advances in the marriage season?—Yes, they get up to Rs. 50 and 60. The marriage season is March.

F-176. This man Bonamali has no children?—Not now. He has had an advance and he is paying back annas 4 a week; there is still Rs. 11-4 outstanding.

F-177. What is the longest time that an advance is outstanding?—They usually run for a year; if possible we recover them in a year.

F-178. Have you an instance in which you have recovered the money in a year?—Yes, a lot of instances.

F-179. Do they ever go into a second or third year?—Not usually, because they work and repay it.

F-180. At what rate do you recover the money?—Annas 4 a week when a man is on full pay.

F-181. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your monthly pay roll all together?—From Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,000 a month.

F-182. *Mr. Cliff*: You told me this afternoon that you required about 550 workers?—I could do with them.

F-183. You at present have 400 workers. Could you tell us why only two *sardars* were sent last year as against 16 in the previous year?—(*Mr. Cullinan*) For the year 1929 11 *sardars* were sent to their country, not 2.

F-184. Apparently you require another 150 men; can you offer any explanation as to why you cannot get them?—What is wrong with your garden?—(*Mr. Healey*) It is because I have not got a connection with the recruiting districts.

F-185. Would it help you to get that connection if you were able to recruit through authorized agents apart from *sardars*?—You will have to ask that of my Calcutta Managing Agency. I have seen no correspondence on this subject.

F-186. At present you cannot recruit except through *sardars* who must be men who have worked for some time on the garden?—That is not necessary; for instance, this man Patchoo was not working.

F-187. He is a resident?—He has retired here and has a lot of rice land belonging to this Company.

F-188. *Col. Russell*: Is the shortage of labour due to the fact that this is a malarious garden?—This was a very malarious garden until I controlled malaria work.

The Chairman: I take it that is why they have not got a good connection.

F-189. *Col. Russell*: I think this garden suffered very heavily in 1921, when there was a large exodus?—Yes.

F-190. *The Chairman*: How many of your total labour force did you lose at that time?—I was not on the garden at that time, during the non-co-operation period.

F-191. Have you tried short-term recruitment for 6 or 12 months?—No, I have not tried it.

F-192. When these recruits came here in the last two years was any term of employment stated?—No, no term; they are under no contract at all. They come up and work when they like and how they like. They come here and ask to be sent to their countries and they are sent; we repatriated 7 quite recently.

F-193. Did you repatriate them at your own expense?—Yes.

F-194. Why?—Because they were not happy here.

F-195. That was a group or family of people?—Yes.

F-196. From what district did they come?—(*Mr. Cullinan*) From Rewah. The manager resigned shortly after that exodus took place.

F-197. Was that because of the exodus?—I would not say that.

F-198. I take it he had little tact in handling this labour force?—Yes.

F-199. Perhaps he was not a tactful manager?—Yes. It was, of course, during the time when there was non-co-operation.

F-200. I can understand that might be a reason for general unrest, but apparently it affected some gardens much more than others, and I take it that the gardens which were most affected were those in which the management was not tactful?—I would not say that of all of them.

F-201. *Col. Russell*: Do many children die of convulsions on this estate?—(*Mr. Healey*) No; there were some previously, but now it is hardly heard of.

F-202. You do have malaria on the garden?—But very little now.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

KASHIA RAM, coolie, at Bandu Tea Gardens (Interpreted).

F-203. *The Chairman*: Where do you come from?—The Central Provinces.
F-204. How long have you worked here?—I have been here 2½ years; I came alone; I have an uncle and aunt in my village at home.
F-205. Have you wife and family here?—No, I am not married.
F-206. Who do you live with?—I live by myself.
F-207. What pay do you get?—Rs. 1-8 a week.
F-208. What do you work on?—Hoeing.
F-209. Why did you come here?—I quarrelled with my uncle and aunt and came here.
F-210. Do you like it here?—I eat, drink and live here and I am satisfied.
F-211. Did a *sardar* bring you here?—I was brought by Shivram, *Sardar*.
F-212. Did anyone else come with you?—No, Shivram only brought me.
Col. Russell: I should think this man is about 25 years old.
F-213. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you saved any money?—It is all I can do to get enough food to eat; how can I save?
F-214. Have you any goats?—I have no cattle and no rice land here.
F-215. Have you had any schooling?—No.
F-216. What is your caste?—Gond.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement made by Mr. J. W. R. McWha to the Royal Commission on Labour on the 4th January 1930 at Labac.

I am the Superintendent of the Labac division of the Tarapore Tea Company. I have been in India since 1908 and on the estate since March 1928. The total population in the Labac Garden is 2,106, of whom 1,094 are workers on the books. We employ very little *faltu* labour. In the season 1928-29 we sent out 58 *sardars* who recruited 99 souls including 64 men. I have enough labour to carry on with but I could do with more. *Sardars* are sent out mainly to keep in touch with the recruiting areas. We do not confine our recruitment to particular areas. In 1928 out of 59 *sardars* sent out 35 returned within the year and in 1929, 42 returned out of 45. We have practically no leakage of coolies in the garden and our coolies have mostly been here many years. It is, however, necessary for us to keep in touch with the recruiting districts. When I opened up a new garden I had no difficulty in obtaining labour. In those days *arkatti* recruiting was going on. I have not experienced any enticement of coolies away from my garden. It is not a fact, as is sometimes alleged, that when a girl marries a man from another garden, a substitute has to be provided from the garden to which she goes. There is no such rule or practice under the Indian Tea Association. The tea factory on the estate comes under the Indian Factories Act. We employ a large surplus labour but I cannot exactly say that this is 25 per cent. of actual requirements. There is no fixed time for the opening and closing of our factory, but this depends on the condition of the leaf which varies with climatic conditions. In 1928 the factory was exempted from the provisions of sections 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 24A and 35 of the Indian Factories Act as regards the classes of labour affected. The factory is completely closed on Thursdays. Last year our factory was inspected by the acting Deputy Commissioner and by the Boiler Inspector. We have had no accidents in our factory under the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. The labour employed in the factory is not distinct from the labour employed in the garden. The actual-working hours last year did not exceed 23 in any week except for an odd man or two, but the year was an exceptional one owing to the poor crop. *Sardars* are given a bonus of Rs. 10 for each coolie recruited. The coolie recruit has not to pay anything to the *sardar*. The average cost of recruitment of 24 adult coolies for Labac for the year ended 31st August 1929 was Rs. 158 per coolie. 89 coolies were recruited by every *sardar* sent out. In Labac we have 3,064 acres of which 696 acres are under tea. Of the remainder there are about 400 acres of *dhan khet* which is given out to our labourers. The rent we charge is Re. 1 per *keer* (⅓ acre approximately) which is about one-third of the economic rent. There is plenty of firewood for the coolies. The grant of land and free fuel to the workers is an expense to the garden, since the land is let out at one-third of the market value and bamboo could be sold in the market. The object is the welfare of the workers.

ASSAM.

Forty-seventh Meeting.

SILCHAR.

Monday, the 6th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
REV. THENURAM SAIKIA ..	.. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
MR. A. B. BEDDOW ..	.. }
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN, ..	.. *Lady Assessor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. ..	.. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN ..	.. }

Mr. A. F. STUART, Chairman, Mr. G. E. RAYNER, M.L.C. (Sylhet), Mr. B. GUPTA (Cachar), and Dr. G. C. RAMSAY, O.B.E., representatives of the Surma Valley Branch of the Indian Tea Association.

F-217. *The Chairman*: What is the membership of your Branch of the Association?—(*Mr. Stuart*) 344 gardens.

F-218. Are they completely represented in your Branch?—Yes.

F-219. There are none of the gardens outside your Association?—90 per cent. of the gardens are represented in the Association.

F-220. How often does your Branch hold meetings?—About four or five times a year.

F-221. Do you at those meetings consult together as to the general progress and prosperity of your industry here?—We discuss all subjects relative to the industry and matters such as transport difficulties arising in getting goods forward in the interests of our labour and the community generally.

F-222. Do you discuss amongst yourselves general questions as to the improvement of the conditions of your labourers on your estates?—We do.

F-223. So that you may all benefit from the experience and the ideas of each of your individual members?—That is one of our ideas.

F-224. Can you tell me anything about your relations with the agents who control your estates?—We are a Branch of the parent Association in Calcutta, and the relations between our Branch, the Surma Valley Branch, and Calcutta are of the most cordial nature.

F-225. Do you find that you are left considerable freedom in the management of your estates, or does everything have to go to Calcutta for reference?—All important matters have to be referred to Calcutta or to London as the case may be. Some gardens are governed directly from London and only have Calcutta as forwarding agents.

F-226. In the offices of the agents, whether in Calcutta or London, have you any practical tea planters who have been managers of tea estates that they may know the difficulties with which you have to contend?—I think in most instances they employ practical men; planters of seniority are taken into the offices.

F-227. Then do you feel that your difficulties are understood and sympathetically dealt with in the offices of your agents?—Yes.

F-228. What kind of agreements have you in your Association with regard to standardizing methods? I understand you have an agreement to prevent what we might describe as the poaching of labour from one garden to another; where you have gone to the great expense of bringing coolies to your garden you naturally do not like them to be enticed away to another garden. Have you such an agreement?—We have what we call rules between ourselves. Those rules do not in any way affect the free movement of labour. Those rules are made to protect us from one or two black sheep whom we unfortunately have in our community who would, if those rules did not exist, see their neighbours import labour and then entice that labour to come and work on their gardens at the expense of our importation.

F-229. Have you a copy of those rules?—They are published every year in our Annual Report.

F-230. Then they are available to us in that form. What improvements have been made on your gardens since the enquiry that was held in 1921-22?—I take it you were here and actively engaged in the industry at that time?—I was. Very great improvements have taken place since that enquiry; there have been improvements generally with regard to sanitation, better water schemes have been adopted and there has been a general increase in wages.

F-231. From the figures supplied it would appear that wages roughly speaking have increased 100 per cent.?—We do not make the increase quite as much as that; we make the increase to be approximately 40 to 50 per cent. on the family earnings.

F-232. My figures show an increase of 100 per cent. in the last 20 years?—We are taking our figures from the last enquiry.

F-233. You make your figures on the family earnings to be between 40 and 50 per cent. increase as compared with 1921?—Yes.

F-234. Can you give the Commission figures as to the improvement with regard to health over that period?—We have worked out figures as to infantile mortality. The general health rate has certainly improved.

F-235. *Mr. Cliff*: As to wages, do you accept the figures given in the memorandum of the Government of Assam?—These figures are slightly under the calculation we have made; our figures as to wages are: the average man Rs. 10-12-11, women Rs. 8-11-2, children Rs. 5-7-11.

F-236. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That is cash earnings?—Yes.

F-237. *The Chairman*: But we have to note that the 1920-21 figures included diet and subsistence allowances, whereas the figure for 1927-28 represents cash earnings only?—Yes.

F-238. *Mr. Beddow*: May I point out that the last figures are March 1929, whereas Mr. Cliff's figures represent up to March 1928; they have since risen.

F-239. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do the figures* you have given us represent the average over a year or merely the average of two months?—We took them over the year.

F-240. From your wages books?—Yes.

F-241. Not two particular months but a whole year's earnings?—Yes.

F-242. *Mr. Cliff*: That is including all the gardens you represent?—In the Surma Valley, yes.

F-243. *The Chairman*: When we were in some of the recruiting areas we endeavoured to find out what were the feelings of the people in those areas with regard to recruiting for Assam; but I take it that you yourselves have not much knowledge of the recruiting end of your work, the recruiting being done through Calcutta; or do you yourselves hear what the feelings of the people are in the districts and the reasons for a certain reluctance to come to Assam?—(*Mr. Rayner*) I think we all have to take an interest in the recruiting. The matter was very fully discussed at

*The witnesses subsequently reported that these figures were taken from the Reports on immigrant labour in Assam for 1928-29.

the Assam Labour Board Meeting as to our system of recruiting. Other systems of recruiting were advocated by the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, but it must be understood that the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board has only been connected with recruiting for the last 18 months and I do not consider that he can know so much about it as some of the more experienced men who have had to do with the problem for such a long time. He advocates an entirely different system. He attributes the lack of success in our recruiting to the methods of the Tea Districts Labour Association. In fact, it is not the system of recruiting that is at fault at all; the difficulties are due to the restrictions under the Assam Labour Emigration Act (Act VI of 1901) and, at the moment, the scarcity of recruits. Those are the reasons why our cost per recruit is so high. At the moment, as you notice in our memorandum, the recruits cost a total of Rs. 101 per recruit. Mr. King, the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, in the course of the discussion, said this figure could be reduced to Rs. 50 if we had a different system of recruiting. But we know his figures are entirely wrong; it could never be done for Rs. 50; the rail fare and the living allowance we have to give the *sardar* come to more than that. If we could get rid of this Act VI and have free recruiting controlled by the industry we should certainly be able to recruit for Rs. 60 or 65, to which would have to be added another Rs. 10 as commission given to the *sardar*. I am certain it could not be done for less than that amount. For instance, a *sardar* may go to his country and be unsuccessful in his attempts to get recruits; the coming and going of that *sardar* will cost Rs. 70 which will be a dead loss. Another *sardar* may go to his country and recruit 8 coolies, a family group. The cost of those coolies will total out at Rs. 65 each and if the *sardar* is allowed Rs. 10 for each recruit, it will come to Rs. 75 per recruit. That is what it would cost if we got rid of this Act VI under which we have to keep a large supervising staff to deal with men going to their country from the gardens. Ex-garden people if they wish to return of their own accord cannot do so under the Act: We have to send an official *sardar* to take them back. The Act interferes with the free movement of labour in India; if our people want to go to see their country and stay there 6 months, we have actually got to send them under a licence; otherwise, if they go, we have to send another man to bring them back. We consider it is most unjust and unfair to put the tea industry under these restrictions while all other industries have free recruiting. Ninety per cent. of the abuses with regard to recruiting for the tea industry have been brought to light through the Tea Districts Labour Association; we want clean recruiting; but other industries recruit from various districts of India and there is no restriction. Do not abuses occur in those other industries? We know perfectly well they do; all of us who have been in the country any length of time know that these abuses occur as commonly, and in fact more commonly, in other industries than in the tea industry, because we try to secure clean recruiting. We only want this control because we who are experienced men know that if we go back to absolutely free recruiting there may be a few of these abuses and we shall get back to the same position as we are in now, i.e., the *arkatti* recruiting of a few years ago. That state of things was put an end to in 1915 when the Assam Labour Board was advocated as a sort of control by the planters themselves.

F-244. But I understand you are opposed to the repeal of Act VI?—No, I think you misunderstand our attitude; we wish Act VI to be repealed; we do not want Act VI at all. We want some mild form of control, not any legislation at all. Our idea is that we could control ourselves; the Magistrates in the Provinces will have powers to check any abuses. We wish to have the registration of emigrants ourselves and we wish the recruiting to be absolutely controlled by ourselves.

F-245. But you do distinctly advocate, under present conditions, the continuance of control in the recruiting districts?—I do not think you will find that in our memorandum; I think you will find we want some mild form of legislation; I think that was a mistake: it should have been: mild form of control.

F-246. But you cannot have control without legislation?—We will control ourselves; the Magistrates have full power under the law of the land. If there are any abuses, say a man goes and illegally recruits, the Magistrate would be sure to know that. Every emigrant who leaves the district is registered; it is very easy to ascertain where that emigrant has gone.

F-247. *Mr. Clow*: If the Act were repealed there would be no such thing as illegal recruitment?—Yes, if a man were brought from another garden, would not that be illegal recruiting?

Mr. Clow: Not if he wanted to go.

F-248. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You want some legislation; otherwise it would all be free recruiting?—We do not want Act VI.

F-249. *The Chairman*: I take it you want a new Act cleared of the difficulties of Act VI?—If there is to be any legislation at all; but I do not see why we require an Act at all.

F-250. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Then how can the Magistrate register and how can anyone do anything with regard to controlling recruiting?—Do you say the law of the land cannot check any abuses?

Mr. Clow: No, it cannot.

F-251. *The Chairman*: I think perhaps we had better pursue that matter when we have the Association itself before us at Shillong. The point in which I was at the moment interested was a much smaller one. We were told in some of the recruiting districts that in spite of the greatly improved communications with Assam there was a feeling amongst the people that Assam was so far away that to go to Assam was practically to disappear from India. Can you tell us how far there is communication between the coolies on your estates and their friends and relations in the villages they have left? Is there any free interchange of letters; is there anything done on the tea estates to encourage them to write to their friends and give an account of their well-being here? It appeared to some of us that something might be done by you locally in that respect, so that when people came here to the tea gardens in Assam, their friends and relations at home should not feel that they had lost sight of them?—40,000 go with licenses every year from the tea districts to their own country; that is 4 per cent. of the population.

F-252. But I am talking of those who do not go?—(*Mr. Stuart*) A good deal of communication goes on and a good amount of money is remitted annually.

F-253. You have no machinery on your plantations to help to assist that?—No, no organized machinery, but our staff do assist in writing letters occasionally for the illiterate.

F-254. Do you not think it would be a good thing if you actually promoted and encouraged very free interchange between the people on your plantations and their people in the districts from which they come?—It probably would be a good movement.

F-255. In the long run would it not help your recruiting?—I should think probably it would.

F-256. I see you keep the most careful registers of the coolies on your plantations, but it does not appear that through your organization there is any register in the recruiting districts to show where the coolies are, and certainly not any statement of their well-being; that would seem to indicate a lack of a link in knowledge and understanding between the recruiting district and the working district here in Assam?—In the recruiting district the agent ought to know and does know exactly where the coolies have gone.

F-257. He should know, but the Governments as such in the districts know nothing?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Do they know in any other industries where the emigrants go?

The Chairman: No, but it is rather a surprising thing that they do not except when they go out of India; when they go to Ceylon or Malay they know a good deal, but when they move in India they appear to know nothing?—Is it not exactly the same at home where labour goes where it likes without any registration?

The Chairman: That is so. We all are aware that there is a lingering prejudice against emigration to Assam, due to conditions which we hope have long since passed away, and it would be to the interests of your industry, surely, that every possible step should be taken to remove those prejudices in so far as they linger, in order that the people where there is not a livelihood for them in their own home districts should not be afraid to come to Assam.

F-258. *Mr. Beddow*: Do you think the Tea Districts Labour Association could do more to keep contact between the emigrant and his home rather than the man who comes here?—(*Mr. Stuart*) Yes, I think they could; I do not see there is any great difficulty in that. As far as I learned from the Chairman, he would like to see a register kept and the District Magistrate advised as to where these emigrants are going.

F-259. *The Chairman*: In those recruiting districts where there is still a feeling against emigration to Assam, I am anxious that every possible reasonable step should be taken to remove those prejudices?—Yes; I do not think there could be any objection to asking the Tea Districts Labour Association to keep a register. (*Mr. Gupta*) Whenever they can get employment near their homes they do not like to move from their houses; that is the reason why the number of recruits is falling low. Previously there was practically no industry near their homes; now many industries are developing in those parts; that is the reason why they do not like to come in large numbers.

F-260. Have you here in the Surma Valley any experience of the short-term recruiting that has come into being in the last two or three years?—(*Mr. Stuart*) It has hardly been followed up in the Surma Valley; there have been one or two exceptional cases, but, speaking generally, there is no short-term labour in this Valley.

F-261. Then you cannot give us any actual experience as to the success or otherwise of this 6, 9 and 12 months' recruiting?—No; there is only one garden that I know in the whole of the Surma Valley, that has employed labour for 6 months.

F-262. Did they in that case for the most part go home at the end of 6 months?—They were all repatriated at the end of the 6 months.

F-263. Have you ever considered whether a condition of repatriation, if they so desired, at the end of a term would be for the benefit of your industry or not?—We have considered the subject and I think we are prepared to repatriate people after a period, but of course in this Valley we look more to recruiting labour with a view to colonizing them and settling them; but, on the other hand, there is no objection to repatriating them after a period.

F-264. But if there were a condition of repatriation at the end of two or three years if they desired to go back to their home country, one may presume that a large proportion of them would prefer to stay and take advantage of the settlement that is open to them here; but you have not any definite agreed policy on that question?—No, we have no definite policy with regard to that in this Valley.

F-265. How far is there any primary education carried out by the tea estates?—There is very little carried out by the tea estates; some years ago it was attempted on a good many gardens, but owing to the disinclination of the people to go to school the schools collapsed. Even in the villages I am informed that the Government schools are very badly attended; they have no inclination to go to school.

F-266. Has primary education really had the encouragement of the members of your Association?—Yes, I think so generally.

F-267. If there were schools for the children of the tea garden labourers, do you think that in itself would be an additional inducement for the people to come here?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Many estates have schools kept up by the garden on the estate, but they do not seem to want to go to school; others have what are called subsidized schools, partly maintained by Government and inspected by Government on the estates.

F-268. Is that reluctance on the part of the parents due to the fact that the children are able to earn when they otherwise would be at school?—I think that is what it is. (*Mr. Stuart*) The school is generally held in the evening. A lot of these children are looking after their parents' goats, cows and sheep; I think there would be great difficulty in persuading them to go to school.

F-269. That has been the case in many countries amongst agricultural people in days gone by, but by degrees there has been an increased appreciation of the advantages of education. I take it that you do not at present find that growing appreciation amongst the parents on your tea estates?—No, we do not find the parents supporting us in any way. (*Mr. Gupta*) Many of the gardens have schools, but it will take some time to make these people send their boys to these schools; they are quite reluctant to do so at present.

F-270. *Mr. Beddow*: I take it not all the children on your garden work?—(*Mr. Stuart*) No.

F-271. Do those who do not work attend school any more readily than those who work?—No; I think they generally like playing in the lines and prefer pitch and toss to going to school.

F-272. Then do you consider that they do not attend school because they want to earn money or from sheer apathy?—Apathy.

F-273. *The Chairman*: I take it from what you have said that although experiments have been made, there is not a general policy of encouraging education?—No, not on the part of the employer.

F-274. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to your garden *sardars*, we have been told in one memorandum by an officer visiting the recruiting districts that instances are very frequent of *sardars* being sent down to recruit after spending a few days in the garden; have you any experience of that?—I do not think that is general though there may be exceptional cases. (*Mr. Rayner*) We very seldom send any *sardar* until he has been 6 months at least on the garden; there may be exceptional cases, but that is done more to keep in touch with the recruiting districts. I know in our discussion that was also brought up, that these people whom we sent back were professional recruiters. That is not so. I have sent away a good many *sardars* and not one has turned out to be a professional man; they were just people who had families in their country, and they were sent back after 6 months or a year to recruit their families, and they did so. I can prove that; I can give you hundreds of instances in the last few years. That statement is not true.

F-275. Can you give us any idea of the proportion of coolies who actually return ultimately to their native districts?—(*Mr. Stuart*) I am afraid we have not got those figures.

F-276. Can you give us a guess? Do the great majority ultimately return? —(*Mr. Rayner*) No, certainly not; they settle in the garden or they settle outside in the *busti*; they remain on the gardens and may afterwards drift off to the *busti*. Ten or 15 per cent. may return to their country but certainly not more.

F-277. Do those find their own way back or are they supplied with their return fare?—Many people after being a certain time on the garden want to go back to their country, and we say: "If you wish to go back, if you have a licence you will be able to get one or two people, your own relations, and send them to the garden." Very often they do so and remain in the country themselves. Sending them to recruit is a form of repatriation.

F-278. Am I to take it, then, that every coolie who returns is furnished with a certificate?—Yes.

F-279. Practically none return who are not furnished with a certificate as a *sardar*?—How can they return otherwise?

F-280. They could return at their own expense?—Some do, but very few I should say; I have not got any figures.

F-281. *The Chairman*: You have told us that out of your 40,000 *sardars*, taking an average per annum, one-third do not return?—*I should say* approximately one-third do not return.

F-282. Then may we take it that that represents about 13,000 who do not like the life in Assam and who go back as *sardars* as a form of repatriation? —Yes. (*Mr. Stuart*) They do not go back because they do not like the life; they go back because they have money.

F-283. *Mr. Clow*: When you accept that figure of 13,000, you are referring to the whole of Assam?—Yes.

F-284. Of that number a very small proportion goes from this Valley; I think it is one in seven?—Yes, about that; we do not recruit to the same extent as the other Valley.

F-285. *Mr. Saikia*: Do you allow a coolie to take his family to his country when he goes as a *sardar*?—(*Mr. Gupta*) Sometimes he takes his wife with him, not always.

F-286. *Mr. Clow*: As regards wages are we to understand there are two systems in force, a system of *hazira* and *ticca* and a system of unit rates?—I should say the unit system is the system which is now adopted generally.

F-287. The other system has been abandoned altogether?—It is dying out.

F-288. Under the *hazira* system the labourer had to do a fixed task, and then if he wished he could do an additional amount of work?—Yes.

F-289. A higher rate was paid for the *ticca* than for the *hazira*?—Yes.

F-290. Under the unit system the rate is uniform?—Up to a point, and then the rate increases again.

F-291. So that the only difference in practice is that no fixed task is demanded of the labourer?—Yes, that is the idea.

F-292. The rates have not been altered?—Yes, the rates have gone up; we do not get to-day the same amount of work out of a coolie as we did 20 years ago.

F-293. Could you give us roughly the rates now for the main forms of work?—It varies a great deal; for instance, in the rains hoeing is a different task as compared with what it is in the cold weather when the soil is so hard. Again you might compare Mr. Rayner's garden with mine; he might require one class of hoeing in the rains while I might demand another kind.

F-294. Take plucking in the season?—The same thing happens with regard to Mr. Rayner's garden and mine; the rates may vary; I may want a better quality leaf and therefore have got to reduce my task.

F-295. But are not there certain broad rates fairly generally applicable?—It varies tremendously.

F-296. We were told in one garden that the rate was more or less uniform for the more general classes of work?—If you take a large company I should think the rates are uniform. Then if you come to another company which is working on a different basis you may find great variation in the rates, but at the end of the day the pay is practically the same.

F-297. Why was the alteration made to the unit system?—It was considered generally a more equitable arrangement for the coolie; I think he prefers it.

F-298. Has it resulted in his doing less work normally for the garden?—There is less work done to-day by the coolie.

F-299. Is the introduction of the unit rate responsible for the coolie doing less work?—No, not the introduction of the unit system.

F-300. It does not result in his coming to work and leaving off after an hour or two before a reasonable day's work has been done?—That is not the unit system, because one or two gardens that still retain the old system are just in the same position.

F-301. *Mr. Beddow*: Does he earn more to-day than he could earn 10 years ago?—Considerably more.

F-302. Does he do more work for it?—He does less work for it.

F-303. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Will you explain the actual working of the unit system? I understand you do give piece-work for the man or woman to do?—Take hoeing; the task is decided on as the result of our experience. If there is any doubt about the task you generally consult one of your senior *sardars* and fix a rate; a man we will say, for instance, is allowed to hoe 10 *nals* for an anna.

F-304. Therefore he is set a task practically of 10 *nals* for an anna; supposing he only does 8 *nals*?—He will be paid in proportion.

F-305. *Mr. Clow*: Under the old *hazira* system a man had to do a specified quantity, say about 4 annas worth, before he was paid at all?—Not always.

F-306. Generally?—Yes.

F-307. Under the new system it is open to him to stop work after he has earned an anna?—He can do as much work as he likes.

F-308. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How do you pay him if he does 20 *nals*?—He gets 2 annas; we rate it. What we like to see them earning is a minimum of 6 annas a day.

F-309. That would be 60 *nals*?—Say that is 60 *nals*; then if he cares to do more than that he gets double rates; it is a rising scale after earning the rate of wage that we consider is the minimum wage that he should be able to earn in 4 to 5 hours.

F-310. *Mr. Clow*: Under the unit system does the coolie ordinarily do that minimum amount?—He generally does more; the good coolie generally does more.

F-311. Is it possible at all seasons of the year to provide as much work as any man may want?—Yes, always.

F-312. On what principle are the rice lands allocated?—They are allotted to families. I think we have the figures here. You may take it over the entire population of the Surma Valley; you will find they have got about three-quarters of a *keer* per head.

F-313. That will all be held by people who have been some years on the garden?—No, not always.

F-314. I suppose a man who has come fresh from Ranchi cannot expect to be given rice land as soon as he arrives?—In some instances it happens; if he goes to a garden which is being opened out and there is rice land that has not been opened out, in his spare time he cuts that jungle and starts to cultivate it.

F-315. But that is the exception, is it not?—There is a good deal of it goes on.

F-316. The granting of rice land is of very distinct economic advantage, is it not?—Yes; at the rents at which they get it, compared with the rents at which they acquire it from Government, it means a lot of money.

F-317. The income of a man who owns rice land differs very substantially from the income of a man who has none?—That is so.

F-318. The difficulty I feel about the system is that whereas the man who owns rice land goes to his village and says that he is perfectly contented and very well off, the man who owns no rice land is in a very much poorer position, to begin with at any rate?—Yes.

F-319. Does that militate against recruitment?—(*Mr. Rayner*) The older coolie can always look after himself. We look after the new coolie much more than we do the old coolie.

F-320. What do you mean by "look after"?—We look after his pay and welfare. (*Mr. Stuart*) Irrespective of what he does, a new coolie draws his full pay for a certain period. Some gardens allow him full pay for three months.

F-321. You pay him the wage he would receive for his ordinary task?—We pay him what we consider is the wage that he ought to earn, irrespective of what he does.

F-322. The wage that he would earn if he did not do extra work?—Yes.

F-323. Is it not possible that the ordinary coolie, coming here and having heard accounts from his relatives of how you give him land and various other advantages, might be somewhat disillusioned when he found that for some years at any rate he had to depend entirely on the garden?

Mr. Beddow: Do you find a new coolie inclined to cultivate land in his first year or two?—Not generally.

F-324. *Mr. Clow*: Because he has not the means with which to cultivate it?—It is not so much as that he is disinclined in the first instance to do it. A new coolie does not as a rule get land that has been in cultivation. He has to open it out himself.

F-325. With regard to *faltu* labour I understand that it is nowhere shown in the return?—No, it is not.

F-326. The Government asks for no return in respect of *faltu* labour?—No. I do not think they could demand it. We have no control over it. It comes and goes exactly as it likes.

F-327. The same applies to the coal miner, but the Government demand a return in that case?—It is hardly the same. One is working in a mine in dangerous circumstances, and the other is merely an agriculturist.

F-328. Would it be right to say that in this valley the *faltu* labour is about 10 per cent. of the total?—Yes, approximately.

F-329. Is any *faltu* labour employed in the factories?—No. The factory labour is permanent.

F-330. Does the *faltu* labourer always do a full day's work?—Yes, as a rule.

F-331. Has the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act had any appreciable effect?—I do not think it has made any difference to us at all.

F-332. There was very keen opposition among planters generally to the repeal of that Act?—There was at the time, because it was depriving us of any control over the coolie. At present we have no control over our labour.

F-333. But I gather that the effect of the repeal has not been very noticeable?—No.

F-334. *Miss Power*: It has been stated that few gardens have facilities for the education of children and that there ought to be lower primary schools in each district. Can you state what number of gardens in the Surma Valley have their own schools?—I have no idea.

F-335. Is it possible to get that information?—Yes. We will submit it.

F-336. You stated just now that there was encouragement given to the workers to attend schools. In going round various gardens lately we have seen evidence of the very patient educational work that has been done amongst your people in order to get them to take advantage of the medical facilities given. I take it that that must have entailed educational work over a long period. Has the same patient educational effort been given to persuade them to send their children to such schools as are available?—I am afraid the same patient education has not been given.

F-337. If they have responded, as it is clear they have, to the medical facilities given, which must have been very alien to them in the first instance, do you think that if the same educational effort were made by employers to persuade the workers as to the necessity of sending their children to school up to, say, the age of 10 or 11, that over a decade you would get the same response from them?—No, I do not think so, for this reason. When the medical side was taken up 30 years ago, the medical officer had great difficulty, especially when it came to a question of an operation; but the mere fact of an operation having been conducted successfully in a hospital was a great inducement for the next case to come along. Looking at it from an educational point of view, however, it would not have the same effect.

F-338. Would it assist if children up to the age of 10 or 11 were not accepted for work in the tea gardens?—If there were any such restriction, I think it would mean that all the children would go to work in the neighbouring villages.

F-339. *Mr. Beddow*: Have you children under the age of 11 working on the gardens?—No. There are very few under 11.

F-340. *Miss Power*: Do you feel as an Association that no endeavour on your part to persuade the children or the parents to take advantage of educational facilities would be of any use?—I do not think it would be of any use.

F-341. Are you really as pessimistic about it as that?—I am, personally.

F-342. You think compulsion is the only remedy?—(*Dr. Ramsay*) From my own experience I would say that there is a demand for education by coolie children after they reach the age of about 12 years, but not before. A good deal of education goes on throughout the coolie lines at night by the Babus.

F-343. Are these recognized schemes of education, or is it a voluntary act on the part of the garden babus?—It is voluntary. A good deal is done by the tea estate establishments in that direction when the children reach the age of about 12.

F-344. You refer to the question of optional medical examination. You also imply that medical examination does in fact take place in most cases; but if it is optional there must be a certain number of recruits who come here who, from the very beginning, are physically unsuited to the work?—(*Mr. Stuart*) They should not be, because as a rule the instructions to the local agent are to have them all medically examined before they come.

F-345. What is the idea of leaving anything so important as the initial medical examination optional?—There is no law that can compel a coolie to be medically examined.

F-346. *Mr. Beddow*: Although it is optional, are not all coolies medically examined?—I have never heard of a case of coolies not being medically examined.

F-347. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the practice in your gardens, Mr. Rayner?—(*Mr. Rayner*) We always have our coolies medically examined before they are sent up. They are also inoculated and vaccinated before they come up.

F-348. Is that the usual procedure for all the gardens?—Yes, in 99 per cent. of the gardens.

F-349. *Miss Power*: You say that no married woman or minor is accepted at a depôt without the consent of the husband or guardian. What steps are taken to find out whether the consent of the husband or guardian has been obtained?—(*Mr. Stuart*) That is obtained by the local agent in the depôt. A peon is invariably sent out to the village from where these people come in order to find out if the woman is willing to go, or if the parents, if she has any, are willing to let her go.

F-350. Is that an invariable practice?—Yes. The Superintendent, Tea Districts Labour Association, Calcutta, will be able to tell you better than I can, but I think it is invariably the case. It is the rule in the case of a single woman.

F-351. The Bishop of Ranchi in his evidence has made certain allegations on which it would be interesting to have your comment. He says: "Family life often suffers from the emigration of young girls who, unmarried, are enticed and disappear among the mixed population of the gardens. Married girls are enticed by grand promises and are often lost to their husbands. Young girls, married or unmarried, when recruited for Assam against the will or without obtaining the consent of the parent or husband are taken by devious ways to the depôt, and are often passing in the open with the *sardar* who may easily under the circumstances commit immoral action with these girls." He also refers to the changing of names, and so forth. As allegations of this kind have been made by a presumably responsible person, it would be very interesting if you could give us your comments on them?—It can easily be found out through our Association where a particular girl has gone to. If there is any doubt about it anybody can write up here and make enquiries through the Magistrate.

F-352. There is no reason for anybody to be lost to his or her family?—No.

F-353. *Mr. Clow*: Even if they have come up here under a wrong name?—If a parent complains that a girl has been sent up to a garden, and the girl has changed her name, the girl can be described. It is very easy for any one to trace that girl, because it is known how many girls have been sent up during the week or fortnight, and the Magistrates can be circularized to find out her whereabouts. There is no difficulty in tracing a girl. They know exactly to what garden the girl has gone. The local agent can tell you at once.

F-354. The father cannot tell which agency she has gone to?—Yes, he can.

F-355. How?—There is only one central depôt in each circle through which she can be sent and all particulars can be found out there.

F-356. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If the girl has gone through the local recruiting depôt to a tea garden it is possible to trace her?—Yes.

F-357. But if instead of going through a local recruiting depôt she has been taken away to the Punjab then she cannot be traced?—No.

F-358. *Miss Power*: Have you ever had any cases in which you have had to return women or girl recruits, because you have found that they were illegally recruited?—It is a very rare thing. (*Mr. Gupta*) I have had a single case in my 34 years' experience.

F-359. You say: "Tea estates are inspected by the Magistrate, and if an estate is unhealthy, also by the Civil Surgeon." It appears that the Civil Surgeon only enters into the matter when somebody other than a doctor has decided that an estate is unhealthy. On what basis is that decision formed?—On the mortality statistics.

F-360. What happens when a garden is disclosed as unhealthy?—(*Dr. Ramsay*) The Government can close it if they care to.

F-361. Your Association has had no experience of gardens in this Valley being classified as unhealthy?—I have had two gardens classified as unhealthy.

F-362. What happened when these gardens were declared to be unhealthy?—The Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon write reports on the garden.

F-363. After such a report is made is there any obligation on the owner of the garden to take definite steps?—I made a thorough investigation as to the cause of the high death-rate on the two particular gardens I have mentioned, and I found that the actual factor was malaria. It was put down to other things, such as hookworm in the first instance, but in the end it was found that the actual factor was malaria.

F-364. You refer to the "extras" given to the workers over and above their cash wages, and you say that these constitute a large increase on the actual cash wage. Is it possible for you to give an assessment of the cash value of these extra concessions given to the workers?—(*Mr. Stuart*) Yes. Over the entire Surma Valley three-fourths of a *keer* of rice land is given to each coolie, the production of which may be computed to be from Rs. 18 to Rs. 20, representing Re. 1-8 per month per head of the total population. In addition, it is calculated, on a conservative estimate, that the value of the cows, goats, buffaloes, pigs, ponies, bullocks, etc., is equivalent to 8 annas per coolie.

F-365. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When you say "Value," do you mean for grazing purposes?—I mentioned ponies. Coolies have purchased ponies and have made money out of those ponies by making them pull trolleys to the railway station —a very valuable source of income to them. In addition they make an appreciable sum by selling milk in Silchar from their cows. Then the homestead produce per head per month we estimate to be 8 annas. They grow a good deal of vegetables. Putting all these things together we make it out to be that, in addition to his cash wages, a coolie earns by concessions Rs. 4-8 per month per head.

F-366. Man, woman and child?—The total population on the gardens.

F-367. *Mr. Beddow*: Of the total population, 58 per cent. is on the labour force, which almost doubles your figures?—Yes.

F-368. *Miss Power*: Will you let us have a statement of the cash value of these concessions?—Yes, I will send it in.

F-369. You say: "It is considered that increased earnings result in a lowering of efficiency." Will you explain what you mean by that?—(*Mr. Rayner*) We do not get the same quality of work done for the amount of money we pay.

F-370. *Mr. Clow*: But money has depreciated very largely since the time you are speaking of?—We have to take an inferior quality of work for the amount of money we give.

F-371. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you suggest that if you double a man's earnings you halve his efficiency?—I say he will do less for it.

F-372. Will you explain that?—A man does not want to do more than a certain amount of work. He wants the rest of the time for leisure, and for doing his own cultivation.

F-373. *Mr. Beddow*: He works up to a certain amount of money and, having earned that money, he stops work?—Yes.

F-374. *The Chairman*: In your case particularly, the man having his own land to turn to?—Exactly.

F-375. *Miss Power*: You are not implying that the quality of the work which is actually done has deteriorated?—We have to take inferior work to what he did before.

F-376. Dealing with the question of labour agreements between employers, and with the freedom of movement of the labourers, is there any agreement between tea garden managers as to accepting a worker from a neighbouring tea garden who may wish to change his garden?—(*Mr. Stuart*) There are labour rules between the managers, which in no way affects the free movement of the coolie.

F-377. You agree between yourselves that you will not entice each other's coolies?—Yes.

F-378. Supposing a coolie without incitement wishes for some reason to change his garden, if he goes to a neighbouring garden will he be refused work?—No; but the manager of that garden has to pay to the manager of the other garden the expenses of the man's recruitment.

F-379. Is the coolie always at liberty to go to any other garden if the manager of that garden is willing to pay the expenses of his recruitment?—Yes.

F-380. Or will the manager say "I cannot afford to pay your recruiting expenses at the moment and therefore I cannot take you"?—It is very seldom that he would say that.

F-381. You are prepared to say that at the moment a coolie, if he wishes, can go to any garden he wants without restriction?—Yes.

F-382. *Mrs. Ataur Rahman*: May we know what have been the declared dividends on the gardens for the last ten years?—You will get that information in Calcutta.

F-383. Yesterday in going round the gardens we came across a coolie woman who said that she pruned 70 large bushes or 100 small bushes for 4 annas. Can a coolie woman do that amount of work in one day and also extra work?—She can do it but it depends on whether she wants to do it. The majority go away after earning merely what they want to earn.

F-384. They told us that they could not do more than that amount of work?—They can easily do it in a very reasonable number of hours.

F-385. *Mr. Beddow*: Is there a disinclination on their part to earn more money at certain times of the year?—Yes, in the cold weather.

F-386. Why?—Because the days are shorter and the weather is better and they prefer to go and amuse themselves. I have some figures here showing the extraordinarily high pay they can earn when the plucking season is on. On one estate a woman earned in April Rs. 6-6-9; in May Rs. 18-14-3; in July Rs. 21-8-6; in August Rs. 24; in September Rs. 19; in October Rs. 19 and in November Rs. 14, and her total working days were only 195.

F-387. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What were her total earnings for these 195 working days?—Rs. 130-3-9.

F-388. *Mrs. Ataur Rahman*: What does the average woman get?—The average for the whole district for the year is Rs. 8-11-2 per month. I can give you figures of the earnings of a dozen women during the plucking season:—The first one earned Rs. 130-3-9 for 195 working days; the next earned Rs. 136-5-9 for 195 days; the next Rs. 119-4-6 for 190 days; the next Rs. 97-7-6 for 187 days; the next Rs. 108-3-3 for 199 days; the next Rs. 107-14-6 for 196 days; the next Rs. 103-1-3 for 200 days; the next Rs. 86 odd for 175 days; the next Rs. 118 for 180 days; the next Rs. 111 for 192 days; the next Rs. 113 for 191 days; and the next Rs. 107 for 199 days.

F-389. *Mr. Beddow*: These earnings are open to anybody as they choose to avail themselves of them?—Yes.

F-390. *The Chairman*: How many hours of work would these high earnings represent?—Seven or eight hours for 6 days a week.

F-391. *Mrs. Ataur Rahman*: You refer to the increase in wages since 1899; but the cost of living has considerably increased also. Twenty years ago you could get 20 seers of rice for a rupee. Nowadays you can only get 5 to 6 seers for a rupee?—(*Mr. Rayner*) I can go back 36 years and I never remember the time when you could get 20 seers for a rupee.

F-392. Twenty years ago one could get a lot of fish for an anna which now you cannot get for 8 annas. Vegetables and *dal* have also gone up in price?—(*Mr. Stuart*) The coolie grows a good deal of his own vegetables.

F-393. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any figures dealing with the cost of living?—Yes.

The Chairman: Will you put those in?—Yes. (List handed in.)

F-394. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What does it come to?—For a single man it comes out to Rs. 8-7-0; for a woman with one child of from 8 to 11 years old it comes out to Rs. 9-8-6; and for a man and a woman with a child it comes out to Rs. 17-15-6.

F-395. *Mr. Beddow*: From the Government return, the total wages earned throughout the year taken over the total population, work out to 3,276 rupees per head, whereas the cost of living is roughly Rs. 8 per head. Where does the balance come from?—From the garden property.

F-396. It does not come from outside?—No.

F-397. Therefore the value of the non-cash payment is equivalent to the balance?—Yes.

F-398. *Rev. Saikia*: May I know if every family on the gardens has paddy lands for cultivation?—(*Mr. Gupta*) In many gardens they have. (*Mr. Stuart*) As we have already stated, the average comes to three-quarters of a *kair* per head of population in the Surma Valley.

F-399. You have already said that when new comers come they do not do anything for the first year. After the first year is it possible for them to clear up the jungle and begin cultivation?—(*Mr. Gupta*) Many do. They get the land free for three years in case they cut off the jungle. (*Mr. Stuart*) There are not many; if land is available it is possible, and some of them do it.

F-400. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What rent do you charge from them?—A very nominal charge, 12 annas per acre.

F-401. *Mr. Beddow*: What is the Government rate?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Rs. 6-13 per acre. (*Mr. Stuart*) That is the revenue that the Government derives.

F-402. *Rev. Saikia*: Will you tell us whether there is a school in every garden and whether there are teachers for those schools?—(*Mr. Gupta*)We have already promised to send a list showing the gardens which have schools. I may say that many gardens have provided buildings for schools and have employed qualified teachers.

F-403. Is it possible for children, who work in the fields all the day, to go to night schools?—(*Mr. Stuart*) It is quite possible.

F-404. Will you tell us whether pure water is supplied to the coolies?—(*Mr. Rayner*) The water supply on the tea estates is remarkably good; most of the gardens supply pure and filtered water.

F-405. When the *sardar* goes out for recruiting, does his wife generally go with him?—(*Mr. Stuart*) No; she probably does not want to go because she has children to look after.

F-406. Does it generally happen that the *sardar* who goes out returns with another wife while his wife on the garden also marries a second time?—There may be isolated cases; it is not common.

F-407. *Col. Russell*: In the first place, I will deal with the question of housing of the coolies. We saw certain types of houses during our inspection and I would like Dr. Ramsay to give his opinion to the Commission as to the types which are most suitable for these coolies and whether the coolies are contented with the types that have been put up?—(*Dr. Ramsay*) In 1917 my predecessor Dr. Glover was highly interested in the subject and he built five brick houses covered with shingles. The idea was to cut out the recurring expenditure on repairs and to provide decent accommodation for the coolies. This experiment was carried out on the Labac Tea Estate, and within two years, during the influenza epidemic, there was great mortality in these houses and the coolies immediately deserted them. We were unable to get them back to these houses and so we reverted to the type of houses that you saw. We had to resort to corrugated iron sheets for covering because jungle produce is difficult to get. The coolies seem to prefer this type of houses and we consider it quite healthy.

F-408. Was it not merely an accident that the influenza epidemic occurred and made them prejudiced against that type of houses?—Yes, but they said that those houses were infested with ghosts and they refused to live in them.

F-409. We saw also on Saturday various lines of houses being put up with iron frames for roofing. Will the coolies make use of these houses?—We hope so.

F-410. You have no assurance on that point?—No.

F-411. Perhaps Mr. Stuart might say whether he thinks that it is advisable to put up such houses?—(*Mr. Stuart*) We have put up similar houses, though we have not adopted corrugated iron roofing but asbestos cement sheets, and the coolies have taken to those houses quite kindly.

F-412. Have you any reason to suspect that this new type of houses has any effect in increasing the amount of respiratory diseases?—(*Dr. Ramsay*) No.

F-413. So that this new type of house which is perhaps more stable and requires less repairs is quite a suitable type?—Yes, we think so.

F-414. As regards the general sanitation of the lines, what methods have been adopted by you to improve the sanitation of the lines?—The lines are cleaned daily.

F-415. You have no definite system of drainage, for instance, the removal of nightsoil by drainage?—No.

F-416. There is also no definite policy as regards construction of latrines for the coolies?—Not in the lines. We have them in the hospital. but we find that they are not popular. The only popular system is that which is in vogue in Doom-Dooma; they have the septic tank system.

F-417. That has proved satisfactory?—Very satisfactory.

F-418. Do you think that such a system might be introduced into other gardens with advantage?—I am asking this question because it is said in the memorandum of the Indian Tea Association that as regards conservancy little progress is recorded?—Certainly. I am quite sure it is going to come along soon.

F-419. It has been said to us frequently that coolies would not use latrines even if they were provided. Is that your opinion?—That is my opinion. The coolies object to the present type of latrines. If you have the septic tank system, which is a clean system, I have no doubt that it will become very popular with the coolies.

F-420. So that if you provide decent latrines and keep them decent there will be no difficulty in the coolies making use of them?—No.

F-421. You would therefore recommend a flush-out system with septic tanks?—Yes, I would.

F-422. With regard to diet, can you give us any information as to the articles of diet that are used by the coolies in the tea estates?—I have got here a list of my hospital diet. (The list was handed in.)

F-423. Do you consider the diet of the ordinary coolie a satisfactory diet or not?—I do.

F-424. You think he gets a proper supply of what are known as vitamins?—I do.

F-425. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you think it is a physiologically balanced diet?—Yes.

F-426. *Col. Russell*: Various statements about the milk that is produced by these coolies have been made. I think Mr. Stuart said that they even sell milk. Do the coolies use milk themselves?—They do to a large extent. They have large herds of cows.

F-427. You would, I presume, support the opinion that the children on the gardens look well because they do get a proper supply of milk?—Yes.

F-428. In the same way they get a proper supply of vegetables because they grow these for themselves?—Yes.

F-429. So that from these two points of view at least the diet is a physiologically and properly balanced diet?—Yes.

F-430. With regard to diseases, I understand that you deal with your statistics of diseases from the general point of view; you do not deal with a particular disease in itself?—Quite so.

F-431. You prefer to do this in estimating the health conditions of the estates?—Yes.

F-432. What is the reason for taking the general disease rate rather than, for instance, the malarial rate?—Because in the diagnosis of malarial cases I have to be entirely dependent on the opinion of my Indian establishment. If we control the incidence of malaria efficiently, we should by this means reduce the total sick-rate, and this has actually happened.

F-433. So that you would not deal specifically, for instance, with cholera, with hookworm and with malaria but you would take the whole group as a group in order that you might get a better idea as to the health conditions of your coolies?—Yes.

F-434. Can you give any comparative statistics for individual gardens in which your anti-malarial work has been carried out?—I can give the figures for the Bandu and the Labac Tea Gardens that were examined by the Commission. In 1927 the total sickness was 14,000 and 17,000, respectively, and it was reduced to 9,281 and 8,840.

F-435. Are you satisfied then that you are on the right lines in your anti-malarial work in improving the health conditions of the coolies on these estates?—I think so.

F-436. *The Chairman*: Do I take it that the full effect of your work has not yet been shown?—Quite so.

F-437. Three years is a short time?—Yes; we prefer to take a five years period.

F-438. Within that period you anticipate a further reduction in your total sickness rate?—I do.

F-439. *Col. Russell*: Malaria, we may take it, is generally prevalent all over the gardens?—No. On the low lying gardens there is very little malaria while the high lying gardens are intensively malarial.

F-440. Do the low lying gardens generally have a lower death-rate than the higher gardens?—Yes.

F-441. Can you give us figures of death-rates and birth-rates of a group of gardens representing both areas?—If you take the Bandu garden that you inspected you will see that in the five-year period 1922-26 there were 30 more deaths than births. In the high lying gardens there is usually a higher death-rate than birth-rate.

F-442. In the low lying gardens?—There is a higher birth-rate.

F-443. Are you prepared to guarantee your statistics?—Yes.

F-444. How do you manage to get them?—We take an annual census.

F-445. We have had some difficulty in getting statistics that are accurate and reliable. How is it that you can say that your figures are both reliable and accurate?—Because some years ago I dismissed three doctors for submitting inaccurate statistics, and now they submit correct statistics, and I also get the complete support of the management.

F-446. You are quite prepared to swear by your figures?—Yes.

F-447. Could you let us have the birth-rate and death-rate for the gardens under your control for the five years before and after you took up their control?—I have got here the figures for 1922-26.

F-448. And for the last three years?—I have got figures for 1927 and 1928, but I have not collected them for 1929.

F-449. After you collect them you can send them to the Commission?—Yes.

F-450. You say that cholera is endemic in Assam. Do you have frequent outbreaks in your gardens?—Not since we adopted the prophylactic treatment and chlorination of wells.

F-451. You chlorinate the wells every day?—Yes.

F-452. How is the accuracy of your chlorination method tested?—We have tested our wells, but we cannot test them individually daily. We estimate how much would be required by Horrocks' box.

F-453. And it has shown that you get successful results?—Yes.

F-454. By inoculating the coolies and by chlorinating the wells you more or less get rid of cholera and you do not consider it a very great danger?—Quite so. During the months of March, April and May we pay particular attention and have an intensive chlorination of water.

F-455. Do you do your inoculation before the outbreak of cholera?—Yes.

F-456. How do you persuade the coolies to get themselves inoculated without the prevalence of cholera?—There is no trouble about it; the coolie accepts it freely. Though it is an expensive method, we give it by the mouth.

F-457. Does hookworm trouble you much?—I was under the impression that it was a very serious factor, but I found that it was a common factor throughout the estates and was not really an important factor at all.

F-458. Almost all the coolies that you get from Bihar and Orissa and Bengal are infected with hookworm. Are they treated before they come up to the gardens here?—I do not think they are.

F-459. Have you hookworm disease here?—No. What we believed to be hookworm we now find to be chronic dysentery or malarial infection.

F-460. Do you not think that the non-existence of hookworm may be due to the fact that the coolies are well fed?—That is probable.

F-461. With regard to maternity benefits, I find that the memorandum from the Indian Tea Association states that the expectant mother is allowed leave on full pay for a period of three or four months. Is that generally the case in all estates?—Yes.

F-462. The expectant mother is looked upon as a valuable citizen then?—Yes.

F-463. Do you think that it would be necessary in these circumstances to introduce what is known as a maternity benefit scheme?—(*Mr. Stuart*) No. I think the benefits that are derived now are probably more than any legislation would give them.

F-464. What exactly do you give in an individual case; it is not quite clear as to what you give?—It varies in gardens. For instance, one garden gives Rs. 5 a month.

F-465. For how many months?—From the time the woman is certified pregnant and unfit for work until such time she is certified that she can go to work again.

F-466. Is certification done by the doctor?—Yes.

F-467. For how many months would that go on?—Probably for a period of three or four months altogether.

F-468. Do you have any midwives or trained *dais* on your estates to conduct these cases?—We have no trained midwives; the ordinary coolie attends to these cases.

F-469. You have not made any effort to introduce trained midwives for conducting these cases?—No. (*Mr. Rayner*) I have got one undergoing training in the hospital for work on the estate.

F-470. So that you cannot tell us just now whether that scheme is going to be a success?—No.

F-471 But I take it that your intention is to extend that scheme if it is a success?—Yes.

F-472. Is it easy to get women to take up that work here?—It is very difficult.

F-473. What class of women could you recruit for that kind of work?—Only lower caste people will do it, and sometimes Muhammadans, but very few high caste Hindus will do it.

F-474. Do you think that the coolie women will make use of the services of these trained midwives?—Yes.

F-475. Is there any other form of welfare work done on the gardens?—(*Mr. Stuart*) Yes. In most of the gardens after the birth of the child a bonus for the birth is allowed and subsequently after a period another bonus is given.

F-476. In addition to this expenditure that might be included under maternity benefits, is there any other form of general welfare work that is being done in these estates?—All the children get blankets free of charge. If the mother is unable to procure milk, it is supplied by the estate free of charge. The mother also gets a blanket.

F-477. Have you, for instance, given recreation facilities?—Many gardens have football teams.

F-478. And cinemas?—Yes; in the cold weather a touring company comes round.

F-479. You pay for that?—The estates pay for it.

F-480. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do the wives of managers take interest in baby clinics or social work?—Some do.

F-481. *Col. Russell*: Have you got any child welfare centres in the Surma Valley?—No.

F-482. I think you wanted to hand in a statement on the conduct of midwifery cases, giving the figures of maternal mortality?—Yes, it is here. I have also a statement giving infant mortality figures.

F-483. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you include the still-births?—If a child lives even for one minute we include it, but we do not include premature births.

F-484. *Col. Russell*: With regard to general medical facilities, I think the Commission is very much interested in your central hospital and the way in which you have grouped your gardens in order that serious cases could be transferred to the central hospital. I take it that it is with your entire approval that this central hospital has been arranged?—Yes.

F-485. Is it the opinion of your managers that a central hospital is the best type of medical institution to have on a group of estates?—As far as I can make out, all the managers are in full agreement with the principle.

F-486. I take it it is much more easy to treat patients from a group of gardens in a central institution than to have a dozen smaller and less efficient institutions scattered all over the area?—Quite so.

F-487. Would it be possible to introduce that scheme into other groups of estates not necessarily under the same management?—(*Mr. Stuart*) It would be very difficult.

F-488. But would it be advisable?—It would be advisable, but I think the work will be an extremely difficult one.

F-489. Why do you say it will be so difficult?—In the first place, who is going to supply the necessary labour for that?

F-490. Surely the cost of the whole central hospital could be easily worked out year by year and the expenses divided in proportion to the number of cases treated, or in proportion to the population of each estate?—My practical experience is that it is difficult to have such central hospitals associated with a number of agencies.

F-491. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have at present a European doctor representing nine different agencies, is it not?—Yes.

F-492. If that is so, can you not get another doctor to work on the same lines?—I would like to see that done, but I think it would be very very difficult.

F-493. *Col. Russell*: But you admit that the system is one to be accepted?—Yes.

F-494. In Java and Sumatra on the rubber plantations such a system prevails, and it seems to work very well. Do you think that the difficulties here would be insuperable?—No, I would not say that.

F-495. But you would not like to face them?—I would not like to have the management of them.

Mr. Beddow: Each managing agent may have different ideas on the subject.

Col. Russell: Yes, but that is a question of education of the managing agents.

F-496. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Would the roads and distances lend themselves to the establishment of such central hospitals?—That would be a factor to be carefully studied.

F-497. *Col. Russell*: You have got tramways now?—Not in our district. Only at certain times of the year you can have transport by motor lorries; at other times you cannot get over the roads.

F-498. I was referring to the conditions in Java and Sumatra. There they have tramways fitted with ambulance cars which connect up outlying estates with the central hospital, etc. This system seems to work very well and there does not seem to me to be any reason why a similar system should not be adopted here?—I am afraid you have not seen the roads here during rains.

Col. Russell: There may be physical difficulties which I am not aware of.

F-499. *Mr. Cliff*: I take it that Dr. Ramsay is representing the Labac Medical Practice and not the Surma Valley Association?—(*Rr. Ramsay*) That is so.

F-500. I want to ask Dr. Ramsay whether the medical practice that he is now covering is not really equivalent to a board of health?—In the practice I now cover it is one agency house, and I deal directly as manager with that agency house.

F-501. The practical effects may be taken to be that of a board of health for the agency that you cover?—I represent the agency from a medical point of view.

F-502. You deal with sanitation?—I deal with the health of the coolies and give my opinion on that to the agency house.

F-503. You run a hospital for the whole of the gardens?—Yes.

F-504. Can you tell us the number of gardens and the population, so that they can be got on record?—The population is roughly 18,000 coolies and the number of gardens is 18.

F-505. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What will be the distance covered?—The area covered is, I think, 17 miles by 7 miles as the crow flies.

F-506. *Mr. Cliff*: Speaking from the health point of view is there any reason why this practice should not be extended over the whole of the gardens?—Some years ago I suggested to the President of the Assam Medical Association the formation of an Indian Tea Association Medical Service. This idea was enlarged upon by Sir Henry Symons who is now the Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, to include jute and coal industries and to make it a sort of Indian commercial medical service. With a properly constituted medical service you can do all those things, but with the present multiplicity of agencies it will be very difficult to have any system except the system you now see.

F-507. I want to ask Mr. Stuart whether the branch which he represents would oppose a board of health for this area?—(*Mr. Stuart*) I do not quite understand what the duties of the board of health are.

F-508. May I put it this way? In many of the memoranda and in some of the answers to questions by Col. Russell, there are two words used, and used with considerable force. One is *many* of the gardens, and the other is *most* of the gardens. It is being represented to the Commission and the Commission have got some valuable evidence with regard to the work of Dr. Ramsay's practice. Cannot the exemplary conditions which you put in front of the Commission from Dr. Ramsay's practice be put into operation over the whole of the gardens?—It might be done, but it will have to be done through agency houses of course.

F-509. For instance, on the question of wages, I notice the Indian Tea Association saying in their memorandum that we better ask the up-country Associations. What I want to ask is whether this branch as a branch with practical experience of tea plantations would oppose a board of health on the lines of Dr. Ramsay's practice?—No, I do not think so.

F-510. May I put it a little stronger? Would you welcome it?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Yes, if controlled by ourselves.

F-511. Dealing with the question of control, are you able to bring in the worst gardens?—I think we are.

F-512. You are able to compel the whole of the tea planters to follow a practice of this character?—(*Mr. Stuart*) If the Calcutta Agency Houses and Proprietors have agreed to it they would insist upon their estates following it.

F-513. Assuming as is often the case there are individuals who will not come in, would you be in favour of statutory compulsion to compel them to come in?—We represent only 90 per cent. of the plantations and we can therefore only insist upon this 90 per cent. and not upon the remaining 10 per cent.

F-514. That is my point; I want to know how you can get that 10 per cent. in. In order to get into operation a practice which you put before the Commission as exemplary, whether you would welcome that the whole of the gardens should be brought up to that standard?—Yes, if we could get the 10 per cent.

F-515. If that would have to be done by statutory compulsion would you welcome that?—I do not think we will be in favour of any statutory compulsion.

F-516. How is it to be brought about without statutory compulsion?—We are an association.

F-517. But then you have a number of people outside?—(*Mr. Rayner*) I think we can get those people in.

F-518. My difficulty with regard to much of the evidence is this: it comes back to the words "many" and "most." And the evidence put before us leaves us with the inference that there are some worse than the best and there are some not too good. The burden of my question is whether what has been found to be beneficial should not be compulsory on the whole. Is there any reason why it should not be so?—(*Mr. Stuart*) We would welcome it certainly, but there are many interested parties and I do not know what the Agents at Calcutta would have to say about it.

F-519. At the moment you are speaking for your Association and other people will have to be consulted separately?—Yes.

F-520. You were answering questions by Col. Russell with regard to maternity benefit and you used the work "many" again and said that because of the conditions which obtained here statutory maternity benefit was not necessary. Would there be any objection to it being a stated condition in the terms of employment that maternity benefit of a set standard should be given?—Personally I do not see that there is any difficulty about that. I think it was very fully discussed in the Legislative Assembly some years ago. The whole difficulty was the question of distance for the organization to pay up the amounts.

F-521. Your Association at the moment say that a statutory Act is unnecessary and possibly difficult and undesirable. But on many of your gardens you reach a certain standard. Is there any objection on the part of your Association that in respect of all the gardens it should be a condition of service?—I cannot see any difficulty there. It will probably be run better by ourselves.

F-522. I am not concerned at the moment whether you run it or not; what I am concerned with is that it should be common and uniform to all employers?—(*Mr. Gupta*) It depends on the condition of each individual estate.

F-523. You view the question from the standpoint of the financial liability involved on each garden. Will the tax that would be involved in the provision of maternity benefit be of such a serious nature that the industry cannot do it?

Mr. Beddow: It may be that individual gardens cannot do it.

F-524. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that because individual gardens cannot do it, it should not be common. Is not that the escape that all the worst gardens have? You have got to face the question of malaria; are they to have an escape because they plead financial inability?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Would any such compulsion with regard to the control of malaria be restricted to the tea gardens only; would it not be extended to the villages also; would it not apply to other parts of the Province and to other industries also?

F-525. With regard to that, the Commission has to deal with many other forms of labour; at the moment we are dealing with the labour you represent?—If Government could do it for the Province as a whole and for all the villages I think we would be quite prepared to fall in. But until then we will be doing all we possibly can. I certainly think that everybody who has seen Dr. Ramsay's work will agree that he is carrying on very good work.

F-526. I am sure the Commission will welcome the kind of work that one sees Dr. Ramsay doing. I am taking it away from any question of higher grounds and asking whether it has not got an economic value?—Yes.

F-527. If so, why should it not be put through the whole of the industry?—Yes.

F-528. Would you be prepared with regard to the people who are not at the moment willing to come in that there should be compulsion?—I should say, no compulsion; but put it to the industry and see what they do first. I think the industry is quite capable of doing it without compulsion.

F-529. For yourself would you say that with regard to the 90 per cent. you represent you would oppose compulsion from the Association?—Yes.

F-530. How would you deal with the 10 per cent. who are not members of your Association?—That is a matter for discussion.

F-531. You have no views at the moment?—We have no control over them. (*Mr. Stuart*) One objection with regard to compulsion is this. Suppose a couple from the adjoining village wants to come and settle in our gardens. Next year they would become entitled to the benefits of maternity allowance. Suppose they say we wish to go back to our village. Unless the same thing is done in the neighbouring villages there would be some difficulty.

F-532. That is a matter of employment. I am dealing at the moment with the ten per cent. outside your Association. What do you propose to do with regard to that 10 per cent. upon whom you exercise no control?—I think it is a matter to be discussed. We can find some way out of the difficulty.

F-533. If you cared to give the Commission your considered view that would be welcome?—Yes, I will do so.

F-534. Dr. Ramsay, on the question of the diet of the coolies you have handed in a statement?—(*Dr. Ramsay*) Yes, those are the various articles of diet which they take.

F-535. Is that taken over the whole of the 14 or 18 gardens?—Yes, that is the diet of the coolies I come across in my practice.

F-536. You have investigated it and I think you said that it was a suitable diet or a good diet?—A balanced diet.

F-537. Have the people selected this diet with guidance or without guidance?—Without guidance. It is the normal diet.

F-538. Have you seen the figures put forward by Mr. Stuart and Mr. Rayner with regard to the cost of diet?—Yes, I have.

F-539. Have you been consulted with regard to that estimate?—No.

F-540. Do you think that that diet can be bought for the amount of money set out by Mr. Stuart?—I should think so. We worked this figure out once with our Indian establishment and they arrived at the same figures independently.

F-541. Could we have those figures now?—I will send them to the Commission.

F-542. With regard to hospital diet have you figures regarding its cost?—Yes, I will send that also to the Commission.

F-543. With regard to the children in the hospital I notice you give glaxo, cow and gates food, virol and so on. If the children are out of hospital can they obtain this food?—Any child can always get it in the hospital.

F-544. Is that by application?—There is no trouble whatever. They come of their free will and if the child is weak we look after it.

F-545. Can the child go on right through the first year of its life on this kind of food; can the mother get this whenever she wants it?—More than the first year of life; any year of life.

F-546. With regard to these children what are the age-limits up to which you call them children?—(*Mr. Stuart*) Up to 12 years we call them children.

F-547. We have a memorandum of evidence put in by a tea garden manager by name Mr. C. K. Bezbaruah of the Boloma Tea Estate. He says that only children between 7 and 9 go to help their parents in plucking, weeding and manuring which are suitable for their constitutions. Exactly at what age are the children employed?—I think about 9; they start with 9.

F-548. Is it true as this manager states and some one stated the other day that the parents take their children with them to do this kind of work? I was on a garden the other day and the manager said: "We do not employ them, but their parents bring them here to help them." With regard to your district do children go with their parents to work in the garden?—Not very many. There may be one or two coming out because the mother does not want to leave them at home.

F-549. With regard to the returns that we have here may we take it that the children are employed from 10 years of age direct by the garden?—Yes, from 10 to 12.

F-550. Once the child is over 12 it is not called a child?—No.

F-551. *Mr. Beddow*: How do you decide whether the child is an adult?—By long practical experience.

F-552. *Mr. Cliff*: I saw some registers on the gardens the other day containing columns for men, women and boys and girls. I have not been able to ascertain when a boy or a girl becomes a man or woman.—I think 16 is taken to be the age. That is the case in Government returns also.

F-553. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That is for recruiting purposes?—Also for death returns.

F-554. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it the case that in the returns of wages also everyone over 16 is included either as a man or woman?—Yes.

F-555. According to your memorandum the total area of cultivated land is 40,641 acres. That is dealing with land let out by the plantations and not by any other body. Mr. Clow was asking you how you allotted those lands. I am not clear how a tea garden worker gets land. As far as I can see there are more tea garden workers than there is land for them. On what basis do they get land?—There is no definite basis. For instance, a man in his spare time opens up an acre from virgin jungle; he is allowed that acre. That man might die and the land becomes vacant. Another man applies for it and he is given half an acre and the other half is given to another man. I do not think there is any definite arrangement; it is all done by the management.

F-556. Are there some gardens in the valley that have no spare lands?—Yes, in some gardens there are no rice lands.

F-557. What is the maximum holding that a tea garden worker has?—(*Mr. Rayner*) we do not allow too much to a single worker. If he clears up 2, 3 or 4 acres he is allowed to have it for two or three years; then a portion of it is taken away from him and allotted to another.

F-558. You have got registers of your holders. You have given us the number of acres. Could you give us the number of holders?—Each estate will have a different register. I could tell you the number of holders.

F-559. Also the maximum holding?—In my estate we have 400 acres of rice land all together. That gives us 1,200 *keers*, or an average of 2 *keers* for a family. We give about 2 to 3 *keers* to a family according to the number of members in the family.

F-560. Is there any agreement between the tea garden worker and the planter with regard to this holding?—There is no agreement.

F-561. What right has he in the land; can he be turned out at any time you please?—He cultivates the land and takes the crop. He cannot be turned out till he has taken the crop. If we want to turn him out we have to apply to the court and there is a specific time for such application.

F-562. Could you dismiss a man from your tea garden and he still have a legal right to cultivate his crop?—(*Mr. Stuart*) He cannot be evicted until he has removed his standing crops.

F-563. Has he no other legal right on the land?—No.

F-564. He may cultivate the land for 5 or 10 years and still be liable to eviction?—Yes. But I do not know of a case in which a man has been evicted like that.

F-565. I am not saying that you would or would not; I am asking the legal rights that the man has on the land. Is there any agreement?—There is no agreement. He pays a nominal rent.

F-566. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you know actually what the legal rights are?—I have a very good idea of that.

F-567. *Mr. Cliff*: Could you tell us anything more about his legal rights?—We purchased some rice land, land which was owned by the *Cacharis*. We bought it for the benefit of the coolies. Before we could get possession of the land which we bought from the *Cacharis* we had to serve them with a notice through the court which I think had to be before the 1st of March in order to give them time to get their crops off. Then we took possession of the land.

F-568. I understand that is the legal position outside the garden; I am asking what is the legal position inside the garden?—I think it would apply here also.

F-569. I am advised at the moment that the tea garden worker has no legal right on the land and I am trying to get definite information?—Once he pays 4 annas he has a legal hold on the land to cultivate it for the season.

F-570. The Indian Tea Association deals with the question of wages in its memorandum. I notice the difficulty of giving precise information about rates of wages. Can we get any definite information as to the rate for a man, a woman and a child apart from their earnings?—It varies a great deal.

F-571. I can see that from your memorandum. But the memorandum of the Boloma Tea Estate says: "According to the prevailing system, the old system of whole day work of 8 hours has been changed to contract or unit work." According to that statement they used to work 8 hours. When was that system changed?—I cannot recall a time when they worked 8 hours. I challenge that statement.

F-572. He is speaking of his own experience in another valley. I am trying to find out when the system was changed?—Less hours were introduced, I should think, about 10 years ago.

F-573. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When did you change your practice from the *hazira* to the unit system?—About 10 or 12 years ago.

F-574. Were there many gardens working on the unit system before 1921?—Yes.

F-575. *Mr. Cliff*: Has it been at different stages with different gardens?—Yes, they did not all come into line at the same time.

F-576. Is it not possible that some might have done after 1921?—There might have been some cases like that.

F-577. Are there some gardens which are not on this system now?—I do not know of any myself.

F-578. With regard to this unit system of work, are there different rates for men, women and children for the same unit of work?—No, they do not all do the same work.

F-579. Would you realize the importance of my not gathering wrong impressions and try to make clear the system of payment by units in respect of the three different classes?

F-580. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Could you tell us what particular work are the men, women and children doing this particular month and what they are paid for doing it?

Mr. Cliff: We saw some women pruning and we were told that it was light pruning. We were told that there were some men hoeing and that the children were doing some other work. Would you give us fairly representative units of work and the wages paid in each of these three categories?—We start with children; I do not know what particular work they were doing. They were probably forking bushes. The men are now hoeing. They are paid at the rate of one anna for two *nals*, a *nal* being 144 square feet (12 by 12). They could easily do the equivalent of annas 6 within a period of 4 to 5 hours. They can do as much more if they like. That disposes of the men, barring of course the men working in the factory. The women are pruning; they are set a task much lower than what you saw, because we demand an entirely different class of work. At the present moment they are pruning and their wages are at the rate of one anna for ten bushels. Later on in the season when they do the light work that you saw them doing the other day they will be paid one anna for 15 or 20 bushels. It is all worked out so that a woman can get 5 annas for four or five hours' work. The same is the case with children. Within

the same period they can earn 3 to 4 annas. If they do more they get more. Some men earn 8 annas a day; others prefer to earn 4 annas and go away to their own cultivation, to harvest or plant their rice crop.

F-581. Can it be taken that in this Valley you have got all the labour you require?—No, we have not.

F-582. Has this valley ever failed to harvest its crop within the last three or four years?—No.

F-583. If the people will only work and in fact do work whenever they like how do you succeed year by year in harvesting your crop?—We have got to hold up our cultivation at times. We get outsiders coming in. That difficulty arises only in the harvesting and planting season.

F-584. I am told that the amount of labour is short and not equal to the demand. I am told that the people work as they will and when they will. The crop is regularly harvested and it appears to me that there is some form of persuation, some attraction, some compulsion if the crop is harvested in time and not spoilt at the factory. How is it done?—In the first place the crop is not always harvested in time. If we could get a greater number of pluckers we could put the same crop on the market but in a very finer quality. On the other hand in order to harvest the crop in time we sacrifice other works such as cultivation.

F-585. *Mr. Beddow*: Could you increase your crop if you had more men?—Yes, it comes to that. We have as much crop as the number of men at our disposal can handle.

F-586. If you had double the number of men could you have double the quantity of crop?—(*Mr. Gupta*) Yes, in ten years.

F-587. *Mr. Cliff*: From the statements made it appears to me that somehow or other the work is completed, the crop is sown and it is harvested; I want to find out how it is done if the people just do as they like?—(*Mr. Stuart*) The first point with regard to that is that the women can make such big money during the height of the season. I would like to explain that the harvesting of the crop is over a period of months; in the months of June to October when the heavy flushes are being produced the money is so attractive that women turn out voluntarily except during a period of three weeks when they are engaged in sowing their own rice crops; yet we find the women are not capable of coping with the crop and we have to transfer our men to handle the crop. Therefore we fall behind in cultivation and we suffer a loss in cultivation and at the finish we have not plucked our bushes or produced as full a crop as we might have done if we had an adequate supply of labour.

F-588. It is stated that people utilize their leisure in working for other people and in cultivating for themselves. I assume that the people go where they get the greatest economic inducement?—That is not always so with a coolie. A coolie may know that rates are slightly better in another garden, but because his father, his mother and his grand-father have worked on his garden, he prefers to stick to the garden that he knows.

F-589. I am not thinking of coolies moving from one garden to another; I am thinking of men who may go and sell bamboo or cultivate their own land. On the face of it it appears that the economic inducement is higher in certain other spheres than on his own particular garden; I want to be clear as to that.—I do not see that.

The Chairman: Do you mean, Mr. Cliff, that he makes more working on his own paddy land than if he were working on the tea gardens.

F-590. *Mr. Cliff*: The statement is made that leisure is used in cultivating his own ground and in working for other people; I assume he goes where the reward is greatest?—Not so, because whatever inducement you offer at the time he is actually cultivating his own rice land, say from the middle of August to the middle of September, nothing will induce him to come and work.

F-591. It seems that the economic inducement for the women is great enough if they earn what you say they do?—When they are planting the rice you cannot even get the women in.

F-592. The Chinese puzzle that confronts me is that the work is completed somehow or other; if it is completed, I do not understand how the people can do as they like?—(*Mr. Gupta*) If we had sufficient labour we should produce larger crops than we usually produce.

F-593. That is bound up with the question of recruitment as well as the question of the labour available?—(*Mr. Stuart*) A crop—not a full crop—is produced at a sacrifice to other works.

F-594. I will not press that any further. Under item 97 of the memorandum of your Association we get a return of wages; I would like to be sure that I am right in thinking that is calculated as set out in the Government return on the months of March and September?—Yes, it is.

F-595. I would like to see an extract of earnings during those two months or the two months of highest and lowest earnings of a limited number of gardens?—I think these figures of the Government returns are taken from a low month and a good month.

F-596. This is an average; I should like to take certain gardens and get an actual abstract of earnings.—We could do that for you.

F-597. Under item 99 it says that advances free of interest to a very considerable amount are given; that is put down as one of the advantages. I would like to get a record of the loans that are made in a certain number of gardens—In this particular Valley we have 177 plantations and in the other Valley we have 157 plantations.

The Chairman: Mr. Cliff, did you see the loan book which some of us saw on Saturday?

Mr. Cliff: I did see a loan book. A loan of Rs. 20 may be given and repaid at annas 4 per month. It may be that some people are continually in debt to the planter; I would like to take say 10 per cent. of these gardens and have a record of their loan books over a period of years. I think 5 years is a short enough period for this purpose. Can we have that information, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: That seems rather a large piece of work, and I do not quite see what the object of it is.

Mr. Cliff: I want to see whether the people are free.

The Chairman: I understood from the books we saw on Saturday (4th January) that these were small loans given in the course of the year and usually paid off within the year.—That is so.

F-598. Repaid by a deduction of annas 4 from the earnings when a full week had been worked?—That is so.

F 599. Is there any larger amount than that?—No.

F 600. Are there any loans running into hundreds of rupees?—No.

Mr. Cliff. I am thinking of consecutive loans, second and third loans, and so on. Under item 99 of the memorandum of the Indian Tea Association the statement is made: "Actual wages are never paid in kind, but there are amplifications in kind such as free housing, water, firewood, sick pay, medical attendance and medicines, advances free of interest to a very considerable amount...." I would like to have information with regard to those advances to a very considerable amount. It may be that these people are always in financial bondage or a considerable number of them are. This is put as an advantage but it may be a considerable disadvantage.

The Chairman: I see your point, Mr. Cliff.

Mr. Beddow: The alternative is for them to go to the *bania* if a loan is refused by the garden.

Mr. Cliff: I am not for the moment concerned with the alternative; I am concerned with the conditions under which they work.

The Chairman: Mr. Cliff, do you really think that these loans, running to Rs. 5, 10 or 20, could possibly form a kind of bond? There is no legal bond in it at all; it is merely an agreement.

Mr. Cliff: I am not yet satisfied that the whole of the population know that the agreement days are gone.

The Chairman: Perhaps not.

Mr. Cliff: It may be that the large majority would sooner stay and pay the loan than run away. I would like to take 10 per cent. of these books over a period of 5 years and see if these loans are going on with the same individuals continuously.

The Chairman: It does not seem to me to be possible. When the books are made up at the end of the year it did not strike me that a large proportion of the workers were in debt to the management.—Taking my own estate, at the end of this year out of over 1,200 coolies, we had not Rs. 500 advanced outstanding.

(*Mr. Rayner*) On my estate out of 4,000 or 5,000 coolies I suppose we have something like Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 3,500 owing from coolies for advances taken; that is all we have at the end of the year. If they take Rs. 10, it is paid back by Re. 1 monthly. (*Mr. Stuart*) We would have no difficulty in collecting these figures for you over a period of two years and we might even do it for three years; but the books five years old have probably been destroyed and it would be difficult to give the figures.

Mr. Cliff: The reason why I press this is that the Association make a point of it; they say "to a very considerable amount."

F-601. *The Chairman*: I read that as meaning to a considerable amount in the total, not to each individual. I understand the figures Mr. Cliff wants can be supplied. I take it that the coolie borrows from you what he would otherwise be borrowing from the *bania*?—Certainly.

F-602. He is getting the loan free of interest from you, whereas he might be paying 75 per cent. interest to the bania?—That is so. (*Mr. Gupta*) And if the whole amount is not recovered within three years the amount outstanding is written off. (*Mr. Stuart*) Do you want recurring names or the total amount?

Mr. Cliff: I would like both.

Mr. Beddow: You want complete copies of the advance account?

Mr. Cliff: Yes, I do.

The Chairman: Perhaps I had better discuss this afterwards with Mr. Cliff as to what is the most practical form.

F-603. *Mr. Cliff*: Yes Sir. Under item 97 of the memorandum of the Indian Tea Association it is said: "In their Resolution of Immigrant Labour for the year 1927-28, the Government of Assam wrote:—'What is now needed is a gradual and steady improvement of the standard of living and the amenities of life to accompany the gradual and steady increase in wages.'" In commenting on that Resolution you say: "Indian labour of the class from which the tea industry draws its supplies is, however, more concerned with the improvement of status than in the improvement of the standard of living." Can you tell us what the planters are doing in this Valley to improve the standard of life and the amenities of life?—Increase of wages; better housing accommodation, better water supply, anti-malarial measures and generally better medical attention all round.

F-604. Your comment on the Resolution is that the labour is "more concerned with the improvement of status than in the improvement of the standard of living." Does that mean that the Indian tea worker prefers freedom?—He has freedom now.

F-605. Does it mean that the Indian tea worker prefers freedom to go away and be a landholder; is that what "status" means?—In that case, yes.

F-606. *The Chairman*: That means the prospect of becoming a landholder?—Yes.

F-607. In a reasonable time; I take it that is the meaning of "status" there?—That is what it means, yes.

F-608. *Mr. Cliff*: Then does it mean that becoming a landholder does not mean an improvement in standard of life?—Yes, it does.

Mr. Cliff: I have difficulty in realizing quite what that means, because it seems to me that if a man is out to become his own employer, he is not only getting improvement in status but an improvement in his standard of life?

Mr. Beddow: But if he moves out of garden land he will be without all the amenities that are provided for him; if he goes to the *busti* it is a great loss to him.—(*Mr. Gupta*) Many come back to the gardens in order to have the benefits they get from the gardens.

F-609. *Mr. Cliff*: In the introduction to the memorandum of the Government of Assam it is said: "What is needed is the education of the labour force to the appreciation of a higher standard of living, when they will want more and be prepared to work for it and make good use of their earnings." Can you tell me what beginnings are being made to realize that?—(*Mr. Stuart*) It must be admitted that there has not been a great deal done; of course, as previously mentioned, some gardens have got schools; but generally speaking there is not a great deal done in the way of education.

F-610. The Government of Assam in their memorandum say: "but more might and should be done in the direction of providing some attraction which might successfully compete with the nearest grog or opium shop." What I am concerned with here is what is being done and whether it is within the competency of the managers to secure this improvement which everybody desires?—Of course, there is a certain amount of attraction being held out in the way of football for them.

F-611. Would there be any opposition on the part of your Association to giving a public right of way to the lines?—I do not think there would be any opposition. As far as I know, in this Valley they are all public rights of way.

F-612. Does that mean that there is unlimited admittance for anyone to go to the lines?—Oh yes.

F-613. Because I am advised that even missionaries have had to ask for permission?—I have not known our Padre ever to ask for it.

F-614. May I take it as far as you are concerned there is no opposition and there is a public right of way to the lines?—I should say in all estates there is a right of way. (*Mr. Gupta*) There is no restriction.

F-615. Would your Association oppose the establishment of a public welfare board for tea garden workers?—(*Mr. Stuart*) I should say we would oppose it.

F-616. Will you tell me why?—Because we consider that we can run our welfare work better without the interference of legislation.

F-617. Then is it the considered view of your Association that as far as this large population is concerned you can do all that is necessary for their welfare?—Yes. (*Mr. Gupta*) I think we could do better.

F-618. Are you hopeful of achieving any great change during the next decade amongst your population?—(*Mr. Stuart*) I should say probably within the next few years you will see great changes generally in the welfare, recreation and condition of the coolie.

F-619. Of the tea managers' own volition?—The companies and managers combined.

F-620. It is said in the memorandum of the Government of Assam and in other memoranda that what is absolutely necessary is to increase the needs of the tea garden worker. If the needs of the tea garden worker are going to be increased, labour is going to cost more. Would that conflict with the interests of the tea garden manager?

The Chairman: Or more hours per day might be put in. I take it there is scope for earning 50 per cent. more than is actually earned if there were a desire to earn it?—That is so.

Mr. Cliff: I think there is here room for confusion with regard to this matter, because I am told the people occupy their leisure in doing work on their own land.

The Chairman: Quite.

Mr. Cliff: The point I am on at the moment is that if they give up cultivating their own land and work for the tea planter instead they will loose the value of that labour.

Mr. Clow: Are we clear that all the leisure is spent on their own land and the landless man does as much work as he can on the garden?

Mr. Cliff: I agree there is still a good deal of confusion. I see a conflict of interests in that if the needs of the worker are to be increased that appears to me to increase the cost to the planter of his labour?—I do not think we should pay more for labour; if they found that they had to have these extras they would probably work an hour or two longer; they would certainly never give up their holdings.

F-621. Then, assuming that to be the position, does it not bring one back to the point that one of the ways of getting your labour working more is to increase their needs, and what are you doing to increase their needs?—We are quite prepared to let them earn more money, but they do not wish to take advantage of the opportunity to earn more money.

F-622. But somebody has got to improve the outlook of these people; I am trying to find out what you as planters are doing to improve their outlook and increase their appetite?—I am afraid we are not doing very much except trying to encourage them to play football; that is about all we have done for them.

F-623. Do the present restrictions on recruiting impede or increase the flow of labour?—(*Mr. Rayner*) It impedes the flow of labour.

F-624. To what extent does it impede it?—It is very difficult to say; there are restrictions on all sides. As we told you before, the people from the country cannot come to the estates without going through certain formalities. Restrictions in every way retard these people from coming to our gardens. If anyone wants to come and has not sufficient money, a *sardar* has to be sent to bring him. That is one restriction and it is a very big restriction. In fact it prevents the free movement of labour in India, and we consider that that is not right.

F-625. The Commission are faced on one hand with the demand of public opinion and of provincial Governments for control of recruiting?—Yes, I know that.

F-626. I understand you are opposed to control of recruiting?—We are opposed to control except a mild form of control by ourselves to prevent abuses.

F-627. We put this question to one of the provincial Governments and they answered that if the restrictions were removed for a year or two there would be a large flow; that would probably result in greater abuses in connection with recruitment and give Assam a bad name again. What do you say to that?—That was brought up by the Governor of Bihar and Orissa when we went to see him. If we have free recruiting controlled by ourselves, that would not happen; we would prevent it happening.

F-628. They say that to-day they have a very considerable number of complaints to Magistrates from the Dooars, and because they have those complaints they make a demand for control. How are you to remove the impression from the mind of the public of this country that restriction of recruiting is unnecessary?—In the case of the Dooars I believe only about 50 per cent. of the recruiting is done through the Tea Districts Labour Association; I do not think you would find many of those abuses from the emigrants that come through the Tea Districts Labour Association; the abuses are in respect of recruitment without any control whatsoever.

F-629. *The Chairman*: Really, are you not wishing for something that would be too unusual to be granted, that one Association, a monopoly, should be granted certain powers of control and nobody else allowed to recruit?—We should not ask for that, if they all had the same amount of control we should not mind at all.

F-630. Then the control would not be your own?—Certainly not.

F-631. It would be Government control of which you approved, but it would apply to everybody?—It might mean that we should have more an official status somewhat as they do in Ceylon.

F-632. *Mr. Cliff*: We are concerned to know, if the conditions are as attractive as the evidence indicates, why you cannot get a sufficient supply of labour?—As we said before, there is restriction, in the first place, and then there is the scarcity of recruits owing to the economic conditions in the recruiting districts. If there is a famine you will usually find it is a good recruiting year. On the other hand, if the crops are good and more labour is being employed in the recruiting districts, then we do not get so many recruits from that district; that is the reason of it.

Mr. Cliff: I see that running right through your evidence, but on the other hand Ceylon and Burma get the labour they require.

F-633. *Mr. Beddow*: The tea garden *sardar* is restricted to his small district and he very soon drains that circumscribed area dry?—That is so; he goes to that one district, finds that the economic conditions there are good and he cannot bring people to the tea gardens. It is not due at all to the system of recruiting.

F-634. *The Chairman*: Then I take it you would be rather glad to see the *sardar* system replaced by a better system of authorized and controlled responsible recruiters who would be above many of the temptations that are open to the ordinary humble *sardar*?—It would not then be *arkatti* recruiting but from our experience it would lead to that; that is why we favour control of recruiting by the industry; we fear it would go back to the old professional recruiters who are difficult to control. We think it is unfair that the tea industry should be singled out for these restrictions.

F-635. Of course that is a matter we shall have most carefully to consider, but I gather from your own memorandum that while both you and the Government would like to see the ideal of an absolutely free flow of labour, you both admit that at the present moment that cannot be attained?—We only say that because the Governments of Bihar and Orissa, Madras and the Central Provinces all want some kind of control from the Magistrates in their Provinces.

F-636. That is so, and as practical people you recognize that?—(*Mr. Stuart*) We have very bitter experience in the past of *arkatti* and the more experienced of us are not quite confident that *arkatti* would not find its way in still, so that for a period of years we would like to see recruiting controlled in some form; after a period of years, if we can prove we can do it as it is being done now, under our own control, then let us have entirely free recruiting.

F-637. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you in favour of a minimum wage for the tea industry?—(*Mr. Rayner*) No, we are not in favour of that.

F-638. Why not?—We do not see how it is possible; it is unworkable.

F-639. Is it more impossible here than in Ceylon?—I do not know Ceylon but I have been here 36 years and I know what we can do here. (*Mr. Stuart*) In Ceylon they have a large number of coolies emigrating; there is a flow going and coming; a very large percentage return. The result is that a man goes there to work; in our case the men come to colonize. They do not go to Ceylon in families to the same extent as they do here.

F-640. *Mr. Clow*: You were here when the statutory minimum wage was in force?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Yes; that was only under the Act; it was Rs. 5 and Rs. 4.

F-641. Did it prove unworkable then?—It was only with reference to those that came under Act I; it did not apply to the old resident people. If it only applied to people newly recruited, I should say there would be no objection, but there certainly should not be a minimum wage for the Province.

F-642. *Mr. Beddow*: Is it a fact that though there is a minimum wage in Ceylon, at the same time a great many men are not paid that minimum wage, and legally not so?—That is because there is a minimum wage and a minimum amount of work to be done.

F-643. *Mr. Cliff*: What opposition could there be on your part to regulation of wages?—The differing conditions; for instance, where the labourers have land the conditions are quite different from the conditions on the higher land and other places where there is no *khet* land.

F-644. Of course that is all a matter of assessment. Would you be prepared to consider the establishment of wage-fixing machinery?—I cannot say we would favour it. (*Mr. Stuart*) What should we do with a coolie who was incapacitated from earning the minimum wage?

F-645. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have certain labour rules amongst yourselves which you say do not affect the free movement of labour?—I have gone through these rules and found that they affect the free movement. Will you please tender them to keep in our records?—(*Mr. Stuart*) I should like to explain that these rules were framed at the period when Act XIII was in force. They have been under consideration for a period of three or four years with regard to revision, but as three years ago it was possible that we might have a new Act, they were held in abeyance; they have since been held in abeyance pending the Report of this Royal Commission. That is why you find references to Act XIII, but there is nothing in these rules that we can see that in any way interferes with the liberty of the coolie.

F-646. I ask for the production of those rules?—Yes.

F-647 I take it you are in favour of the abolition of Act VI of 1901?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Yes.

F-648. Can you tell us how many coolies were recruited last year?—I think it was 73,000 for the whole of Assam.

F-649. I suppose you will have no objection to the free movement of your coolies?—No.

F-650. With regard to your civil contract system, I suppose you renew the contract every year?—(*Mr. Stuart*) There is no contract at all; it is only an arrangement between the management and the coolies.

F-651. I suppose there are certain penalties for the breath of the contract?—As there is no contract the question of penalty does not arise.

F-652. I have been making inquiries since these four days and I gather that penalties are imposed for any breach of the contract?—There is no contract and as such there is no breach of contract.

F-653. I suppose the fact that you advance money to many of your coolies shows that they are indebted?—No; on the other hand a lot of coolies send money home.

F-654. With regard to the system of recruitment of coolies, do you have any objection if recruitment is done by a public agency or bureau?—(*Mr. Rayner*) If you could show us a constructive system by which we could get our labour cheaper we are quite willing to consider it. The scheme that has been put forward by the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board is, in our opinion, unworkable.

F-655. With regard to repatriation, I take it that it is not a fact that coolies are repatriated at your cost?—Some are and some are not. (*Mr. Stuart*) If they come on short-term contract they are repatriated at our cost.

F-656. Whenever there is a strike in the garden, I suppose you take the aid of the police force?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Yes, if it is a serious riot; otherwise not.

F-657. With regard to education, I think Mr. Gupta said that children do not come to schools because they go to jungles to cut bamboo and make money?—(*Mr. Gupta*) I said they do not like to come.

F-658. Is it not a fact that because the parents of these children do not get a living wage they are forced to send their children to the jungles instead of sending them to schools?—The money that these children get from the sale of the forest produce does not go to help their parents; they utilize this money for buying sweetmeats.

F-659. I suppose you are willing to consider the question of paying these coolies a living wage?—We are paying them a living wage.

F-660. I take it that these labourers do not get any holidays with pay?—(*Mr. Stuart*) During *poojas* some gardens grant holidays with pay, but I have never heard of a weekly holiday being paid.

F-661. How many days' holidays do they get in a year?—(*Mr. Rayner*) They take a holiday when they want it.

F-662. If one puts in a number of years' service on the garden, does he get any gratuity or pension?—(*Mr. Stuart*) There are many instances in which people have been given a pension. (*Mr. Gupta*) I have some men who are getting pension.

F-663. I suppose the practice of giving pension is not in vogue in many gardens?—(*Mr. Rayner*) Deserving cases always do get pension.

F-664. *Sir Alexander Murray*: It has been put to us why cannot the tea gardens recruit as easily as the oil fields in Assam. For instance, recruitment for the oil fields at Digboi is not made from outside the oil fields. Will you shortly explain why the oil fields should be able to get people on the spot while you have such difficulty in getting people?—(*Mr. Stuart*) In the case of the tea estates we like to go in for families, while in the case of oil fields and mines they go in for single men for shorter periods.

F-665. They are very much better paid in the oil fields, are they not?—Yes, if you take the actual cash earnings. They have got to be paid more because they have to support themselves and also have to remit money for the maintenance of their family in their country.

F-666. In other words, you mean to say that the single man working in the oil fields has got to be paid more in cash because he has to maintain two establishments while on the tea gardens the case is different because the man lives with his wife and children?—Yes.

F-667. We have had it put to us, why should you take advantage of the man, his wife and children and decide that they all should work instead of making only the man work?—Because they are agriculturists; they have always done it.

F-668. *The Chairman*: Do I take it that you are looking forward to the time when you will have your own labour force born and bred in Assam?—Yes, that is our hope.

F-669. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you got any figures to show the number of people who have in recent years been recruited into this province, or into the Surma Valley, and the numbers that are to-day?—Taking the years 1914-1925 there were over 500,000 souls recruited into Assam.

F-670. Where did you get the figure from?—From the reports of the Assam Labour Board.

F-671. Altogether how many are there on the estates now?—About a million.

F-672. So that of the 500,000 people who were brought up here since 1914, 400,000 have drifted away into other employment?—A great number of them have colonized in these parts.

F-673. Have you any idea of their number?—Roughly, I think, it is 600,000.

F-674. Where can we get the exact figure from?—From the Assam Board. If you want we can given you the number of acres that are under these settlers.

F-675. No, that I have already got. I want to know the number of people, outside the tea gardens, who have colonized since 1914?—I think that information was collected for the Simon Commission.

F-676. Can you get us the figures?—Yes.

F-677. You are going to give us a statement showing the budget expenditure of different families. Has it been drawn on the lines of 1921-22 figures so that we can draw a comparison between the position in 1921 and the position to-day?—Yes.

F-678. Have you attempted to convert into money value all the additional things that you give your labourers?—We have the statement here and we can let you have a copy of it.

F-679. What is all included in that?—Do they show a value placed on housing, on medical attendance and such other things?—We have left that all out.

F-680. Why?—Because in this statement we were simply taking the actual earnings of the coolies plus his supplementary earnings. We have not taken into account any bonus.

F-681. Why?—Because we were trying to show what the coolie actually earned in cash and what he earned himself.

F-682. What special forms of bonus do you give to the labourer?—Many gardens give a bonus of one rupee for a complete month's work in addition to the annual Rs. 12 bonus.

F-683. You have not included that in your figures?—No, not in these figures.

F-684. What is the use of giving figures which do not give the total amount that the labourer earns?—The bonus comes under the total wage earnings, but our statement shows the actual cash earnings.

F-685. You give blankets to your coolies every year?—Yes.

F-686. And that has a value?—Yes, about Rs. 3.

F-687. Have you included that?—No.

F-688. You supply your coolies with rice at a cheap rate?—Yes.

F-689. Is that included in the statement?—No.

F-690. Have you put in anything for fuel and grazing?—No. We have prepared out statement on the basis of Government returns. Our returns to the Government give the actual cash paid to the coolies; the Government does not accept rice concessions or free supply of blankets, etc. In addition to the actual cash paid, we wish to show what they earn from their rice fields and from the sale of goats, cows and buffaloes.

F-691. All people do not earn from rice fields or from the sale of goats, whereas all of them get blankets and other concessions?—If you want that information we can submit it to you later on.

F-692. *The Chairman*: The point I take it is that as a general rule they only work as you say, from 4 to 5 hours on the tea garden and the rest of the day they spend on their land, and you are attempting to give an estimate of the value of the work they do on their land so as to enable us to understand their total income from the two sources, that is, from the tea garden and from the land. That is your purpose?—Yes, leaving out all concessions. Here are the complete figures of one garden. In this garden the allowances, taking rice land, sugarcane, homestead, housing accommodation, firewood, livestock and medical attendance, came to Rs. 40,000 per annum.

F-693. Amongst a labour force of?—Of a permanent labour force of 1,147. If you add to that the bonus, sickness benefits and maternity benefits, the total comes to Rs. 71,224.

F-694. *Mr. Beddow*: I think there is some misunderstanding about the period that is taken up for cultivating paddy. Will you tell us what time is taken for this purpose?—On the average, the man takes a month to cultivate it and another month or six weeks for harvesting it.

F-695. *Mr. Cliff*: He does not work during those two months on the garden?—No.

F-696. *The Chairman*: At the beginning I asked you a question as to how often your Surma Valley Branch met, and we have heard from the replies to great many questions that some gardens do this and some gardens do that. There is evidently a great diversity of policy amongst individual gardens. I take it that the tea planters are by nature strong individualists, but still may I take it also that you are willing to pool your experience and knowledge for the benefit of your whole industry, or, at any rate, for the benefit of the whole of your valley?—Certainly.

F-697. And there would seem to be a possibility for adding to the usefulness of your branch if you were from time to time at your meetings to discuss what individuals are doing in various directions so that your industry as a whole might benefit from the experience of every one of you?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. G. D. WALKER, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Cachar.

F-698. *The Chairman*: You are the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar district, and you have some years' experience, I understand, in this neighbourhood?—Yes. I have served four years in this district altogether, and have in all ten years' experience in planting districts as an *ex-officio* inspector of tea gardens, both as Subdivisional Officer and as Deputy Commissioner.

F-699. Will you tell us from your experience whether or not conditions have substantially improved since the enquiry of 1921-22 and in what respect, and also point out any particulars in which you think further improvement is still needed?—I was here in 1921-22 and then I was away for a number of years, not in a tea district. I noticed on returning that, first of all, the wages now given were on a higher scale than they were in those days; instead of 3 annas you find 4 annas is being given and 5 annas in the place of 4 annas; there is an actual increase in the nominal money wage given. Another thing I have noticed is that every garden now gives maternity benefits while in the old days only two or three gardens were giving them. I also notice that whereas the coolies used to work longer hours in the cold weather they are working much shorter hours now-a-days. These are the principal changes I have noticed.

F-700. Do you think that their condition is substantially better than it was eight years ago?—It is an exceedingly difficult question to answer.

F-701. Because the cost of living was at its height in 1921 and it has presumably fallen since then?—Yes. I think, on the whole, the coolies are looking much better fed now than they were in those days. That was an exceptional time after the War. They are looking fitter in body and better clothed, on the whole.

F-702. Have you any observations to make to the Commission with regard to the methods of recruitment? You no doubt will have noticed in the years that you have been in this neighbourhood, whether or not the old abuses connected with recruiting are on the decrease as years go on?—Very seldom there is any complaint of illegal recruitment these days. I am not acquainted with the modes of recruiting, never having had anything to do with recruiting districts. I can only judge from what I see of people who have been newly recruited when I meet them on the tea gardens, and in one or two instances it has been pointed out to me that people who are obviously unfit for any sort of duty have been recruited as workers. I am interested to know if all such workers are supposed to undergo medical examination before they come up. I can only assume that they have been recruited as dependents. No doubt

the company at Calcutta has got the usual commission for recruiting them as workers. I should think that every one accompanying a worker should also be medically examined. I do not know if one could insist upon that. Anyhow more adequate medical examination is necessary from the specimens I have seen.

F-703. You think that would be for the good of the tea gardens as well as of the individuals?—Yes.

F-704. You know, of course, that there is a stringent medical examination for an emigrant going from Madras to Ceylon. You think that the present examination is inadequate?—In some cases it must be so from what I have seen.

F-705. Is there any other point that you would like to put before the Commission?—Not about recruiting. I can only judge from what I hear from the planters, and they have already expressed their opinions; I have no independent opinions upon that subject.

F-706. You are not aware of any number of coolies, apart from such cases as you have mentioned, wishing to get back to their country but unable to do so?—No. If a coolie wishes to return to his country he applies to do so, first of all, to the manager. I have heard cases in which a coolie has run away from a garden.

F-707. For what reason?—I do not know. I have known coolies running away, but they never apply to me to be repatriated. The only time that such a coolie will come to me—and the cases are few—will be to say that he has left his wife on the garden and he would like to get her released by the manager. Sometimes he runs away leaving his cattle on the garden and approaches the Deputy Commissioner for getting his cattle back. The Deputy Commissioner after investigation settles the matter with the manager one way or the other.

F-708. What is the extent of cases of that kind?—Not more than four a year. In 1928 there were four complaints and in 1929 there were four. They were almost all of them of that nature.

F-709. A small proportion compared with the total force?—Very small indeed.

F-710.—If the coolies or any considerable number of them were actually discontented with their life and anxious to go back to where they came from, you would be sure to hear of them?—Yes.

F-711. Are you quite confident that they are free to go?—Yes.

F-712. There is no restraint?—No, there is none. I may say it has been suggested that because a coolie has taken an advance of Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 he is bound to that garden. That is not so. If a coolie wants to go and he owes Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 all he has got to do is to sell his goat and pay his debt. Nothing whatever can keep him from going.

F-713. *Mr. Clow*: If a man is perfectly free why should it be necessary for him to leave his wife behind him?—Because he is probably owing some money to the garden.

F-714. Does the manager hold his wife as surety?—No. He makes it a grievance; but what generally happens is that he has quarrelled with somebody and wants to go.

F-715. Actually there is no impression among the labour force that they are still bound to remain for a term of years?—No.

F-716. They are fully alive to the changes which the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, XIII of 1859, has made?—Yes.

F-717. In actual practice the gardens although they may be in the same valley vary very largely in the attractions they offer to the labourers. Why is that so?—Healthier and more comfortable gardens require to offer less than gardens which are not so healthy or comfortable. A good manager keeps his labour more easily than a hard man.

F-718. In actual practice do you think that the less desirable gardens pay higher wages?—We visited a garden the other day; we were told that the wages were 5 annas and 4 annas there. Mr. Stuart was talking of his gardens to-day and said that the wages were 6 annas and 5 annas. In Mr. Stuart's garden there is only a small area available for rice cultivation. It is not a healthy place and the money wages are therefore higher.

F-719. Do you consider it practicable to enforce a system of statutory minimum wage in return for fixed hours of work?—It is no good doing so, because no two gardens have the same conditions not only from the point of view of health but the kind of work to be done, the kind of coolies they have and many other things.

F-720. But you had a statutory minimum wage some time back. How did the varying conditions in the several gardens affect that?—That applied only for three years to coolies recruited under Act I of 1882 and Act VI of 1901. Only those coolies received, as it were, special statutory treatment. All the rest were not affected by that.

F-721. *The Chairman*: And the figure was placed low enough. I presume, lower than what the actual earnings were?—I presume so. When you have coolies newly recruited to Assam and not acclimatized to the place a statutory minimum wage is all right, because they could not do the necessary work for some time. The Statute also had to lay down the kind of housing, water supply, the number of blankets and certain minimum medical facilities which the labourers should get.

F-722. *Mr. Cliff*: Does the same condition apply now; is the coolie given the same protection for the first three years till he gets acclimatized?—I did not say that it lasted for the whole of three years. The contract lasted for three years. I should think that a tea planter will better be able to say how long it takes a coolie to get acclimatized. But if a man wants to keep his labour it is not under any agreement now; he voluntarily does the very best he can for their health and comfort and makes them settle down.

F-723. *Mr. Beddow*: Does not a new coolie get a minimum wage now?—It is not a statutory minimum wage. The garden pays him voluntarily. A woman gets a minimum wage of 4 annas a day in the plucking season whether the leaf is plentiful or not. That is the minimum wage for 4 to 5 hours work.

F-724. *Mr. Clow*: In the old days was the minimum wage lower or higher than the actual earnings of a coolie to whom the statutory minimum wage did not apply?—The minimum wage was the lowest. Nobody else in the garden got quite so low as the one who got the minimum wage.

F-725. *The Chairman*: I understand that at present for a new recruit they pay a certain fixed wage whether or not he is able to perform the ordinary task for the first 12 months?—Yes, he has to be paid in order to afford the necessaries of life. Probably in the first year those necessaries of life are more expensive than they would be later on.

F-726. *Mr. Clow*: Was it a custom to tie down the coolies on contracts under Act XIII of 1859?—That disappeared only two or three years ago. They entered into a contract for 313 days and received a bonus of Rs. 8, 10 or 12. They put their thumb impressions on a document. They could be prosecuted under that Act.

F-727. In contracts under that Act there was presumably a wage fixed by contract?—None at all.

F-728. You have experience of both the valleys?—Yes.

F-729. Could you give us briefly how the conditions here differ on the main points from those of the Assam Valley?—With regard to Act XIII, in Sibsagar and Darrang one got hundreds of petitions from tea concerns to enforce agreements under that Act. But the number is extremely small here. I have a book here of labour difficulties in tea gardens from many years back; most of the petitions in this concern those agreements. It is astonishing to find that the number here is very small.

F-730. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What year were you over there?—I was in Golaghat from 1910 to 1914, in Mandalgai in 1915 and part of 1916. Towards the end of 1916 I was Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, for six weeks. I was a few weeks in Dibrugarh.

F-731. All that was about 13 years ago?—Yes.

F-732. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to inspections of gardens done by you or your officers, to what are they directed?—I have here some specimen inspection notes on the condition of the gardens we have been seeing. The first thing to look at is the condition of the lines and houses. Then we inspect the water supply, the hospital and the medical arrangements. Then we inspect the factory, because nowadays in addition to inspecting the tea gardens one has to inspect

the factories also. In the office we inspect the births register, the deaths register and the vaccination register. We also take the *hazira* books and check the returns of wages; we generally take out the two last six-monthly returns to Government and if we feel any doubt about them we check them carefully. I may say I have never found an instance in which such check revealed anything wrong. To get an idea of the health of the garden, death-rate alone is not a sufficient guide. I take the hospital books and see the incidence of diseases at various critical points in the year or two years just before. These are the several points to which we generally direct our attention when we inspect the gardens.

F-733. To what extent is inspection done by the Deputy Commissioner and what extent by junior officers?—In this district as well as in Sylhet, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang the Superintendent of Police and the Civil Surgeon are also inspectors of labourers.

F-734. Not the Subdivisional Officers?—The Subdivisional Officers are inspectors for their subdivisions. And it is my practice and I know it is the practice of most of my Service to do as many inspections themselves as they possibly can. In a heavy district or when there has been an interruption of one's work in the cold weather one may be forced to call upon the Superintendent of Police or the Civil Surgeon to inspect certain gardens. I had myself to call upon the Superintendent of Police to inspect two or three gardens once. At other times I have done it myself.

F-735. We have it suggested that the birth and death statistics of the gardens are inaccurate. Is that your experience?—I do not believe that the returns of the tea gardens are in general inaccurate. In the old days when under Act VI of 1901 a garden might be put on the black list on account of its unhealthy conditions and debarred from recruiting, there was a great temptation for the Doctor Babu to cook his figures and show a lower death-rate, also certain planters without looking into the causes of ill health might dismiss the Doctor Babu if he showed a high death rate. I would not say that was not possible. But my experience has been quite the reverse of it. In Mr. Mullan's memorandum which I have read he quotes the case of a garden in which he found 53 children under one year of age but not a single death among them. When I was in Golaghat I inspected a garden at Khumtai and found on the books that the births for the first 8 months of the year were 91. I referred to the deaths register and found not a single death among those children. I asked them to produce the children; they were all mustered together in the factory; they were all present and everything was correct.

F-736. *The Chairman*: Ninety-one births without a single death?—Yes. I think Mr. Mullan might have checked his figures in the same way as I did. It is highly improbable that such a thing could be correct, but I have verified it from my own experience and found that it could be correct.

F-737. That is a very important statement. What is your opinion about death certification; is it reliable?—I have no reason to suspect it. After all I do not see what is to be gained by concealing deaths nowadays at least, and everything is to be gained by putting down absolutely correct figures, so that if there is anything going wrong in the garden, if there is anything unhealthy happening, they would get all the assistance of their Agents at Calcutta in putting it right. For instance, if a manager wants to put up a better water supply there is nothing better he could do than putting up the correct death-rate. Then the Calcutta Agents would feel that there is something wrong and improve matters at once.

F-738. You think that nowadays self interest also works on the side of accuracy?—Fortunately self interest works in favour of the coolie all the time nowadays.

F-739. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What about the district returns, I mean the returns for places outside the garden; are they reliable?—I know that they are not reliable. They cannot be, because many of the people who record them are illiterate. But on a tea garden you can get more accurate figures, because you know every body who is there. All of them have been recruited and they live on the garden lands. They are dealt with by a Doctor Babu who works directly under a European trained Medical Officer.

F-740. *Col. Russell*: As a matter of fact the provincial figures are higher than the garden figures; still you say they are inaccurate?—With regard to accuracy all I can say is that there is no intentional omission; there is no tendency to do that.

F-741. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the position of your Government regarding labour difficulties or complaints of that description? How does Government intervene, where and when?—Government intervenes through the District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Officer as the case may be.

F-742. Suppose there was trouble on a garden, how do you get knowledge of it; what do you do when you get knowledge of it?—Suppose there is an exodus of coolies into a station on account of something going wrong in a garden. One hears about it quickly enough. Then one goes out. Or suppose a manager is having a riot, he will send a wire to the district authorities.

F-743. Who goes out?—The District Magistrate. I had one case to deal with as soon as I returned. It was the very first morning after I arrived here. There was a garden giving trouble. I went out and met the coolies on the road and asked them what their grievances were. I told them to go back to the garden. I discussed the matter with the manager and came to certain conclusions. There were certain members of his staff who were undesirable and he said that he would get rid of them. There has been no trouble ever since. That is one instance. In my experince most of the strikes are local and personal and are very easily disposed of.

F-744. You know there is trade union legislation; are there any trade unions that you have come in contact with at all?—Not, except in books.

F-745. We have trade disputes legislation. Have you studied that so that you may know what should be done in the event of any dispute arising? Or do you act on your own initiative?—I act on my own initiative. At the same time I may say this that every trouble between Indian and European has to be reported immediately to the Government of India. I report it to the Local Government and the Government of India is notified at once.

F-746. There is no dispute arising on a garden of which you get notice without your promptly advising the Local Government and the Government of India?—That is so. Meantime I cary on.

F-747. You will have to act on your own initiative?—I may ask for guidance.

F-748. Supposing it was suggested to you that there should be arbitration in the event of a dispute; is there any machinery for arbitration or for a board of conciliation in this Province?—No. For instance if I found that the arrangements of a manager were very unfavourable to the coolies and that they were badly paid, (rarely do I get such complaints), I would try and get together all the senior and more respected members of his own community from the neighbourhood and have the public opinion of the community on my side, because I know that the planters are not in favour of starving the coolies. I would then insist on the manager raising the wages.

F-749. What would you do to persuade the workers?—Generally I would let them have a talk with me and let them tell me what was wrong. In 99 cases out of a 100 that would settle the matter. I do not know why it should, but it does.

F-750. Can you tell us how many schools there are in your province?—In this district there are three Government lower primary schools and 14 Government aided schools on tea gardens, of which 3 are in Hailakandi. There are 2 A class schools and 11 B class schools in Silchar subdivision. In the Government primary schools on tea gardens there are 118 children. In the B class Government-aided schools there are 379 children. In Local Board lower primary schools in the neighbourhood of tea gardens there are 634 children of tea garden labourers. That is only for the Silchar subdivision. I cannot give the figures for Hailakandi.

F-751. Would the children be prepared to take advantage of the schooling provided for them if it was near by and if there was a teacher available?—My impression is that the children have no inclination to come to school. I have been told of cases in which the children went to school for a day or two and then came up for their wages. The number of schools on tea gardens is gradually increasing. Apart from the schools, there is the *Baboo* class on the tea gardens who teach the boys of about 12 years of age in the evening. I think you would get the planter to encourage children to come to school more if going to school did not mean that those children were going to be turned into little *baboos*.

F-752. Has free compulsory education been discussed in this district?—Yes.

F-753. With what result?—In this province any local body which wishes to do so can vote a certain proportion of the cost, provided that Government contribute the rest.

F-754. Has any Municipality or District Board put that into effect?—Not yet.

F-755. Have you any statistics available of the amount of land that has been taken up by ex-tea-garden-coolies in Cachar or Hailakandi. I want to get at the average amount of land held by these people? I will try to get the information.

F-756. *Miss Power:* You said you thought the number of schools was gradually increasing, but the Government evidence is very much to the contrary. It says that there has been a general decrease all round in the A, B and C types of school?—There has been an enormous increase in the number of Local Board schools in this district. There are more coolie children going to Local Board primary schools than there are going to schools on the tea gardens.

F-757. Is the suggestion that the children who used to go to the tea garden schools are now going to the Local Board schools?—I did not suggest that. The number of lower primary schools in the neighbourhood of tea gardens has increased. The facilities for going to school are many. The number of lower primary schools in the Silchar division is about 230.

F-758. How far would you say that the coolie workers on the tea gardens or in the tea factories are aware of the legislation governing their conditions of service?—There are probably "sea lawyers" in every garden—people who know the law. If a coolie is in doubt about it he has only got to ask a Magistrate.

F-759. What opportunity does he get of meeting with the magistrate?—He has only to walk into Silchar.

F-760. Do you ever get any complaints from the workers themselves?—The Deputy Commissioner of this district in the year 1928 received 4 complaints from coolies, and 4 in the year 1929. They were all matters of adjustment of accounts between the departing coolies and the manager, and they were settled to the satisfaction of both parties.

F-761. Take this Commission. I take it that all the managers of tea gardens were aware of the existence of this Commission and of its coming here and of the questions it was investigating. Would you say there was any general knowledge among the workers on the tea gardens of the existence of this Commission?—Yes. The coolies think that Mr. Gandhi has sent this Commission to raise their pay.

F-762. Why do you say that?—Because I have heard it said.

F-763. Have any of them suggested coming to give evidence?—No. You were asking about what facilities the coolie on a tea garden had of knowing what the law is. On a tea garden, in addition to the European management, there are a considerable number of clerks, more or less educated people, whose interests are very often not the interests of the managers; and whenever there is any grievance in a garden it is those people who instigate whatever disaffection there may be. In the case of a real grievance they have the opportunity of having it made known, because these people can write letters and can suggest to the coolies the line of action. That is one considerable safety valve.

F-764. But these people are in the employment of the firm, and if the firm were contravening an Act, the complaint of a coolie to an employee of the firm would not assist the matter much, would it?—If a clerk on a tea garden finds there is a grievance, he does not come into the light of day at all. He simply instigates the coolie to make a row about it. The coolies get in for all the trouble. It is their heads which can be broken. The clerk does not get his head broken.

F-765. The reason I am asking this is that in the Government return the Chief Inspector for Bengal says there is an extremely high percentage of factories in Assam which are not inspected every year—a much higher percentage than we have met with in the more heavily industrialized areas?—That is because they are tea garden factories. They are not worth worrying about. They are tiny little places. They are open to the light of day. You can see them at any time you like. They are not factories in the real sense of the term.

F-766. *Mr. Clow:* They are as much factories as ginning factories?—They are very small.

F-767. *Miss Power:* They have as much machinery, and therefore as much capacity for causing accident, as ginning factories?—Possibly. Have you any statistics of the number of accidents which have occurred in Assam factories?

Mr. Clow: We have sufficient evidence that the statistics are entirely unreliable.

F-768. *The Chairman:* I understand that there is to be a separate Inspector of Factories for Assam. Do you know whether there is already a separate Inspector of Factories for Assam?—I do not know.

F-769. *Miss Power:* The same presumption underlies the Government evidence in respect of workmen's compensation?—I do not know how anybody could get away with it in a tea garden. I cannot imagine Dr. Ramsay, or any other of these medical officers, being unaware of an accident in a factory.

F-770. Are all the medical officers of the same standing as Dr. Ramsay?—I do not say of his attainments.

F-771. *Mr. Cliff:* You said in reply to Mr. Clow that the inspection took the form of inspecting the lines, sanitation and water?—Inspection of lines and water supply.

F-772. In the report for 1929 neither of those two subjects are *mentioned.* Are they ever made the subject of observation in the reports?—*You can see all* the reports of myself and my predecessors. The first thing one does is to report on the lines and the water supply.

F-773. In this printed report, while there are observations on many subjects, there are no observations on these two subjects. Are there any reports of this character which deal with these subjects?—I gave to the Secretary of the Commission reports on the gardens which we have visited.

F-774. I wondered what observations were made by the Inspectors in regard to the lines?—You can see them.

F-775. *The Chairman:* Are they included in the Public Health Report?—The reports are in detail on each garden. Nothing is excerpted from them. They are mostly routine things.

F-776. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have sent us copies of the Deputy Commissioner's latest inspection report on these gardens?—Yes.

F-777. *Mr. Cliff:* Do they contain a general summary of the observations with regard to the inspection of the lines of the whole of the gardens inspected?—Of the particular garden he was inspecting at the moment, yes.

F-778. That is not my point. I am reminded that these are reports on individual gardens; but here we have a report covering the whole of the Valley. There is no mention of housing or of water?—You had better see Government about that. I am not responsible for making up the report about the Valley.

F-779. Is there extant a report covering the whole of the gardens on these two subjects.. I understand I can get the information in other reports. Have you the report on "Emigrant Labour in the Province of Assam, 1929." Will you look on page 4 of each section—"Complaints from tea garden labourers to tea garden managers." Why is there such a remarkable difference between the number of complaints in the two valleys? In the one valley the number of complaints received during the year was 86 and in the other valley 4?—I pointed out that in the other valley they rely much more on complaints by coolies for breach of contract, and that in this valley they do not do so. That is the bulk of complaints which one receives by coolies.

F-780. You say that the number here that has been dealt with refers to complaints by coolies against managers?—It is due also to the fact that they were under contract. The complaint against the manager very often was "I want a discharge certificate."

F-781. May we take it that "the number dealt with executively and decided for complainant on application for discharge certificate" accounts for the large number?—Yes.

F-782. Were any steps taken to make the garden population aware of the fact that they were not now under the agreement which they were under previously?—They know that; they do not come and ask me for discharge certificates.

F-783. Were any steps taken by the Commissioner or Sub-Commissioners to make them aware of that?—It did not appear to be necessary to do so, because as soon as the giving of agreements was stopped, they did not come and ask for discharge certificates.

F-784. May I take it that no steps were taken by the officers?—I cannot say whether they were or were not.

F-785. Are any steps taken to make the illiterate population aware of their rights under the different Acts passed—the Workmen's Compensation Act or other such Acts?—No more steps than have been taken to inform the common villager of the existence of the Indian Penal Code.

F-786. You were speaking about minimum wages. Taking evidence the other day on a garden, a young fellow of about 25 said that his rate of wages was Re. 1-8 per week and that he had been employed for 2½ years. Are there many cases like that within your knowledge?—I do not know. He did not complain of it, did he?

F-787. He made the statement in evidence?—That was his wage. He looked fit enough.

F-788. Are there many cases like that?—I do not expect so.

F-789. You do not know?—I do not know.

Mr. Beddow: I think he said that that is what he earned. He did not say what more he could earn. We have looked up the books and we find he was only working four days a week.

Mr. Cliff: He said he had been there for 2½ years. I think he was asked what his wages were, and his reply was Re. 1-8 per week.

Mr. Beddow: That is what he chose to earn.

Mr. Cliff: My point is about the question and his answer. I am trying to find out whether there are many more cases of that kind.

F-790. The Government of Assam have put in a memorandum in which I see it was suggested that there should be a conference of medical officers to discuss the matter of the provision of latrines and conservancy arrangements. Has that conference taken place?—You had better ask the Government.

F-791. The Government appears to have no information, and therefore I am asking about it in the Valley?—I do not know. I have not heard about it at all.

F-792. The Government of Assam refer to a recommendation of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee to the effect that it would be better to spend money on education, superannuation benefits, and welfare work rather than on giving increases of wages. Has anything been done to give effect to that recommendation? Government has recommended the tea planters to do that? The tea planters have increased wages, and since I came here there has been a very large increase in the number of schools both, on tea gardens and near tea gardens, and there has been a great increase in maternity benefit. That is directly bearing on child welfare.

F-793. The recommendation is that it would be better to spend money on education, superannuation benefit and welfare work?—It would be better to spend it on that than in giving higher wages? Undoubtedly, if it is a choice of giving the labourers more money to spend in the grog shop and spending it in these beneficial ways for their benefit.

F-794. You agree with the recommendation. Has anything been done to give effect to the recommendation?—I have just said that I have seen a steady improvement all the time since I have been in this country.

F-795. I am speaking of since the report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, 1921-22?—I began by saying that I have noticed a big difference since I was in the district last—in 1922, coming back in 1929—in those directions.

F-796. In education, superannuation and welfare?—I do not know about superannuation.

F-797. There was a point raised before this Commission that rice was issued on credit and that there was a tendency for the labourer to take more than he actually required. A committee advocated that when rice was issued it should only be issued for cash payments. Has effect been given to that?—I do not know of any garden on which rice was issued on credit. During the flood recently Government issued nearly a lakh of rupees worth of rice on credit in this district to the villagers.

F-798. You are not aware of the system which was tendered in evidence to the Assam Labour Enquiry?—No, but I should think that if coolies needed it as much as the villagers needed it this last year they would do as Government did in this case and issue it on credit to them. Why not?

F-799. I am not dealing with your opinion; I am dealing with the opinion of the Committee. The Comittee advocated that when rice was issued it should be issued only on cash payment. The Government concurred in that recommendation?—That is to say that instead of giving the coolie rice you should give him money.

The Chairman: The point was that the Committee appeared to fear that the issue of rice on credit tended to increase the indebtedness of the coolie, and for that reason they thought it undesirable that planters should issue rice on credit?—My idea is that if a coolie has not the money it is better to feed him than to let him starve.

F-800. *Mr. Cliff:* I was only on this recommendation, and if the witness cannot give us any information I will leave the matter?—I do not know of any case in which rice was issued on credit in this district.

Mr. Beddow: The granting of rice on credit has been absolutely done away with on all gardens since that recommendation.

F-801. *The Chairman:* So that there is now no piling up of credit *in connection* with the issue of rice?—No.

F-802. *Mr. Cliff:* I want to ask a question about the title which a tea garden labourer has to land. If a tea garden labourer clears some jungle, and is allotted two *keers* of land, what right has he on that land?—If the land is on the tea garden land, for which the tea company is paying a revenue to Government, he has such right as the tea company may give him. The crop is his. If it is outside, then he becomes a tenant of Government. He gets a lease and he gets settlement.

F-803. Is there any written agreement of tenancy between the tenant and the company?—No.

F-804. Or any lease?—No.

F-805. If he is turned off the land, has the tenant any right to compensation for clearing the jungle?—He will have a case against the garden in the courts. If he had grown a crop on it and was not allowed to reap it he would have a claim.

F-806. I am not dealing with the question of the crop. If a tea garden labourer acquires land and cultivates it, has he any right to compensation for his work done on that land if he is turned off it?—I do not understand what compensation is wanted for clearing the land.

The Chairman: Compensation for work done in clearing the jungle and making the land suitable for cultivation?—And then he runs away, do you mean?

F-807. *Mr. Cliff:* If he be given notice to leave (which the Company has got a right to exercise), is he entitled under any Act to compensation?

The Chairman: What we call in England compensation for improvement?—I cannot imagine such a case occurring.

F-808. He clears the jungle at his own risk?—People do not dismiss coolies like that. I think he might have a case in the courts if he has done the work and is not allowed to reap the fruits of it—if he has put seed in the soil and is not allowed to reap it.

F-809. *Mr. Ahmed:* Suppose a tenant cuts the jungle and clears the virgin soil, improves the land and makes it fit for cultivation. If he wants to leave the land or if he is evicted from the land is there any law here in this Province, just like the Bengal Tenancy Act, which will entitle him to get compensation for the improvements he has effected?—He usually does not leave the land, nor is he evicted like that. Why should he?

F-810. There is no such law here?—No.

F-811. So that a tenant may occupy a land for 20 years and still have no right of occupancy?—He has no prescriptive right even, is that not so?—I do not know.

F-812. You are also an Inspector of Factories and in that capacity you have to look after the health and conditions of work of the factory workers here in this Province. In what way are you qualified to discharge those duties?—I am neither a doctor nor an engineer, it is quite true.

F-813. Is it not necessary that an inspector should have those qualifications just as it is in other provinces?—I do not know whether it is or not; that is a matter of opinion.

F-814. Why has your Government not appointed a qualified man instead of asking the District Magistrate who is not a qualified man to do the work?—I cannot answer for Government; it is a matter for them to decide entirely.

F-815. You appoint a Bengali Babu to teach the children. He does not know Mahrathi or Madrasi languages and how do you expect him to teach the children in their vernaculars?—From the point of view of good education is it not desirable

to appoint men who know the different vernaculars of the coolies?—From my experience of the tea gardens in the Assam Valley I find that the children quickly learn to speak Assamese. Here it is a kind of Hindustani with a mixture of Bengali. If the children are going to learn any vernacular which will be useful to them—they do not konw their original Madrasee—it is much better for them to learn the local vernacular which is the language of the tea garden clerical staff.

F-816. *The Chairman*: That is taught in the district board schools?—Yes, Bengali in this valley and Assamese in the other.

F-817. *Mr. Ahmed*: Suppose a coolie wanted to be repatriated, would he be sent home at the expense of the garden?—If I found that he had been recruited by fraud or misrepresentation and was unfit for the garden I could call upon the manager to pay his return fare. If within 24 hours he did not pay his return fare I could pay it myself from Government and make him pay afterwards. I could recover that from him as a public debt.

F-818. But that is only when the man has been recruited by fraud or misrepresentation. Suppose a coolie has finished his term of contract and wants to go home, is there any provision for you or the manager to pay him his travelling expenses?—I do not know. There is a fund for repatriating sickly coolies, but merely discontented coolies, I am afraid, will have to pay their own fares. Surely if they have finished their term they would have sufficient money with them.

F-819. So there is no provision for repatriating coolies who have finished their term?—Not that I know of.

F-820. Was that not one of the causes of the troubles in 1921?—Not to my knowledge. That was not so.

F-821. You said that the Superintendent of Police was sometimes asked to inspect the gardens. Does he not go in his uniform with a number of constables and do not the coolies get frightened?—On only one occasion that I know of, the Superintendent of Police went there in his ordinary kit without any constables accompanying him.

F-822. *The Chairman*: He goes there as an ordinary inspector of tea gardens?—They go like civil officers. For instance, the Civil Surgeon does not go there with his rubber gloves on.

F-823. *Mr. Ahmed*: Even in the event of a riot in the garden does he go there like that?

The Chairman: If he is called upon in his police capacity he goes in his uniform accompanied by his men?—Yes, that is so.

F-824. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do not the coolies know that he is a man of dual responsibility and get afraid of him?—They may know him if they recognize him, but I do not think they are afraid of him.

F-825. Do you follow the International Labour Conventions regarding the welfare of labour?—I have been looking after the welfare of labour even before Geneva thought of it, ever since I was put in charge of a planting district.

F-826. I take it that you thoroughly follow these Conventions?—Not a bit.

F-827. You will have no objection to apply Trade Union legislation and Trade Disputes legislation to this Province?—If I knew that any legislation of that kind would do good to the men I would be in favour of it.

F-828. *Rev. Saikia*: How long do you stay in a fairly big garden to inspect it thoroughly?—Two to 3 hours.

F-829. Is it enough?—It is a matter of opinion.

F-830. Does the manager go round with you when you inspect the garden?—He generally does.

F-831. Are you generally satisfied with what you see in those gardens?—I write down in my report whether I am satisfied or not. If there is anything to criticise I do so in my report.

(The witness withdrew.)

Rev. E. R. SINGH.

F-832. *The Chairman*: I understand that you have been working for great many years as a missionary in Assam?—Yes.

F-833. And that your work has been to a considerable extent among the coolies of the tea gardens?—Yes.

F-834. For how many years have you been carrying out your work?—Since 1896.

F-835. In that time no doubt you have seen very great changes?—Yes.

F-836. Would you be good enough to give the Commission the benefit of your experience. In the first place, can you tell us if you think the condition of the coolies has substantially improved in recent years; and in the second place, have you anything to say to us by way of recommendations with regard to their condition?—When I was in Assam Valley in 1896 the pay of a man was Rs. 7 a month and the pay of a woman was Rs. 6 a month. For that a man had to hoe 30 *nals* and a woman 25 *nals*. At that time everything was cheap. They are getting the same pay now; but the cost of living has greatly increased.

F-837. Do you think the coolie is better off now than he was?—No, because of the high price of foodstuffs, clothing, etc., now.

F-838. Do you think that the increase in the earnings has not been more than the increase in the cost of living for them?—In 1896 a man was getting Rs. 7 a month and a woman Rs. 6 a month, and they are getting the same now.

F-839. Were you here in 1921 at the time of the troubles in the tea gardens when a great number of coolies left the gardens?—Yes.

F-840. Do you remember the enquiry that was held in 1921-22?—No, I do not.

F-841. Do you know what cash wages the coolies are earning now?—Yes, the men are earning 4 annas a day and the women 3 annas a day for their fixed tasks.

F-842. These are the tasks which take them four or five hours to complete?—Yes.

F-843. In addition to that do they have paddy land to cultivate?—Very little.

F-844. Are you speaking now of the Surma Valley or the Assam Valley?—Of the Surma Valley. In the Assam Valley most of the people have their own land—Government land.

F-845. Do you come in contact with a number of people who have come here in the last two or three years as new recruits?—No, I do not.

F-846. Therefore you cannot tell us whether or not they are happy and comfortable?—No.

F-847. Have you anything to say to the Commission with regard to the method of recruiting labour for Assam?—No.

F-848. Have you had experience of any people who have been brought here by wrong methods?—A long time ago.

F-849. I am speaking of recent times?—No.

F-850. In recent times you have not heard of any wrong methods of recruitment?—No.

F-851. As far as you know, the people who have come recently have come willingly?—I think so.

F-852. Do you know many people who first worked upon the tea gardens and then were able to take Government land themselves and become independent land owners in the last ten years?—Yes, in Assam Valley.

F-853. You do not find amongst the coolies a desire to return to their own country?—Many of them say they wish to, but they have not money enough to return.

F-854. Is there anything you would like to say to us about the housing of the coolies?—In some places I have seen small houses with corrugated roofs. They do not like them, because in summer they are too hot and in winter they are too cold, and also the room is not big enough.

F-855. They prefer the thatched house?—Yes.

F-856. Would you like to say anything to us about the education of the coolies?—It would be better if schools were established, because by that means the coolies could escape from the clutches of the shopkeepers as well as be able to write to their friends or relations expressing their difficulties or prosperity.

F-857. Are you speaking of the education of the children or of the adults?—The children.

F-858. You want children under 10 years of age to have education?—Yes.

F-859. Do you think they would come willingly to the schools?—Yes, if the managers would persuade them and explain the matter to them.

F-860. Is there a school attached to your own Mission?—I have been transferred recently but I used to teach the young men at night.

F-861. Where are you working now?—Thaligram, 14 miles away from here.

F-862. Close to the tea gardens?—In the tea gardens.

F-863. Is there a school in that tea garden?—Yes, the Government school.

F-864. How many children come to it?—Over 30.

F-865. Out of how many?—The garden children do not come, but the shopkeepers' children do.

F-866. You think the garden children might come if they were more encouraged by the managers?—Yes.

F-867. Do you want to say anything about the vegetable gardens?—Some of the coolies have none.

F-868. Do you mean that there are some who would willingly cultivate?—Yes, everybody.

F-869. Does that apply to the tea gardens, generally speaking, or to one particular garden?—Generally.

F-870. Generally you think there ought to be more opportunity for them to cultivate their own vegetable plots?—Yes.

F-871. Have you anything else you would like to say to us. We are anxious that you should feel that you have said everything to us that you would like to say?—No, I have nothing else to say.

F-872. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have stated that the coolies are, as a rule, getting Rs. 7 for men and Rs. 6 for women, and that the price of foodstuffs, clothing, etc., has gone up. Do I understand that they cannot go back to their native villages, as many of them would like to go, because they have no money?—Yes.

The Chairman: The witness did not say that they were anxious to go back to their villages.

F-873. *Mr. Ahmed*: Some of them; but for want of money they cannot go?—No.

F-874. Are they indebted to the *banias*?—I cannot tell you definitely, but sometimes people come to me to ask me for a loan.

F-875. You are speaking generally?—Yes.

F-876. Is there any *bania* here?—Yes, there are a good many *banias*.

F-877. Is there any other way of getting a loan from any other source than the *bania*, at a small rate of interest?

The Chairman: Can they get a loan from the gardens if they ask for it, at a low rate of interest?—If they can get it from the gardens why should they come to me?

F-878. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you think that a number of teachers would be available if provision were made for education?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

ASSAM.

Forty-Eighth Meeting.

PANCHGRAM.

Tuesday, the 7th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
REV. THENURAM SAIKIA	} *Assistant Commissioners.*
MR. A. B. BEDDOW, Uirunsbund Tea Estate, Cachar.	
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN	*Lady Assessor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.	} *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN	

RAM PRASAD GOALA (Mr. Clow interpreted).

F-879. What work do you do?—I dig clay. When there is none of that work to do I carry coal.

F-880. What district do you come from?—My home district is Fyzabad.

F-881. When did you come to this country?—Eight or nine years ago.

F-882. Did a *Sardar* bring you?—Yes.

F-883. Whom did he bring with you?—My father and mother.

F-884. Did he bring any others?—There were five or six.

F-885. Did they belong to your own village?—Yes.

F-886. Where are they?—They have gone back to their country.

F-887. How did they get back?—They escaped and ran away.

F-888. How did they get money to go?—They did it by working.

F-889. How long did you stay in the garden?—Six months.

F-890. Why did you leave it?—Because I did not get 'enough to live on.'

F-891. How much did you get?—I got 3 annas a day.

F-892. What did the *sardar* tell you?—He told me that in Assam I should get large pay; he said I would get Rs. 15 or Rs. 16 a month for light work.

F-893. Where did you go after you left the tea garden?—I took service with the Oil Company.

F-894. How much do you get at present?—Rs. 18 a month.

F-895. Do you prefer staying here or would you like to go back to your own country?—I would much rather go to my own country.

F-896. Why do you want to go back when you will not get the same pay in Fyzabad?—In Fyzabad I can get cultivating work; I am not used to the work here.

F-897. What did you do in your own country?—I was a ploughman.

F-898. In which garden did you work?—It is five or six years ago and I do not remember the name but it was in the Assam Valley.

F-899. How did you get here?—I saved up enough money by working.

F-900. Were you at Digboi?—No.

F-901. In what district was the tea garden?—It was in Sibsagar.

F-902. Have you saved any money here?—How can I save any money because there are two of us working and my mother does not work, so there are three to feed.

F-903. Did your mother work when you got to the tea gardens?—No, we did not allow her to work.

F-904. Do your mother and father also want to go back to their country?—Yes.

F-905. Do you work every day here?—There is a half holiday on Saturday and I work till 12 on Sunday. We do not get a holiday on bazaar day.

F-906. How much does your father get?—He gets Rs. 16 a month.

F-907. Where do you draw your pay?—In the office.

F-908. Who gives it to you?—The Camp Baboo.

F-909. What are the women paid?—They get 7 annas a day.

F-910. How many hours do you work?—We work from 7 to 12 and get an hour's leave and then we work from 1 to 5.

F-911. Did the *Sardar* who brought you belong to your village?—Yes, the *Sardar* belonged to my village. He ran away from the garden about two months after he landed us there.

F-912. Did he give you an advance?—No.

F-913. How old are you?—16 or 18 years.

F-914. *Mrs. Ataur Rahman*: He is older than that.

F-915. Are you married?—No.

F-916. When you came to the garden were you a small boy?—Yes.

F-917. Do you have a house, rent-free?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. D. P. TRENCH, Field Agent at the Panchgram Oil Wells of the Burmah Oil Co., Ltd.

F-918. *The Chairman*: How do you get your labour here?—We do not actually recruit any labour; they come in from the surrounding villages and apply for work and we take them on; they live in the *bustis* locally.

F-919. Do you have as many applicants as you require?—Yes, there is usually plenty of coolie labour available.

F-920. Are the coolies working on the land before they come to you?—Yes, and they usually still work on the land after they come to us; they have their own patches of paddy which they cultivate, and spend perhaps three-fourths of their time with us and the other quarter on their own cultivation.

F-921. Do they work any fixed hours with you?—Yes, they all work fixed hours, varying from 8 hours to 12 hours per day.

F-922. How many days a week do they work?—Six or seven. What are the coolies actually doing?—Digging and mixing mud, transport work, unloading and loading, etc., etc.

F-923. Then they are not actually on the oil field?—The labour employed on wells, production, and that sort of thing is skilled labour; they do rather different work.

F-924. What do you pay the coolies?—Nobody gets paid, less than Rs. 14 a month, except apprentices. Anybody who receives less than Rs. 20 a month is entitled to a bonus of Re. 1, provided he works every day in the month. This is to encourage attendance, but not many coolies earn the extra rupee because they prefer to go off and look after their own paddy after they have earned ten or twelve rupees. A skilled labourer is paid anything from Rs. 30 to 250 a month; drilling coolies get from Rs. 14 to Rs. 40.

F-925. You pay considerably higher wages than are paid to the tea garden coolie labour?—I do not think we pay more taking into account the amount of work that is done; a tea garden coolie does not actually get so much money but he does not usually work such long hours.

F-926. He only works five hours a day?—He works perhaps only three or four hours a day and after he has earned three or four annas he will go home.

F-927 And work on his own paddy field?—I think he usually returns to his lines, but we have nothing like that here; our permanent staff of coolie labour is very small in proportion to the amount of work we do. For anything big we employ contractors and they make their own arrangements for labour.

F-928. *Mr. Cliff.* What are the women paid?—We do not employ any women on the field itself and the percentage of women employed on outside work such as digging clay is almost negligible.

F-929. A woman has just told us that she gets 7 annas a day. Is that right?—Yes, coolie women get paid at the same rate as the men.

F-930. *Mr. Clow*: If you knew coolies had come from a tea garden would you employ them here?—We would employ them until we knew they had come from the tea garden concerned and if we were then asked to return them we should do so provided the coolies were not unwilling to go back. Cases of that kind have been very rare: in the last three years I think we have had only 2 applications for the return of such coolies. We do not knowingly take on any tea garden coolies because we recognize that the tea gardens have gone to considerable expense in recruiting their labour.

F-931. *Mr. Cliff*: Did you return the two coolies with regard to whom application for return was made?—In the cases I am thinking of the tea gardens sent over a *sardar* who identified the coolies and took them back. But that was some years ago. I think recently tea garden coolies have had very much more liberty to go away. On the tea gardens the contract with a coolie is not binding nowadays; he can depart if and when he wants to without giving any warning.

F-932. *The Chairman*: Do you find that the tea garden coolies are still under the impression that they are bound by contract?—I have little experience of tea garden labour and I do not know.

F-933. Are the coolies working on this particular tea garden local?—I think they are local. Originally they were probably recruited, but of recent years they have been multiplying and they have their own tea garden village at Badarpurghat. I do not think Mr. Stoker has done any recruiting for some time; but in any case we do not have any dealings with his labour; it consists largely of women pluckers and it is labour which is not really suitable for our purposes.

F-934. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you under the necessity of housing your workers?—No; we think not. There are a few barracks available for any one who has not got anywhere to go temporarily, as, for instance, during a flood. These particular quarters were practically demolished during the recent flood and they have not since been repaired.

F-935. Were these quarters put up by the Company?—Yes.

F-936. Was there any special reason why you should house any of them?—At one time when we were constructing the refinery we had a lot of labour imported for the big transport jobs involved and we found it necessary to supply quarters for quite a number. We had a labour pool of about 150 in those days, but during the last few years we have not had a labour pool of our own; we have carried a very small nucleus of coolie labour and when we have had any big constructional or transport jobs to do we have put them out on contract.

F-937. Generally speaking, you do not house your labour?—No, we do not set out to house the labour employed on Badarpur field.

F-938. With regard to the few workers for whom you supply houses do you charge rent?—No.

F-939. *The Chairman*: The others live in their own villages?—Yes, within about three miles radius. They come in over these rivers and we have an arrangement by which we pay the ferry charges.

F-940. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there a school near here?—There are three schools within 5 miles, two secondary schools and one primary school; and we are also starting a school on the field.

F-941. *Mr. Ahmed*: Are those schools under the District Board?—I think two of them are.

F-942. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why are you starting a school?—It has not been started by the Company; it has been started by the clerks themselves; they have a certain number of children whom they do not want to send to the other schools owing to the distance.

F-943. Do you employ any children?—We employ a few children only as office *chokras*.

F-944. What are the working hours at the wells?—We work an eight hour shift on rotary wells and 10 hours daylight on cable wells.

F-945. Then you do not work continuously on that type of plant?—Usually on rotary drilling only, in which case 8 hour shifts are worked continuously. The ordinary field hours are from 6 to 4; the engineering hours are 7 to 5. The men bring their lunch and Muhammadans have a break of one extra hour for prayer on Fridays.

F-946. Do you do night work and overtime?—Yes; any overtime is paid for.

F-947. At what rate?—At the rate at which they are normally paid for daylight work.

F-948. Do you come under the Factories Act?—Our Machine Shop and the Refinery come under the Factories Act.

F-949. In the places which come under the Factories Act, when you work overtime you have to pay one and a quarter?—When we want to work at night we work 8 hour shifts. We do very little overtime; any overtime that is worked is paid for at the daily rate.

F-950. What is the total number of employees on your books?—The total number of employees at the present time, excluding clerks and junior staff, is about 789.

F-951. How many women do you employ?—Perhaps 20 or 30.

F-952. How many children do you employ?—About a dozen only as office *chokras*.

F-953. Have you had any bad accidents?—Yes, we have had a few.

F-954. Do you come under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—We do; at least we pay compensation in accordance with the rates laid down in the Workmen's Compensation Act.

F-955. Are you insured with regard to your liability under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No, we do not insure outside for the purposes of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

F-956. *Mr. Ahmed*: You do not give any leave with pay?—No, not to coolie labour unless injured at work in which case the coolie concerned receives half pay for the period off.

F-957. There is no medical help given to them?—Yes, there is a hospital with 6 beds in which free medical treatment is given.

F-958. Do a lot of them go there?—About 90 per cent.

F-959. Is pure drinking water supplied by you in the working places?—Not distilled water, but quite good water for drinking purposes; reservoir water is laid on to all barracks and the junior staff quarters are fitted with taps in each kitchen and bath room. Perhaps you would like to go over the hospital.

(The witness withdrew.)

ASSAM.

Forty-ninth Meeting.

JORHAT (ON THE MOABUND TEA ESTATE).

Wednesday, the 8th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
REV. THENURAM SAIKIA ..	.. *Assistant Commissioner.*
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN ..	.. *Lady Assessor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. ..	.. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A DIBDIN ..	.. }

SHAM KAMAR, (Moabund Tea Estate).

F-960. For how many years have you worked on this tea garden?—Between 10 and 12 years. I have my wife here and my two sons and two daughters.

F-961. Have you been sent out as a *sardar* to recruit in Ranchi?—Yes. I have been to Ranchi to get recruits six times.

F-962. How many did you bring back with you last time?—I generally take leave by saying that I am going to get recruits. The last time I went I could not persuade anybody to come with me. When I ask for leave to go for recruits I am allowed to go.

F-963. But you sometimes go just to visit your own country?—I have always gone on a *sardari* pass, not otherwise.

F-964. Have you brought any of your people from your village on any of the occasions on which you have gone there as a *sardar*?—On one occasion there was a lot of illness there, so I brought some of my own people here.

F-965. Are they still here?—Yes.

F-966. Are they happy here?—They are quite happy here. If some of them do not like it they run away.

F-967. How much do you earn?—Rs. 12 a month for 6 days' work a week. My wife gets 4 annas a day.

F-968. Have you got some *khet* land?—Yes.

F-969. How much do you get from your *khet* land?—Sometimes I get a good harvest and sometimes I do not.

F-970. How much paddy did you get this year?—I only got 9 maunds. I had a very poor harvest.

F-971. Do you owe any money?—I have some debts with the shop-keepers. At one shop I owe Rs. 1-10 and at another shop I owe Rs. 9-15 and amongst the coolies I have a few debts.

F-972. You say you have been to your home country as a *sardar* six times?—Yes.

F-973. Did you not save any money out of the advances you got from the Company for those journeys?—When I start from here I get Rs. 2 as advance, and as I go to the different depots I get money there—from 4 annas to 6 annas. I go along like that until I arrive at Ranchi.

F-974. What advance did you get at the depot at Ranchi?—The first time I went to Ranchi I got Rs. 10. Now I do not get that Rs. 10 advance. If I bring back coolies I get it, but if I do not get any I am returned to the garden.

F-975. Are there many other people from Ranchi who are on this tea garden and who have been here for some years?—Yes, there are many. Sometime ago there was great illness in Ranchi, and since then a lot of people have come here. Before that time there were not very many from my own place.

F-976. Are they better off here than they were at home in Ranchi?—There was not enough work for every one at Ranchi. Here we get work and get paid for it.

F-977. You say that the last time you went to Ranchi you brought back no recruits. Why would not the people come with you?—The headman of the village very often dissuades them from coming. The village headman says to them, "Why do you want to go? You have your land here. I will try and improve your conditions here. Stay on here." He does not stop them from coming, but he dissuades them from coming.

F-978. Instead of borrowing from the *bania* why did you not ask for an advance from the garden?—I get advances from the manager, but I am talking of my shop accounts.

F-979. How many coolies from Ranchi have you brought here, and how many are here now?—The first time I went I recruited one man. The second time I went I brought my mother and my wife and children. The third time I went I brought my wife's people. There are 6 people in the family. I have been twice since then and I have not been able to get anybody. On four occasions I brought people back and on the last two occasions I did not bring any back.

F-980. Are the people you brought here on the first four occasions still here?—The man I got the first time has died. The second one is living here, and my family and my wife's people are here.

F-981. Have you any cattle?—One cow and nine goats.

F-982. Why are you borrowing when you are getting good pay and living so well?—I get into debt because I drink, and drink costs money, and I have to feed and keep my children.

F-983. Did you say that without drink you could not do work?—If I have to go any distance at all I feel a bit run down unless I have some drink to brace me up again.

F-984. Do your wife and children work?—My daughters and my wife work, but my sons do not as they are too small.

F-985. What did the three of them earn last week?—My wife got Rs. 1-4 during the week. My daughter got 13 annas in the week. Only one of my daughters works, the other is too small.

F-986. How much do you get?—Rs. 12 a month.

F-987. What did you earn last week?—Rs. 2-8 after having 8 annas deducted for the advance.

F-988. Did you work 6 days?—Yes.

F-989. Did you work 6 whole days or only half days?—I am given work to do and when I do that work I get 8 annas.

F-990. Any *ticca*?—No. I am not supposed to go from the land without the Sahib's orders.

F-991. Do you get a bonus at the end of the month or at the end of the year?—I get *girmit* money. A man gets Rs. 12 a year, a woman Rs. 6 a year and a child gets nothing. If a man goes away with this *girmit* money he will get into trouble. If a man goes away after he has got the *girmit* money he will be caught and brought back.

F-992. When did you get it?—I got it before. After a year I got Rs. 12. I am paid it before and not after. When a man comes to this part, if he comes on contract for three years he is allowed to take an advance of Rs. 12 a year. Sometimes he takes it there and sometimes he also takes it here.

F-993. How many years have you been here?—I worked for 7 years as a coolie and then I was made a sardar. Since then I have been recruiting. I am not sure about the years, as I do not know how to count them.

F-994. Do any coolies leave this garden and go elsewhere?—I do not know but sometimes they are not pleased and they run away.

F-995. Have you had advances from the manager quite recently?—No.

F-996. I see from the books that you owe to the manager now about Rs. 40?—Since the new manager has come I have not taken any advance from him. I have from the other manager, but I am not sure how much.

F-997. The books show that at the end of July you owed Rs. 38 and it has increased now to about Rs. 40?—I am not sure. I do not know.

(The witness withdrew.)

OTI GOA of TARA KHUL, (Moabund Tea Estate).

F-998. How long have you worked on this garden?—One year.

F-999. Are you better off here than you were in your own country?—I am much better off here.

F-1000. Have you your wife and children with you?—No.

F-1001. Have you any wish to go back to your own country?—I want to go and bring my wife and family.

F-1002. You think they would be happier here?—Yes. They will be happy if they come up here.

F-1003. Did you get any *girmit* money?—I have one month left to go yet. I have been here only 11 months.

F-1004. Your agreement is for one year?—Yes.

F-1005. But you intend to stay?—Yes.

F-1006. *Sir Alexander Murray:* He also says that he will get a bonus at the end of 12 months, and not at the beginning. When his other month is over he will get the contract money of Rs. 12.

F-1007. Are you going home for your wife and family next month?—When I get leave I shall go and bring my wife and children.

F-1008. Have you asked for leave to go?—No.

F-1009. Do you write letters to your wife?—No. Nor have I had any letters from her.

F-1010. Have you never asked the manager to have a letter written to your wife?—No.

F-1011. Have you any *khet* land?—No.

F-1012. Have you saved any money while you have been here?—I sent home Rs. 10. I have not been able to save any money because I spend it on eating and drinking.

F-1013. What wages do you get?—Rs. 3 a week.

F-1014. Who do you live with?—We are five men staying together.

F-1015. How many hours do you work a day?—I go out in the morning at about 9 and I return home at about 12.

F-1016. Why do you not work longer?—If I could get *ticca* work I would do it.

F-1017. Have you not been asked to do any extra work?—No.

F-1018. Do you work every day?—Yes, 6 days a week.

(The witness withdrew.)

KATAUR, KHOND, (Moabund Tea Estate).

F-1019. How long have you been here?—Eleven months.

F-1020. Did you come on an agreement for one year?—Yes, I came on a year's agreement, but I have not taken the Rs. 12 as yet.

F-1021. Do you like the work here?—Yes.

F-1022. Do you propose to stay here?—I have my wife and family here and I should like to stay.

F-1023. Did your wife and family come with you?—Yes.

F-1024. And they are happy and settled here?—Yes.

F-1025. Who brought you here?—The *sardar*.

F-1026. Do you expect to get a bonus when you have finished your 12 months?—Yes.

F-1027. How much do you expect to get?—Rs. 12.

F-1028. Is that for having worked regularly during the year?—If I work 12 months I shall get Rs. 12.

F-1029. Who told you that?—I have heard it. Everybody says that if they work they get a *girmit* money of Rs. 12.

F-1030. Can you go away when you have got your Rs. 12?—I cannot go away at my own pleasure. If I ask the manager and he gives me a license, then I can go.

F-1031. Can you go away now if you want to?—How can I go?

F-1032. Why cannot you go?—I do not want to go away because I like it here.

F-1033. Can you go away to work for a contractor in Jorhat at more money?—I do not want to go.

F-1034. What wages do you earn?—Rs. 3 a weak.

F-1035. Does your wife work?—Yes. She gets Rs. 2-4.

F-1036. Do you work every day?—I work 6 days, but if I am not well I do not work.

F-1037. Do you do *ticca*?—No.

F-1038. Have you been asked?—No.

F-1039. Have you any land?—I have only been here a year, so I have not any *khet* land.

F-1040. Do you want to get it when you can?—Yes.

F-1041. Have you any goats?—No. I have got nothing.

F-1042. Do you owe any money?—No.

F-1043. Have you saved any money?—I have saved a little.

F-1044. If others want to go can they go without a license?—How can I say about other people.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. B. LEONARD, Manager of Moabund Tea Estate, Jorhat.

F-1045. *The Chairman*: How long have you been here?—For not quite a year. I came here last April.

F-1046. You have had a much longer experience of tea garden work, have you not?—I came out in 1906.

F-1047. All your experience has been in this Valley?—Yes.

F-1048. I understand that you are responsible both for this and some other tea gardens?—Yes.

F-1049. How many acres of tea in all are you responsible for?—4,300 acres.

F-1050. What working force does that represent?—About 8,200.

F-1051. That is men, women and children?—That is the number of workers. The population is somewhere about 16,000.

F-1052. How far is your labour force permanent?—All of it is permanent. We have not any short-time labour. Our standard is 2 coolies an acre. We try to have two workers to an acre. That is the standard we are trying to maintain.

F-1053. Have you that standard now?—Very nearly. In this Company there are two souls working to an acre.

F-1054. How many coolies did you have to recruit last year?—106 in 1928 and 206 in 1929—men, women and children, a few of these are not workers.

F-1055. About 300 in the two years?—Yes, workers.

F-1056. Those were all recruited by sending out *sardars*?—Yes.

F-1057. Do you find as a rule that the people you bring here settle down permanently?—Most of the family people do. Some of the single men do not.

F-1058. What happens to the single men who do not stay?—They either leave the garden or are sent down as *sardars* and do not come back.

F-1059. When a man wants to get back to his home country, he applies to be sent down as a *sardar* and you let him go?—Yes.

F-1060. It is in that case a form of repatriation?—That is what it amounts to.

F-1061. What proportion of *sardars* have you lost in that way?—Last year we lost 65. The year before, of the 214 who were sent down, 181 returned. In 1928 the figure was 33 and it was 65 last year.

F-1062. The proportion is about 1 in 7?—Of the total number sent down, yes.

F-1063. We have had a statement made in one quarter that one-third of the *sardars* sent down do not return?—Our percentage is not so big as that.

F-1064. You have a large proportion who do return?—Yes.

F-1065. Do those who do not return make a practice, from garden to garden, of taking advances and bonuses and really make themselves professional recruiters rather than tea garden workers?—Yes, there are a number of them who do that.

F-1066. You are quite sure about it?—Yes. But we hear of them and we can get our recruiting expenses. We can get from the garden where they have gone to as a new coolie our recruiting expenses if we can trace the coolies.

F-1067. You mean that a certain number of so-called *sardars* go without any intention of trying to recruit any one for the garden by whom they have been sent?—That is the impression which one gets.

F-1068. They take the money, and then get themselves recruited as new coolies. They go down as *sardars*, and then to another garden as new coolies, and promptly become *sardars* for that garden, and so on?—Yes.

F-1069. How many cases of that kind have you known?—I mean actual cases and not mere impressions?—There are a good many. I could not give you the number. We had one instance this year. In some years there would probably be three or four.

F-1070. Have you got the particulars of those cases?—I should have to turn up the names, but I could let you have the names. There might only be just a few. I do not say that there are many who make a practice of doing it.

F-1071. It is rather important that we should quite understand where this great leakage of *sardars* arises. It looks absurd on the face of it that the tea industry as a whole in Assam should be sending out 40,000 *sardars* and that those 40,000 *sardars* should only produce one recruit each on the average. It looks as though no businessman would long sustain a system of that kind. Therefore we are anxious to know where the leakage occurs. One statement put before us is that one-third of the *sardars* do not return, and they simply take it as a method of repatriation at the Company's expense. You tell us that your leakage is much less than that—1 in 6 or 7. However, even here you say you do know of some cases where there has grown up what I may call a professional *sardar* turning himself over and over again, making his money not out of hoeing tea, but out of the practice of going down as a *sardar* and coming back as a new coolie?—I think there are cases like that.

F-1072. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you know of more than one case?—We have had three cases in a year either of people who should have come here but have gone elsewhere or of people who should have gone elsewhere but have come here. I think you will find that this is so on a number of tea gardens; but that would not account for all the leakage.

F-1073. *The Chairman*: We have heard of men being sent down after a fortnight. In the case of this particular garden do you ever send a *sardar* down who has only been a few weeks here?—Only in exceptional cases. As a rule we try to keep them for a year, in order to let them see what the conditions are before sending them down.

F-1074. Suppose a man says, "I want to go down and fetch my wife and children," after he has been here a month; would you let him go and give him a license?—Yes.

F-1075. He may turn out to be one of those frauds?—We try to check it by asking other people who have been down there.

F-1076. With regard to the three cases which you mentioned a moment ago, how long were those coolies on the garden before they were sent down?—They were all comparatively new coolies who had worked for abour a year or possibly a little under. They were not old coolies.

F-1077. We have been told that in some cases coolies who have only worked for a few weeks and who have asked to go down as *sardars* have been sent down as *sardars*. That is not the case here?—Only exceptionally.

F-1078. That is to say, where you feel confident that it is a genuine case of a man wanting to go to bring back his relatives?—Yes.

F-1079. Do you have many cases here of people who find the life not to their liking and who desire to return to their own country?—No, we have not many cases of people wanting to return to their country. There are a certain number who apply for permission to go out into the *busti* to settle down.

F-1080. To take up land and be independent?—Yes.

F-1081. Those are the ones who have saved money?—Yes, old coolies.

F-1082. Take these 300 odd coolies whom you have recruited in the last two years. How many of those do you expect to make permanent settlers on your estate here?—It is difficult to say. It varies from year to year. I should say about 70 per cent.

F-1083. What happens to the other 30 per cent.?—They drift away, or go down as *sardars* and do not return.

F-1084. You are not conscious of having men who are here against their will?—Not that I know of.

F-1085. Supposing you became aware of any family who were unhappy or uncomfortable here and who would rather be back in their own country. What would happen to them?—They would have to pay their own way down, I presume. They would leave the garden.

F-1086. If a man applied to go as a *sardar* what would happen?—He would go down as a *sardar*.

F-1087. *Mr. Cliff*: With his wife and family?—It depends.

F-1088. *The Chairman*: Do you ever send a man with his wife as *sardars*?—Yes. Sometimes they go down with a special license—what we call "*policy wallahs*"; that is to say, people who want to go back to their own country at the Company's expense and who are not really *bona fide* recruiters. They go down with this license with liberty to stay there if they wish to.

F-1089. On one of two grounds—either that they were improperly induced to come here or that they are unsuited to the life on the tea gardens?—Yes.

F-1090. Is the license a magistrate's license?—We send them down as *sardars*. They get the ordinary license. We send them down as "*policy wallahs*" with instructions to the local Agent that if they want to return they can do so, and bring coolies. They can recruit. If they do not want to come back they stay down there.

F-1091. That is your mode of repatriation?—Yes.

F-1092. Is that peculiar to your garden or is it general?—That is general.

F-1093. Does that mean that any family who find themselves unhappy here can go back and are not kept in any way against their will?—Yes, that would be the chief reason. If a family have been here for some time and have been good workers and they come to me and say, "We want to go back to our country. Give us a license. We will go down. If we do not like it we will come back," on that understanding they go down as "*policy wallahs*."

F-1094. *Mr. Cliff*: Take the case of a man who has been here 12 months and is quite unhappy?—It is not the general rule to send him down as a "*policy wallah*."

F-1095. You say he either drifts into a *busti* or finds his own way back?—Yes.

F-1096. *The Chairman*: You are, no doubt, aware that in the recruiting districts there is still lingering a considerable prejudice against coming to Assam. You have been in the tea industry a long time and you know how long prejudices remain, in country districts particularly. We have been told that one cause of the prejudice against coming to Assam is that it is such a long way off, and that if

people's relatives come here they are lost and they will never hear of them again. I asked one of your men just now if he had written to his wife during the 11 months he had been here. He said he had sent her Rs. 10, but had not written to her; nor had she written to him. We know that they cannot read or write, but surely there could be means by which the management of a garden could keep these people here in contact with those whom they had left behind?—A great many of them do correspond.

F-1097. Through your office?—Some of them, and others through people in the lines who can write.

F-1098. Would it not be a good thing, and make for the contentment of the people, and also for the good of recruiting, if the management took a particular interest in maintaining touch between the people who come here and their villages, especially in the first year or two?—I think it would be a good thing.

F-1099. It seems to us rather a serious thing not to have heard from your wife for 11 months?—I suppose they do hear. There is a big movement up and down. There is a good deal of information going up and down all the time by the *sardars*.

F-1100. No doubt there is, but might it not be worth while for the garden itself to encourage new recruits particularly to correspond with their relatives and to ask them if they have written to their wives telling them how nice it is here, and to give facilities for having letters written at your own expense?

Mr. Beddow: I have tried that on my gardens. I have engaged men who can write in two or three different languages. Not a great number of the coolies avail themselves of that opportunity of writing. I was of your opinion, Sir, that if they had facilities either through the garden office or through the management they would probably avail themselves of it and write many letters. I tried it for two or three years, but on the whole very few letters were written.

F-1101. *Mr. Cliff*: Would not there be a disinclination on the part of most workers to have their employers write their letters for them?—There are many writers in the lines who do it for them.

F-1102. *The Chairman*: You have told us in effect that the coolies who work here for any length of time sufficiently long to be sure whether they are or are not suited to the work, have an oppotunity in one way or another of getting back to their country if they feel that they are not likely to become settlers here?—Yes.

F-1103. Would you, as an experienced tea planter, have any objection to having that the general rule, namely, that after three years, say, there should be the right of repatriation at the Company's expense to anybody who really felt themselves unsuited or unhappy, or for any reason desired to return home. That would surely at one stroke remove all the lingering prejudices there are, and lead to a largely increased flow of recruits to Assam. Would there be any objection to that from the planters' point of view?—There would be none at all. In fact it is being passed by our agency that people can be repatriated after three years. That goes down in our question sheets every year to the recruiting offices.

F-1104. That a coolie may be repatriated at his own request?—Yes, after three years.

F-1105. That is so in your case, is it?—Yes. The three years are not yet up since that was started. It was started about two years ago.

F-1106. Have you a copy of your question sheet?—From what we hear in the recruiting districts there undoubtedly seems to be that prejudice against coming here, partly due to the distance, and partly due to the unhealthy conditions in days gone by before sanitation was taken up by the tea gardens. I want to ask you, as a practical man, whether you do not think that what I have suggested would be to the mutual advantage of every body?—I think that a freer movement of labour would be to the advantage of Assam.

F-1107. And if that were done successfully for a period of years you might attain the ideal, which I think every body holds, of having a complete and free flow of labour in future, which appears to be impossible at present?—Yes, that would be so.

F-1108. It is recommended in many cases, and I think by your Association, that there should be established another system of recruiting, parallel with the *Sardar* system, not doing away at one fell stroke with the *Sardar* system, but allowing authorised and responsible agents in the recruiting districts to recruit, under the same condition that their licenses may be cancelled by the Provincial Government in case of any misconduct, and that they may be under the same general rules as the *Sardars* are. Do you not think that that would enable you gradually to diminish and perhaps to dispense with the expense of the *Sardar* system?—I think it would.

F-1109. Would you have any objection to that system being brought into operation and, for a time, running parallel with the *Sardar* system, and, in the course of a few years possibly, taking the place of the *Sardar* system?—No.

F-1110. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the arrangement about the Rs. 12 bonus which the workers have just told us about?—We call it an attendance bonus. It is given at the expiry of 12 months.

F-1111. Every 12 months?—Yes.

F-1112. What is the standard of attendance?—There is no standard. It is given at the expiry of the 12 months.

F-1113. *The Chairman*: What is the standard of regularity?—It is just given at the end of the year.

F-1114. *Mr. Cliff*: Does every worker get Rs. 12?—Yes. We could give it. If a man is a bad worker we can say "We are not going to give you the bonus."

F-1115. Do you give every worker a bonus of Rs. 12?—Every worker who applies for it. He has to come up and apply for it. The workers come to the office and write their names in the books, and it is paid to them on a certain day every month.

F-1116. Were there a number of workers last year who did not get the bonus?—Yes.

F-1117. Why did they not get it?—Because they did not apply for it. They did not want it.

F-1118. Why did they not apply for it?—I do not know.

F-1119. Do they know about it?—Of course they do.

F-1120. Surely any body who knows that there are Rs. 12 waiting in the office for him will make an application?—Whether they think they are under an obligation or not I cannot say.

F-1121. *The Chairman*: That is the point?—They are under no obligation. They are told that it does not make any difference whether they take the bonus or not. Some of them prefer not to take it.

F-1122. *Mr. Cliff*: Are they left with the idea that if they take a bonus at the end of 12 months they are here for another year?—That idea has come forward from the old days when they were under an actual agreement. They probably still have that idea at the back of their minds.

F-1123. We have been told that many of the workers do not realise that the *girmit* has gone?—A certain number suppose that it has not gone. They feel they are under some obligation. On the other hand, take another garden which I superintend. There the workers get a monthly bonus of Re. 1 if they work 20 days a month. Some of them will not take the trouble to come up and take the bonus at the end of the month.

F-1124. Is it paid without application?—They have to come up for it.

F-1125. Do you not pay it at the same time as you pay the wages?—If they claim it.

F-1126. Surely they come up for their wages?—There is a special night for paying this bonus. If they do not want it it is no use shoving it upon them.

F-1127. It appears to me that they cannot know about it?—They do.

F-1128. I have never met any human being who has not been "after the carrot." I cannot understand it. Can you help us about it?—I cannot. I only heard of it the other day as a matter of fact.

F-1129. Have your people ever been told by the management that the agreement system has gone?—No. They know it quite well themselves.

F-1130. *Mr. Clow*: Is it not incredible that if the men realize that there is no shadow of an obligation or anything else attached to the twelve rupees that they will not take it?—I should take it.

F-1131. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can you give us any reason why a man who knows that he is entitled either to a bonus of Re. 1 a month, or to Rs. 12 at the end of the year, should not come up and take it?—I cannot give you any reason. Probably if you sent a man to the lines with the bonus and told them it was *bakshis* they would still shake their heads and say they did not want it.

F-1132. That shows that there still survives amongst the workers the idea that the taking of the bonus means that they are under obligation to serve another year?—There is no reason why there should be. It has been explained to them often enough.

F-1133. You just said that you have never told them anything about it?—They have been told that they are under no obligation. In the olden days there was an agreement which they were obliged to sign, but since 1913 that agreement has been done away with and they have never been given papers to sign and therefore they know now that it is not an agreement but a bonus.

F-1134. That does not explain why a man does not come up for his Rs. 12?—They were under an obligation at one time, and they are still of the opinion that the bonus puts them under an obligation.

F-1135. *Mr. Clow*: Do you not take a thumb impression as a receipt?—There is a thumb impression taken at the depôt for the money.

F-1136. *Mr. Cliff*: Do they give a thumb receipt for their wages?—No.

F-1137. Just for the bonus?—Yes.

F-1138. *Miss Power*: You do not take a thumb impression for the wages?—No.

F-1139. Why do you take a thumb impression for the bonus?—I cannot say.

Miss Power: Surely the implication to the worker of a thumb impression for the bonus is that he is committing himself to another year's work on receipt of the bonus.

Col. Garbett: May I give you an instance. My bearer came to me for more pay. He was already rather highly paid and I said to him: "I give you quite enough. Have you taken your bonus this year?" He replied that he had not. I said "Why not? The Company is prepared to give you Rs. 12. You will not take it. Why ask me for more money." He said "I do not want to take it." I said "It does not make any difference to you. There is no obligation." I made him thoroughly understand that. His answer was "I get big pay from you. I am a big man and I am not going to lower myself by taking this bonus."

But that argument does not apply to a coolie, does it?—I think it does apply to some. It may apply to people who are well off, and those are mostly the people who do not get agreements.

F-1140. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can you give us the percentage of the workers who have not drawn the monthly bonus due to them and also the total number who have not drawn the yearly bonus when that was due to them, say, for the last three years?—We could get that figure.

F-1141. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there much *ticca* work on this estate?—It is practically all *ticca* work in a way. The coolie gets into the habit of earning so much and when he has earned that amount he goes home.

F-1142. How do you pay them?—We pay them on the unit system. A unit is one anna.

F-1143. A man who earns 4 annas does four units and the man who earns 8 annas does eight units?—Yes.

F-1144. Whether the man understood the question or not I do not know, but when I asked him he said he earned Rs. 3 a week, which is 8 annas a day?—We try to get new coolies to earn 8 annas, but they do not all do it.

F-1145. Is that including *ticca*?—Yes.

Mr. Cliff: This man said he had not been asked to do any *ticca*.

F-1146. *Mr. Clow*: Do you have any *faltu* labour?—No.

F-1147. *Mr. Cliff*: Would it be possible for you to give us an abstract of the number of days worked, with the earnings?—For 1929 it worked out at 20 days each per month.

F-1148. Have you got the earnings?—No, but it would not take very long to get them. (See Q. No. F-1152.)

F-1149. *The Chairman*: What is the explanation of that low number of days per month?—They just take a rest.

F-1150. They could work 26 days a month?—Yes. They could work 6 days a week every week.

F-1151. Therefore they take those 6 days off in addition to Sundays?—Yes, on the average.

F-1152. Are the *Sardars* who are away recruiting included in that figure?—Yes. I have now the figures for the earnings. Taking October, the average pay for the men was Rs. 10-9-10; for the women Rs. 10-3-6; for the boys Rs. 7-6-7; and for the girls Rs. 7-1-10. For September the figures are:—men Rs. 9-8-6; women Rs. 9-8-9; boys Rs. 6-7-11, and girls Rs. 5-9-2.

F-1153. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can you give us for the last 12 months the total population on the garden, the total working force on the garden, and the hours of work, and payment?—The hours of work are what they make themselves, with the exception of plucking time. In plucking time they are rung in at 4 o'clock and they go out whenever they like. I now have the figures about the agreement. There are under agreement 1,200 men and 1,153 women. There are 308 men and 324 women not under contract.

F-1154. *Mr. Cliff*: What do the phrases "under agreement" and "not under contract" mean?—"Under contract" is what we call attendance bonus.

F-1155. Can you show to us the form on which they put their thumb print?—It is just a plain foolscap book.

F-1156. *Miss Power*: Have you a school on the tea garden?—Not on this garden. We have two schools on the other division.

F-1157. How many children are there on this garden?—About 800.

F-1158. Is there any school available for the children of this garden?—Yes. There is a Government School just down the road and another one within a short distance.

F-1159. How many of the children come to those schools?—I do not know.

F-1160. Does the Management encourage the parents to send their children to those schools?—No; there are schools on the other division to which they are encouraged to go. Not many take advantage of them. We have had schools here, and have put in teachers and fitted up the schools, but they have never been attended sufficiently well to give the management much encouragement.

F-1161. *Col. Russell*: What was your birth rate last year?—The birth rate was 45·04 per thousand and the death rate was 22·12 per thousand. That is for this garden.

F-1162. What are the chief diseases you suffer from in this garden?—Nothing in particular—a little fever.

F-1163. There is not very much malaria here?—Not a great deal.

F-1164. Do you insist on your Baboos registering every birth and death?—Yes.

F-1165. Do you check them up?—Yes. The register is signed by me every month.

F-1166. Are you satisfied that every birth and death is recorded?—Yes, the Doctor sees to that.

F-1167. Have you a hospital and beds in it?—Yes.

F-1168. Do the workers make use of the dispensary?—Yes.

F-1169. They have no objection to going to hospital?—No, they are well looked after in that respect.

F-1170. Can you give the number of children under one year of age who died last year?—You will get that from the statistics which we send in monthly to the Government.

F-1171. *The Chairman*: What proportion of your people here have *khet* land. I gather that you have not enough for all of them?—We have not as much as we would like to, but we have quite a lot. 482 *Purras* (that is an acre and a quarter to a *Purra*) of *khet* land are cultivated by 1,042 tenants.

Mr. Cliff: Is any new land available?—No. It has all been opened up.

(The witness withdrew.)

ASSAM.

Fiftieth Meeting.

JORHAT.

Thursday, the 9th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
MR. JOHN CLIFF.	

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA. .. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
LT.-COL. H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budla Beta Tea Co., Ltd. }

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN .. .. *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN .. .. }

Mr. L. N. SARMA, Manager of the Rowriah Tea Estate (near Jorhat).

F-1172. *The Chairman*: For how long have you been the Manager of this Estate?—For the last 7 years.

F-1173. What is the total population on the Estate?—The total number of souls is 372; the labourers are 234.

F-1174. That is workers: men, women and children?—Yes.

F-1175. Will you tell us about your recruiting during the last two years, how many *sardars* you sent and how many recruits you got?—In the season 1927-28 I sent 10 *sardars* who brought me 21 souls. In the season 1928-29 I sent out 13 *sardars* who brought me 22 souls.

F-1176. Do any of your *sardars* not come back again?—Yes.

F-1177. What is your loss in *sardars* who do not come back again?—Four *sardars* did not return last year and they are not likely to return. I lose the man's service and the expense that is incurred in bringing him here as a labourer, and also the expense in sending him again as a *sardar*.

F-1178. They have become *sardars* because they wanted to get back to their own country at your expense?—That might be their idea, but it was not known to me when they were sent out.

F-1179. Could you employ more labourers on your estate if you could get them?—Yes.

F-1180. How many more could you employ?—I could employ up to 300 labourers in the garden for the present planted area.

F-1181. As compared with the 234 that you have?—Yes.

F-1182. That is to say you could do with another 65 labourers if you could get them?—Yes.

F-1183. Have you ever found men going as *sardars* and then getting re-enlisted for other gardens, making a profession of being *sardars*?—Yes, I have.

F-1184. To what extent?—I had a case of that kind in the season 1923-24; a man came originally to the Hautley Tea Garden as a labourer and then went out as a recruiting *sardar;* then from that district he came to this garden as a labourer and from here he returned as a recruiting *sardar.* Somehow in the recruiting depôt he was caught; a Hautley *sardar* there recognized him and got him back to Hautley. Cases of that kind occur; in that case he was detected; there may be other cases which are not detected.

F-1185. Do you find the system of recruiting by *sardars* very expensive?—Yes, I think it is expensive; in the year in which we got 21 souls we had 10 *sardars* and the expenses per head were Rs. 115-15-3; we had 13 *sardars* in the year we got 22 souls and the expenses were Rs. 120-4-5 per head. That is the expense per soul; the average may include infants of 3 or 4 years, or even a mere birth.

F-1186. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Did you recruit them through the Indian Tea Association?—Yes.

F-1187. You are a member of the Association?—Yes.

F-1188. *The Chairman:* Have you considered any improved form of recruiting in addition to the *sardar* system? Your Association appears to be in favour of allowing an additional form of recruiting apart from the *sardars;* you have not considered that personally?—I have not considered it personally, but what I feel is that we ought to be in closer touch with the recruiting districts than we are now. We send our *sardars* to the depôt and they go to villages 7 or 8 days' journey from the depôt; if a *sardar* in whom I may be particularly interested is not coming back, I cannot get the man in charge of the depôt to make enquiries about him; They sometimes send a peon but that does not help very much.

F-1189. Then you would be in favour of having responsible recruiting agents in the recruiting areas who were not *sardars*?—Yes, if that is possible I am in favour of that.

F-1190. If a system of that sort were established do you think it would save you the present very high expense of sending out *sardars* many of whom do not bring back recruits at all?—The result of such a system would have to be seen, but I hope it would improve matters.

F-1191. Of your average labour force you lose a certain number who go as *sardars* and do not return?—Yes. The number of *sardars* not returned during the last five seasons was 11.

F-1192. What is the average loss per year which you need to make up, apart from deaths, to maintain your labour force; do you lose 30 or 40 in the year?—In my case the figure is not so large; it is 18 or 20.

F-1193. You lose 18 or 20 on the average in a year?—Yes.

F-1194. And you do not know where they have gone?—In many cases we do not know; when they go to neighbouring gardens of course we get them returned if we know. This applies to absconders and not to *sardars* not returned from district.

F-1195. But still you have a certain loss of 18 or 20 a year unaccounted for?—Yes, we have always losses like that.

F-1196. I suppose those are people who do not find the life on the tea garden to their liking and they go off somewhere?—Generally we find the people who do not like to settle on the tea garden go out; they are the kind of people who come from the depôt as single men. Those who come with families do not generally abscond from the garden after they once come.

F-1197. We found in the recruiting districts that people still think that Assam is a very long way away and there is a distinct reluctance to come to Assam because they think if they once get here they are lost. Now if they had the right of going home if they did not find the conditions suitable, do you not think that would substantially increase your flow of recruits and bring a better quality of recruit?—My idea is that coolies who really want to labour for their living do not like to leave Assam when once they come. I cannot give you a definite reply to your question. Coolies when they come here do not generally consider that the life in their own country is better than here.

F-1198. Once they have got over the first stages of settling in what to them is a new country, you find them happy?—Yes, that is my opinion; they generally find the conditions prevailing here in Assam better than the conditions in their own country.

F-1199. If once you could overcome the reluctance to make the plunge you would get a freer flow of recruits, and any losses that you might have then of people who did not find the life to their liking would be unimportant?—But I think it is better to have coolies willing to settle on the garden; they are more useful than those who are coming and going.

F-1200. *Mr. Cliff:* If you send a *sardar* down into a given district and he approaches a man to come to Assam, that man's friends say to him: "Do not go to Assam because if you do we shall lose you for ever"; and so the Chairman suggests: supposing the *sardar* made it known to the man that if he did not like it, after a given period he would have his fare to come back to his home, that that was a legal right he would have, then his friends would not be able to say to him: "You will be lost for ever." Do you think that would be a help in recruiting labour?—I have not considered that yet, but I do not think it would help very much. This is a small concern and my recruiting is mostly in connection with Sambalpur; the *sardars* do misrepresent things there. Personally I am quite prepared to offer that repatriation as a term and sometimes I do repatriate the coolies, though, of course, that is not general. For instance, there was a woman who came from Madras; I learned that the *sardar* bringing her made certain misrepresentations to her. She was not satisfied with the conditions here and was always complaining. I sent her with an escort back to her home. Personally I am quite prepared to offer coolies repatriation.

F-1201. *The Chairman:* And would you think that three years would be a reasonable period in which they might have an opportunity of becoming used to the new life here and in which they could make up their minds whether they would become settlers here or not?—I think it should not be less than three years.

F-1202. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* You say the *sardars* in some cases misrepresent things; apart from the particular case you have mentioned, are there any other cases which you have noticed of misrepresentation?—No. In that case the only evidence I had of misrepresentation on the part of the *sardar* was the statement of the woman herself.

F-1203. Do you find that the new recruits who come in usually come in from the same villages as those from which your old recruits have come?—The *sardars* generally bring their own people from their own villages.

F-1204. What are the average earnings of your recruited workers here?—We have to make bi-annual returns as to that. In my case in September 1929 the average earnings were: men Rs. 12-11 per month, women Rs. 10-7-7, children Rs. 9-10-2, and in March Rs. 10-11-3, Rs. 6-6-6 and Rs. 4-9-6, respectively. Labourers are also supplied with rice at concessional rates, and loss suffered by estate on this account in 1928 and 1929 was Rs. 1,183 and Rs. 670, respectively.

F-1205. At the end of a year, after they have paid for their rice, clothing, etc., is there much of a margin left to enable them if they wish to leave here and get back to their homes at their own expense?—I think there are coolies who have some funds after meeting their expenses.

F-1206. *The Chairman:* In addition to those earnings have they paddy land?—Yes, we give them paddy land, charging them the same rent as we have to pay to Government. In some cases we give them land free; for instance, we let them have the low land intervening between the tea lands; they have to clean that land up before they can cultivate it. If they did not clean up that land we should have to clean it up, and so we give them those lands free.

F-1207. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Out of your 234 workers how many have paddy land of their own?—If they are willing they can have it; I have sufficient land to give them, but at present I do not think there are more than 20 or 15 houses with land.

F-1208. Would a system of labour exchanges spread out in the recruiting districts be of assistance to you, in preference to the present system of sending out *sardars* every time you want to recruit? The labour exchanges would be constantly in touch with the labour supply. If you had a series of offices in your recruiting districts and you could communicate your requirements with those offices, would that assist you more than the present system?

The Chairman: If you have not considered it, just say so?—I have not considered it.

F-1209. *Mr. Clow:* Under the *girmit* a bonus of Rs. 12 is given?—Yes.

F-1210. Do all your coolies take it, or do some not take it?—Generally all of them take it; when they come for the bonus we pay it. Nobody refuses to take it.

F-1211. Do you take a receipt from them at the time of taking it?—No. Formerly we had a proper stamped form.

F-1212. I mean simply in the register?—Now we do not keep any register. A register is meant to be kept, and is in preparation.

F-1213. Do you not take an acknowledgment from them, —their thumb impression?—There is no use in it and we do not take it.

F-1214. The coolies inform me that when you give them what they call the *girmit*, you take a thumb impression in a book?—The practice is now discontinued because we found there was no use in it; we used to take their impression although we know it is not a binding document.

F-1215. If you knew it was not really effective, why did you take it?—It is only from the 1st January of this year that we have abolished taking their thumb impression on the form.

F-1216. Then why did you continue it after the Act had ceased and it had no binding effect?—To tell you frankly, when anything new is introduced among the coolies it is very difficult to get them accustomed to it: that is the only reason. We had no idea of bringing a case against them. They would consider it a hardship if the amount were not paid.

F-1217. But if you had given them the amount without taking their thumb impression, they would not have considered it a hardship; why did you take the thumb impression for this payment?—Because that was the practice; they are used to doing that, and for us it serves as a voucher for the payment.

F-1218. *The Chairman:* I understand you ceased taking the thumb impression a week ago?—Yes. I have explained to the coolies that it has no force. We have never paid that Rs. 12 as a *girmit;* it has always been paid as a bonus, even when the *girmit* was in force.

F-1219. What do you call the Rs. 12; do you call it an attendance bonus?—It was called *girmit* bonus. We are now trying to forget it.

F-1220. *Sir Alexander Murray:* You say you have stopped since the 1st January?—Yes, taking the thumb impression on the form.

F-1221. Have you paid any bonuses since the 1st January?—No.

F-1222. During last year, 1929, how many of your workers who were due to take the bonus of Rs. 12, did not take it?—Without counting I cannot say.

F-1223. Is the bonus given to encourage them to work in the ensuing year or is it given for good work in the past year?—No, it is merely continuing the practice.

F-1224. What does the coolie think when he gets the Rs. 12; does he think it is for next year or what?—He thinks he is being paid bonus in advance.

F-1225. *The Chairman:* What was the reason that led you to decide to discontinue this from the 1st January?—Because the matters which are stated in the old form are no longer in force.

F-1226. But they have not been in force for a number of years; did you continue to use this old form?—Yes; sometimes the thumb impression is taken but the form is not filled in.

F-1227. Then you think your coolies quite understand that the acceptance of this Rs. 12 does not imply any obligation on their part?—Yes, I think they understand that; I have personally explained it to most of them.

F-1228. *Sir Alexander Murray:* You are a member of the Indian Tea Association?—Yes.

F-1229. Did the Association ever issue any circular to its members saying that Act XIII had been abolished and that you should not get agreements signed any longer?—Yes, I have read the circular, only lately.

F-1230. *Mr. Clow:* Do you pay annas 4 to a man for the *hazira* and annas 4 for the *ticca*?—Yes.

F-1231. At what rate do you pay the adult men for hoeing?—Generally it is Rs. 7 a month wages and there are extra earnings besides that. For that Rs. 7 there is a fixed task in the morning; they have to do 10 *nals* in the particular hoeing you saw in the morning, except Sundays, in order to earn that Rs. 7 a month; those who turn out in the afternoon will have another easier task for which they will receive annas 4.

F-1232. Does the *sardar* get any commission on what they do?—Yes.

F-1233. What does he get?—In my case for hoeing he will get annas 2 for every rupee's worth of work.

F-1234. Does he get any pay in addition?—Yes, one gets Rs. 10 and the other Rs. 11.

F-1235. How does the *sardar* get the men to come out and work?—They generally come out at their own time; we have not much trouble about that. Of course, we have to look after some lazy people who do not like to come out.

F-1236. How do you induce them to come out?—Some of our men go there and get them out.

F-1237. *Sir Alexander Murray:* How many souls have you working?—234, which includes absentees who are not always at work.

F-1238. How many *sardars* have you now working?—I have 5 *sardars.*

F-1239. *The Chairman:* Does the *sardar* get a fixed pay?—Yes.

F-1240. In addition to the annas 2 per rupee of work done?—Yes.

F-1241. *Sir Alexander Murray:* What do you pay your 5 *sardars;* that is to say, the fixed pay and then the commission?—Two get Rs. 11 each and another 3 get Rs. 10 each. The tea house *sardar* gets Rs. 16 a month, with Rs. 10 to 15 as *bakshish* at the end of the season. The *sardars,* like other labourers, are also given what is now called working bonus of Rs. 12.

F-1242. You said the *sardars* get in addition commission; what would their commission amount to?—In one week in November two *sardars* got Rs. 5-13 between them.

F-1243. That would make nearly Rs. 3 per week per *sardar?*—Yes.

F-1244. So that he would get Rs. 12 a month in addition to his Rs. 11?—Yes; he may be making more or less.

F-1245. Then he would be getting about Rs. 23 a month?—In the plucking season they get much more.

F-1246. The coolie gets annas 4 for hoeing in the morning and annas 4 in the afternoon, which is annas 8, and he works about 26 days a month?—Yes.

F-1247. So that the coolie can earn Rs. 13 a month if he likes to work?—Yes, he can get even more. He can earn annas 8 a day in addition to his *hazira* earnings in the morning but we generally find them only doing annas 4 or annas 6 worth of work for their extra earnings, except in plucking when all people can and do earn much more than annas 8 as extra.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. F. McALLISTER, General Manager, The Assam Oil Company, Limited, Digboi.

F-1248. *The Chairman:* For the purpose of record may I ask you how long you have been the General Manager of the Assam Oil Company at Digboi?—Four years.

F-1249. We are interested in particular about your labour force and your methods of recruitment. You tell us in your memorandum that your company now employs about 8,000 men, 300 women and 200 boys, and that "applicants for work apply to the Labour Bureau." Will you tell us shortly as to whether you have an ample supply of labour; how you obtain this large force of 8,000 men, 300 women and 200 boys; do you send out to recruit, or do they come to you in all the numbers that you require?—Some years ago we had to recruit, but we stopped actual recruiting, except in isolated cases, about three years ago, and the labour generally is now plentiful. There is no occasion for recruiting whatsoever except in very isolated cases, and we have established a labour bureau where applicants for work are registered and in rotation are offered work when vacancies occur.

F-1250. Take these large numbers of people who come to you, 2,450 from Bengal and 1,200 from United Provinces. Do those come of their own accord to apply for work?—Yes.

F-1251. You send out no *sardars* or recruiters?—No.

Can you tell the Commission to what you attribute the fact that you are able to obtain this labour, some of it from considerable distance, without any method of *sardars*?—One must only conclude that the conditions as regards pay and otherwise are such as to induce the people to come from those distances; I can offer no other explanation.

F-1252. Do these people pay their own travelling expenses to come to you?—They do.

F-1253. From what part of Bengal do they come?—Mostly from Chittagong; as a matter of fact, most of these 2,450 men are Chittagonians.

F-1254. And the 1,200 that come from the United Provinces, what type of men are those?—They are mostly from Gorakhpur.

F-1255. May I take it that you have really more men applying for work than you have work for them?—At the present time, yes.

F-1256. What do they do in the meantime?—As far as we know, nothing. They hang around waiting for jobs. Actually, I am not particularly interested in people for whom we cannot find employment. We have no organization to handle such men. They are permitted, of course, to stay in the lines if their friends are willing to put them up.

F-1257. You say that a good deal of your labour is migrant labour and that they return to their villages. Do they return to their country for two months in the year and then come back to you again; is it a regular practice?—Yes, it is a regular practice.

F-1258. Do you regard that as absenteeism or as recognized leave?—We treat it as recognized leave provided they do not stay away for more than six weeks, which is the regulation period; if they stay away for a longer period they are generally scored off the books, and they re-apply for employment in the ordinary course.

F-1259. That six weeks is without pay, I presume?—Yes.

F-1260. But you have a considerable proportion who come back year after year taking that six weeks' recognized leave?—That is so.

F-1261. With regard to the conditions of pay which attract this ample supply of labour, I see that you say in your memorandum that " the average coolie wage is 14 annas a day. Semi-skilled and skilled workers obtain up to Rs. 3-8 a day according to their work and ability." It seems rather remarkable that 14 annas a day should enable a coolie to come and work and return at his own expense for six weeks to his country and then come back again to you, and to go through that process regularly?—Of course, I am speaking more or less generally. Statistics are not of such accuracy as would enable me to say quite categorically that they return to their country. What we possibly should have said is that they leave our employment. Where they go has been no particular concern of mine. They leave the service, they may do paddy work or any other sort of work, or may take rest in surrounding villages. I am afraid I am not in a position to say that they actually return to their country.

F-1262. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Will that apply to the United Provinces men also?—Yes; I am speaking of the labour force generally. I do not think we say definitely that the same people go every year and return every year. Actually that is not so. We may get some people staying for two years, but there is always a substantial percentage of people moving around.

F-1263. *The Chairman*: Your general practice is to allow six weeks' recognized leave during the year?—I would not put it that way either. If it is recognized leave in the sense that their names are not cut off the books the answer is in the affirmative.

F-1264. If they stay longer than six weeks, they are removed from the books, and if they come back again they are treated as newcomers?—That is precisely the position.

F-1265. Do you house them free?—Yes.

F-1266. With regard to education, will you tell us what you do for them in that respect?—I am afraid not a great deal. We have a girls' school and a boys' school, which up to five or six years ago was by no means popular. The school is of middle English grade, partially, although by no means generously, supported by Government. For many years there were only a few of the clerical staff's children who attended this school. However, in recent years there has been a more

organized drive to interest the labour force generally, and one class in particular, in education. Last year we extended the school building by approximately 100 per cent., and the pupils to-day are in the neighbourhood of 100 boys and possibly 70 girls.

F-1267. Does that mean that you and your staff have interested yourselves in endeavouring to get the children to go to school?—Yes. The General Manager of the Company or the Assistant General Manager is the president of the school committee and takes a personal interest in the school as much as time will permit.

F-1098. Would it not be a good thing, and make for the contentment of the Labour Superintendent who receives complaints from the men and investigates grievances. How long have you employed that officer?—Six years.

F-1269. Have you found that he is able to do much in the way of understanding the people and helping them in their troubles?—Yes. As a matter of fact, we have now two whole-time European Labour Superintendents employed on welfare work.

F-1270. Is their sole work to listen to the peoples' grievances?—One man's sole work is that. This Labour Bureau has been established for various purposes. All engagements, for instance, are made by the Labour Bureau.

F-1271. These two labour superintendents are part of the Labour Bureau?—Yes.

F-1272. They engage the labour for you, in the first instance?—Yes; or if there are no appointments vacant they will register applicants. In the event of any man being dismissed from any particular department, he has the right of direct entry to the Labour Superintendent for investigation of his grievances should he happen to have any or should he think he has any, and this is the idea in having the second man in the Labour Bureau. He is rather the labour man than the company's man; one might put it roughly that he is in the service of the company on behalf of the labour.

F-1273. He is really appointed by you as an advocate of the interests of the labour?—That describes it precisely.

F-1274. Does your company consider that this money is well spent?—I think so. With reference to your previous question to illustrate one item which would result to the benefit of the labourer, I might mention that we have on the staff, roughly speaking, 100 Europeans, and some of them, of course, are very junior in service; some of them hasty and some of them with an incomplete knowledge of the language. We have had the feeling that in many cases the labour—I am not speaking only of the coolies, I am speaking of the labour as a whole—has really had just grounds for complaint. But inasmuch as we had no organization to investigate those complaints, nor had the management time enough to enquire into them, we thought the time had come to increase the establishment to such an extent as would enable a man to give more or less all his time to the labour. Actually this latter part of the organization has only been functioning for some two months.

F-1275. To whom do your Labour Superintendents report?—Direct to me.

F-1276. So that I take it the purpose is to make a direct link between the rank and file of the workers and yourself?—One might describe it that way. Personally I hope that references to myself will be few and far between.

F-1277. I meant to the real director of the business?—I might add perhaps that the Senior Labour Superintendent has a certain amount of authority. Unless it is a particularly serious case which might result in friction between himself and the department dismissing the labourer, he shall have power to reinstate the labourer without reference to me.

F-1278. Then obviously you need a man of very high type to be able to fill a post of that kind?—That is so. The officer we have, I think, had four or five years' experience of labour conditions elsewhere.

F-1279. The real point is, I think, that when there is a large labour force amounting to 8,500 men, women and boys, you think it is well worth while to have a special officer whose whole-time is engaged in dealing with the personnel?—I think I might safely say yes.

F-1280. And that both you and your company are satisfied that that leads to the efficiency and the contentment of your labour force?—That is our belief.

F-1281. Does the Labour Superintendent also take an interest in the houses and in the education of the labour?—He does.

F-1282. Is that particularly in his province?—Yes.

F-1283. He attends then to any difficulties that may be in the houses?—He actually allocates the houses; the houses, as completed, are handed over to him. Even before the new Labour Superintendent was appointed, the housing was largely under the direction of the Labour Superintendent, but there was a certain amount of come and go with the general office, that is, with myself or one of my assistants in the main office. But since we have a better type of Labour Superintendent, a more educated man and a man of better social standing, his responsibilities have been increased, or rather the responsibilities of the post have been increased. As soon as a house is completed, the civil engineering department advises direct the labour department, sending me only a copy, that such and such a house is ready for occupation, and then the Labour Superintendent deals with the matter; he releases the congestion in other quarters or allocates as occasion demands. He also interests himself in games. He is a member of the school committee.

F-1284. Have you a provident fund?—Yes.

F-1285. Does he take a lead in that?—No; he has no more to do with the provident fund than any other official of the company has.

F-1286. Does the provident fund extend to the manual workers, or is it confined to the office?—It extends to all. The only limiting factor is that one should earn a minimum salary of Rs. 30 a month, so that although many of the artisans are members of the provident fund there are very few of the manual workers.

F-1287. Does the senior Labour Superintendent report periodically to you as the General Manager; does he make a formal report once a month or once in two months?—He actually reports quarterly, but we are more or less in constant communication on major matters; I do not worry about the routine work; that is his job. If there is any trouble, or any serious case for investigation, or any difficulties about housing, we consult.

F-1288. What I was wondering was if there was any formal report that he made, whether it might be useful to us as showing in some detail the kind of work which such a labour superintendent is occupied in doing?—There is an annual report in the course of preparation.

F-1289. Would it be possible for you to let us have a copy of it when it is prepared?—I think it is quite possible; I do not see any objection myself.

F-1290. *Mr. Cliff*: What was your approximate number of dismissals last year?—I do not know how that arises. Was that in the questionnaire?

It arises out of your remarks about the difference in human character between different departmental chiefs and the fact that your company has thought fit to appoint a man who should represent labour. How many dismissals did you have last year?—Dismissals are not considerable. As I have no books here, I cannot give the exact figures.

F-1291. Have you any idea of the number of cases of dismissals that have been preferred in the two months that this man has been operating?—That, again, I cannot tell you; probably very few, inasmuch as the two months that the new man has been operating have been employed in the reorganization of the department.

F-1292. In the case of the work that is to be done, with regard to the lodging of an appeal, the appeal lies with the chief labour officer?—Yes.

F-1293. Does it mean that the departmental chief is present during the hearing of an appeal?—The idea is that the labourer shall not be unduly embarrassed by the presence of his discharging official. The labour office is an open door, and I think the departmental official would merely come into the discussion if he discovered that this man was reinstated; he then might make a little trouble.

F-1294. It really means in effect that the chief labour officer can overrule the decision of a departmental chief?—That is correct; if, in his opinion, the dismissal stands on rocky foundations he can overrule the departmental man. The question, as I said before, in the event of serious trouble, would then come direct to me.

F-1295. Referring to housing, with regard to the expenditure that has to be incurred or has been incurred, is that dealt direct by the chief labour officer, or is that the function of the General Manager?—I might mention what would happen now in a case of this kind, and what has in fact already happened. The

Labour Superintendent after completing his rounds of the lines reports that the place is over-crowded; he carries his report a bit further and tells us that to overcome the difficulty he requires so many houses of this or that type. We have got standard plans of our quarters, and if anyone is interested in seeing the plan I can leave behind the drawing I have.

(*Col. Russell*: Yes, please.)

(The plan was handed in.)

The Witness: We have also put in the cost of various units. We then proceed to ask our London office for sanction, not for all his requirements because things change very rapidly. We may have 8,000 people to-day while we may have only 6,000 people to-morrow; I mean by that, two years hence the position of production may necessitate a reduction in establishment. To be quite frank, we are all hoping so. So that we merely cover so much as we can spend within a reasonable time. Let me illustrate that: We have now indicated to the Directors that on the basis of the present labour establishment we require something like Rs. 5¾ lakhs to cover the building programme. Without a very heavy increase in the number of contractors and without bricks you cannot build houses, the supply of good bricks in Assam, or at any rate in our part, is very limited; even the *kucha* bricks in such colossal quantities as we use them are very hard to get. So that I feel that the most we can hope to spend during 1930 would come to Rs. 2 lakhs, and I have asked for sanction of this amount. Whether I shall get it or not I do not know, but I think we will.

F-1296. Thirty per cent. of your workers are not housed. Is that margin left with a deliberate purpose, or is that due to your not being able to get as far as you would like to get?—The growth of the company has been greater than our ability to provide for everyone. In principle and in the light of our experience, we would prefer not only for the sake of control but for stability to have our force housed internally.

F-1297. Before leaving the question of labour force, how many years have passed since you had no difficulty in obtaining labour?—Roughly I should think four to five years. It has been improving steadily all the time, for what cause I cannot say. Whether it is due to better provision for houses, water, sanitation, medical attendance or otherwise, or whether the rates of pay are better in Assam in industrial undertakings than they are elsewhere, I am not in a position to say. But the fact remains that whereas, say, ten years ago it was extremely difficult to get labour, we find to-day that it is very easy. Another point which may contribute to some extent is that our difficulties, say five or six years ago, were generally with the lower classes of labour, that is with men handling material and such like. We have now a considerable amount of mechanical transport and mechanical appliances generally, so that our demand for the lower class of labour is diminishing in direct relation to the increase of mechanical appliances.

F-1298. Have you any idea of the approximate number of applicants you have on your register that might be called a live register?—To-day, I think, we probably have 700.

F-1299. Is there any alternative employment in the district?—Industrially as against agriculturally the only alternative employment is with the Assam Railway and Trading Company, who really control the D. S. R. and the coal mines at Margherita. That is the only outlet, beyond the tea gardens, requiring a fitter here or a fitter there; there is a very limited need for labour of this type.

F-1300. With regard to shift workers is there no provision for rest at all?—In some departments, I am afraid not, apart from time for food on the job.

F-1301. Could you tell us approximately the number of men who are under the Rs. 30 limit; or could you say the number who draw above Rs. 30?—I can get it for you. Again I prefer not to commit myself.

F-1302. Do you advance money?—We will advance, but the demand for advance is very limited.

F-1303. Is it an advance against wages?—Yes.

F-1304. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you give any holidays with pay to your workers?—The labour that we were now discussing is entitled to four days leave with pay in a year.

F-1305. If you grant them one month's leave in a year, as in the case of Government servants, they can go to their villages once a year and come back to you?—It is quite conceivable, but they do that now.

F-1306. When they come back to you, you treat them as new-comers?—That is correct.

F-1307. And therefore there is no continuity in their service and they cannot get any pension or gratuity?—The question of pension does not arise.

F-1308. Why?—Because we do not give any pension.

F-1309. Would it not be advisable to give pension to your workers?—We have a provident fund scheme, which admittedly does not cover people under Rs. 30 a month; the reason being that before one can receive the benefits of the provident fund he must have continuous service. I think that applies pretty well all the world over. In the case of the lower grades who leave service to suit their convenience, either for cultivation or otherwise, without any concern whether or not they are thereby inconveniencing the company, I think they are unfit to participate in such a scheme. If they have continuity of service we are quite prepared favourably to consider the lowering of the present minimum, but until such time as we can get that continuity we cannot but keep up to the present limit.

F-1310. *Miss Power*: I take it that the bulk of the people who come up are men who come without their families?—Now the tendency is for more married people to come. A few years ago there were very few people who brought their families.

F-1311. When you say married people, do you mean to say people who bring their families with them?—Yes. It has become more common. Actually, our provision under the new scheme, covers, I think, 30 per cent. married accommodation.

F-1312. Do you expect the number of coolies who settle down permanently to increase?—We are certainly hoping so, and a good deal of our expenditure is designed with that object in view.

F-1313. You said that you had 700 men on your labour books waiting for work. When you are selecting further people from these 700 you would, I take it, select as far as possible those who have brought their families, or who want to become permanently settled?—I should definitely say not at the present time; we would prefer single men at the present time inasmuch as we have not enough accommodation for men with families. Our quarters are definitely over-crowded, and there is no point in taking any more married people.

F-1314. If you had more quarters, I take it, you would reverse that policy in order to get a stable population?—Assuming always that money can be found. You are now examining the representative of a company which has not paid any dividend for the last nine years.

F-1315. *Mr. Clow*: To what class of your establishment does the Factories Act apply?—To the workshops only.

F-1316. Covering about what proportion of the labour?—The average for the last 11 months is 389.

F-1317. The rest of the establishment is subject to no regulation under any Act?—That is correct. By the way, the figure of 389 that I gave is for the workshops on the fields. There are men in the refinery, but I cannot give you their exact number at the moment; but probably it may be a couple of hundreds.

F-1318. Do you employ any women or children?—I think that has been answered. The numbers are negligible.

F-1319. Do you think there should be labour regulations applying to oil establishments, apart from the workshops?—I do not see any particular objection would be raised, but I do not know if there would be any great advantage. We are applying the Workmen's Compensation Act, whether by law we are responsible or not; for instance, if we lose a man we pay compensation to his family.

F-1320. That has been applied by notification to the more dangerous occupations?—Yes, that is so. But inasmuch as the Factory Act, to my mind, is largely a safety measure to ensure the safety of employees it stands to reason that, without the application of any Act since we pay compensation, we shall take all due precaution for the protection of the labour force.

F-1321. What is your difficulty in giving a weekly holiday to all your employees?—The work in certain departments must proceed. It is essentially continuous, and you cannot stop the process.

F-1322. Continuous work can be carried on, and is carried on, in many factories although a weekly holiday is given?—Any man may have a weekly holiday if he wishes it, but he will not be paid for it.

F-1323. But should not he be compelled to take it?—That would necessitate a large increase in one's labour force to cover that.

F-1324. You had a strike last year designed to secure Sunday holiday by some people?—I believe so; I was at Home then.

F-1325. Should it be taken that what you have told us applies solely to the Digboi oil fields or to all the branches of your company working in this province?—It applies to those in upper Assam.

F-1326. Not to those in the Surma Valley?—I have no connection with the Surma Valley.

F-1327. Can you tell us what the general rate of daily wage for unskilled labour in your vicinity is?—I can only make a guess. On paddy fields I might put it down at 12 annas. I have not sufficient knowledge of tea gardens to tell what is paid there.

F-1328. In your labour force are there men who were previously employed on tea gardens?—Yes.

F-1329. Are there many?—The representatives of tea would probably tell you more about that than I can.

F-1330. The mere fact that you know or suspect that a man has come from a tea garden would not prevent you from employing him?—I think it would prevent us. I think I must say a little more about that. At one time, as I have already explained, there was definitely a shortage of labour. Naturally, when there is a shortage of labour, anything on two legs counts for something. If labour came along, I do not think we put them through a very drastic cross-examination or asked too closely their antecedents. If we had reason to believe that they were connected with our next door neighbours we would not take them on. The position now really does not arise because we do not want them; we have no need for them. Mechanical methods have very largely eliminated the need for coolie labour. Our labour may really be divided under four heads: skilled labour, semi-skilled labour, labour of a type that we think may be potentially skilled or semi-skilled labour; there is a selection of the best applicants and we have, fourthly, the definitely unskilled labour which is becoming a smaller percentage of the whole. So that if our friends from the tea gardens came along now I think we would probably give them an examination that we did not give them five years ago.

F-1331. *The Chairman*: But you did build up part of your present labour force from tea garden recruited labour?—It is so said, but it is neither admitted nor believed to be substantially true.

F-1332. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do the figures of 8,000 men, 300 women and 200 boys include your contractors' labour?—No.

F-1333. How much contractor labour do you employ over and above those figures?—That varies very considerably according to the demand. At the present time we may have in the neighbourhood of 2,000 contractor labour. For instance, we have to do a large amount of earth cutting. Last cold weather we had 1,100 *Nunias* to do earth work alone; this year we have something like 150.

Who brought up these *Nunias*?—They came up themselves; we can get *Nunias* by the thousands.

F-1334. They cannot afford to come up by themselves by millions?—Contractors bring them up; all the earth work is under contract.

F-1335. When you want a contractor to excavate earth, or whatever it is, do you give the contractor an advance?—No. We would give him an advance if he wanted it.

F-1336. Your contractors who employ *Nunias* to the extent of 2,000 to 4,000 hands recruit their own labour?—That is so.

F-1337. Presumably they go down and attract the labour and pay all the expenses of these *Nunias*?—Yes.

F-1338. Can you tell us how many of your workers are skilled, semi-skilled, potentially skilled and unskilled?—No, I am afraid I cannot; I should require notice in order to answer that question. I have some figures here which I can leave behind if you are interested in them. These figures give the average number of the men employed and the full wages paid from January to November 1929. They are sub-divided not into classes but into departments. Roughly I think you might divide unskilled and skilled in the proportions of 75 and 25 per cent.; that figure is extremely rough and I give it with considerable reserve.

F-1339. Will you give us some further particulars later?—Yes, if you desire it

F-1340. How many of these workers are in the workshops, the refinery and the out-field?—We have two sets of shops, the field shops and the refinery shops. In the field shops we have 389 employed as against the outside engineering, which consists of fitters running round the field and doing repairs on the spot. Engaged in that work there are 939 on the average this year, and there are 2,031 workers on the average employed on drilling operations. The refinery workers are lumped together in the statement I have handed in and not split up into detail; there are 2,480 souls working in the whole refinery.

F-1341. They come under the Factories Act?—Subject to verification, I think only a section of the refinery comes under the Factories Act. That is a point I am not clear about. I think it is only the workshops and the tin factory that come under the Factories Act. I do not think the refinery is a shop; it is a distillation process. I estimate the number of men in the workshops to be about 200.

F-1342. You say that the coolie labour is migratory; frequently staying not more than six months. What percentage of the labour will be turning over?—We have no statistics unfortunately.

F-1343. Will you make a guess at it?—I think these guesses are distinctly dangerous.

F-1344. I agree with you. Will you send us your figures?—We have not got the statistics; we have got a labour bureau, but I do not say it is perfect.

F-1345. You definitely make the statement that coolie labour is migratory, frequently not staying more than six months?—Yes, and I believe that to be so. We can give you such figures as we have with pleasure.

F-1346. When any labour comes in do you ask them where they come from?—No, I do not think they will be asked where they come from.

F-1347. So that they may have come from Chittagong or anywhere else?—That is what I suggested to the Chairman a short time ago.

F-1348. You speak of your birth-rate being 3·3 per thousand. You say the female population is very small?—There are a great many women around Digboi.

F-1349. How is it that your birth-rate is so small as 3·3 per thousand if you have women in your coolie lines?—We only give the birth-rates for such children as come under our medical inspection—there may be any number of births originating from the employees of the Assam Oil Company of children who are brought into the world in the neighbouring villages.

F-1350. You say you house 70 per cent. of your labour?—Yes.

F-1351. And I think you said they brought up their wives?—Yes.

F-1352. If the birth-rate is only 3·3 per thousand there cannot be any women at all in your compounds?—Of the 2,450 people largely from Chittagong the percentage of women is practically negligible.

F-1353. Is your Labour Superintendent a highly paid officer?—He is paid Rs. 1,000 a month, with allowances.

F-1354. With regard to sickness insurance, you say full pay is given whilst in hospital and half pay whilst under treatment as out patients. Have you any figures which show what percentage of your 8,000 employees come into hospital and draw full pay and what percentage get half pay?—I have no doubt we have those records.

F-1355. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What were the causes of the last strike you had?—I think the major cause was the question of Sunday work.

F-1356. Did the workers present a list of their demands or grievances?—I do not think there was any actual list of their grievances; at all events I have not seen one. I know their main grievance was not so much the Sunday work because the people had worked on Sunday for many years, but the amount of the overtime paid for Sunday work.

F-1357. What was the result of the strike?—The result was that the point was conceded; or the major demand, which was for double pay for Sunday work was conceded and the people came back to work.

F-1358. Has an attempt ever been made to form a trade union by the workers?—Not by the workers, not to my knowledge; I have never been approached by any workers with regard to a trade union.

F-1359. You have mentioned workmen's compensation; how many accidents occurred last year?—I have no doubt we have statistics; I am afraid I have not them with me, but you can take them with pleasure.

F-1360. Can we also have a statement as to the amount paid in each case?—Certainly.

F-1361. Do you pay workmen's compensation in cases of coolies employed by contractors?—No, not always. We pay under cover of the Act. The Act in certain circumstances saddles not the contractor but the contractor's employer with the obligations of the Act. In those cases we pay. In other cases the contractor pays.

F-1362. Have you any figures as to the amounts paid to the contractor or the cases in which a contractor has paid anything?—I think it is unlikely, and I think perhaps the number is so small as to be completely negligible. The accidents do not occur in that particular branch.

F-1363. Are the children in your school mostly children of the clerks?—No, not now; it is becoming more general now. *Mistris*, fitters and the lower orders are now sending their children to school, though to a very limited extent.

F-1364. During the last few years have you had any other strikes on your works?—Yes, we had a little trouble in 1928, on much the same lines as last year's strike; it was again on the question of Sunday working, and its relation to pay. The arrangements with regard to overtime were strictly in accordance with the law which provided for time and a quarter. Work in this particular branch is possibly more arduous and certainly more dirty than the rest of the work. I am speaking now of the actual winning of oil in the fields. So far as money was concerned the strike was of minor importance. My own feeling was that time and a quarter was hardly a fair deal, so we conceded it without very much discussion beyond insisting upon the workers going back before we altered the terms to time and a half.

F-1365. You agree with me that it would be a good idea if there were a workers' organization; would you be averse to a union being set up by the workers?—If it is properly controlled and set up by our own workers there are no objections that I can see.

F-1366. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you charge rent for your houses?—No.

(The withness withdrew.)

Mr. D. S. WITHERS, Manager of Dessai and Parbattia Tea Company.

F-1367. *The Chairman*: I think you have had a very long experience in the management of tea gardens?—I have been in charge since 1908 as Manager. I have been in Tea since 1897.

F-1368. You have had 32 years' experience on the tea gardens?—Yes.

F-1369. Will you tell us the vital statistics of your gardens: the population, the number of souls, number of workers, figures as to births and deaths, and so on?—The total population is: male 1,032, female 882, children, that is to say, minors 1,750, making a total of 3,664. Our birth-rate per thousand per annum is 46·9; the death-rate is 31·3; the infantile mortality per thousand is 168·6· still born 12. The working force consists of: men 1,439, women 1,107, children 605, making a total of 3,151.

F-1370. What is the area?—1,413 acres under tea.

F-1371. What is the amount of other land?—1,793·90 acres.

F-1372. Have you got the area of paddy land and the number of labourers who hold paddy land?—476 acres held by 564 families.

F-1373. Have you enough paddy land for those workers who are willing to work it?—No, I have not enough. I have enough for roughly 60 per cent. of the labour.

F-1374. Presumably you give that land to those who have been longest with you?—Yes, the others have to wait their turn unless there is a man who has been thrifty, saved money and has a pair of buffaloes or bullocks; naturally one is inclined to help him as much as possible.

F-1375. We have been struck with the remarkable number of children about your estate?—In view of the recruiting difficulties in the past we wondered whether we could not raise our own labour from the children. As far back as 1912 I started feeding the children and looking after them. Then I found that when there was a family of two children and a third child was born that child was sometimes neglected and died. Therefore in 1925 I started paying a man 30 per cent. higher wages if he had three non-working children. That increased the number very much; in 1926 there were 52 families with three non-working children, while at the present day there are 91; that is to say, that in three years the families with three under-working age children have increased from 52 to 91.

F-1376. Is that because there has been a lower death-rate among the children?—Yes. If by the death of one of his children a man is going to lose 30 per cent. of his earnable wage, he will bring a sick child to hospital immediately; ordinarily he might hide the child when it was ill and do various ceremonies in his own way to save the child's life, in which event it would probably die. Now rather than lose the child a man will take the child to hospital or call in the doctor.

F-1377. Have you the figures for infantile mortality for the last few years? —Yes, but the mortality figures ten years ago were not as reliable as they are now.

F-1378. Just now you gave us the infantile mortality as being 168 per thousand. Is that less than it was a few years ago?—I cannot tell you without looking it up, but I can get that figure.

F-1379. Your system of paying 30 per cent. bonus where there are three non-working children has had the effect of improving the care of the children by the parents?—Undoubtedly. It is not a bonus. All my coolies are paid monthly, and the rate of wages of a man who has three non-working children will be Rs. 9 a month instead of Rs. 7.

F-1380. When you say that 30 per cent. more wages are paid, does that apply to the man and the woman if they are both earning?—No, only the man's wages; but in the event of a man dying if the widow is left with three children she gets it.

F-1381. How do you think recruiting might be improved?—I know the difficulties we have from what would appear to be a very clumsy arrangement at present. The difficulties are those of getting labour to come from other districts, their long standing ingrained dislike of the country through rumours and officials, antagonism. That is especially so in the Chota Nagpur area. About two years ago an Assistant Manager was in the Ranchi district, and was warned by the District Magistrate that if he was seen speaking to his *sardar* on the road he would be prosecuted under Emigration Act VI.

F-1382. That would be under that curious definition of assisting in recruiting?—Yes. In the Chaibassa district the son of one of the big headmen made a run-away match with a girl servant; he came to me. I knew at once who it was; I wrote to his father and to the Deputy Commissioner telling him the circumstances of this man coming to me. I said I was looking after him and was quite sure that after things had cooled down he would come back again and I would send him back. A warrant then arrived at the garden and the man was arrested and taken away at a moment's notice. The woman was left here; a child was born and the woman and the child were left on my hands. That was at a time when I was recruiting a good deal of labour from Singbhum, and there was a talk about the possibility of being arrested and taken back. I think the officials in the Chaibassa and Ranchi districts are antagonistic to recruiting and the ordinary coolies know it; that is one of the drawbacks.

F-1383. Is that because the existence of a new opportunity to labour tends to raise the local rate of wages?—I do not think so. I think that antagonistic feeling has been in existence for a good many years; I think it is a remnant of the old idea that if people come to Assam they never go back again.

F-1384. In recruiting districts when we asked the reason for the reluctance to go to Assam to the tea gardens we were told about the distance and the idea that a person would be lost for ever if he went to such a distant part as Assam. Does your opinion confirm the idea that that perjudice still lingers? —Yes, it still lingers. Even in trying to get *mistris*, artisans, skilled labour, washermen, and such like people from Calcutta, they will tell you the same— that they have a fear of coming to Assam.

F-1385. Do you think if there was a system which involved free repatriation in case the coolies found themselves unhappy here at the end of a reasonable term, let us say three years, and if that became generally known in all the recruiting districts that if for any reason they desired to return to their country it would be easy for them to do so, do you think that might remove this lingering prejudice against coming to Assam?—Yes, I am inclined to think it would; but there would have to be a safeguard; after his three years if the labourer wished to stay he would be allowed to stay, and then that arrangement for repatriation at the end of three years would be finished. That is to say, if a labourer stayed after that period and subsequently wished to go back to his country he would have to go back at his own expense.

F-1386. That was the suggestion: that three years was a reasonable time in which a man and his family might become acclimatized and happy having got over their first difficulties in the change of country and climate; and if at the end of that time he really wanted to go back to his country he would be free to do so at the Company's expense?—There is the possibility of outside influences trying to stampede a batch of coolies from a garden if it was known that they might be repatriated at the Company's expense after a period of three years.

F-1387. Some reasonable safeguards will require to be worked out, but the suggestion was that it would once and for all remove the feeling in the recruiting areas that to go to Assam was never to have a chance of getting back again?—Yes, I think it would remove that feeling.

F-1388. Have you any experience of this short-term recruitment for 6, 9 and 12 months?—I believe I had the first batch of short-term coolies that ever started in Assam: it occurred I think in 1912 when a brick contractor, who was burning bricks, was unable to meet his liabilities, absconded and left all his Ranchi coolies there with nothing to eat. They came to me and I said they could work with me until they got money sufficient to take them back to their own country. They subsequently came back to me the next year and worked for six months on the same terms.

F-1389. But the figures show us that last year there was a considerable recruitment, some 9,000 souls from the Ranchi district on this short-term agreement which involved repatriation at the end of the term. Have you had any of those?—No. I should like to see the free influx of labour coming in as freely as possible.

F-1390. Do you not think some intermediate step is required before the recruiting districts will be prepared to do without any control of recruitment and absolutely free movement of labour?—Undoubtedly to begin with I think there would be trouble. But there would be no trouble as soon as labour got up here and gardens were filled; there would be a rush and probably a few abuses would creep in at first.

F-1391. Supposing the right of repatriation at the end of three years if dissatisfied were the general rule, it might be expected very considerably to increase the number of people willing to come to Assam?—Yes.

F-1392. So much so that you might possibly have more people anxious to come than you were able to take?—Yes.

F-1393. That would enable you more or less to choose your workers and to obtain a completely contented, settled and happy population on the tea gardens?—Yes.

F-1394. *Miss Power*: Could you subsequently let us have statistics as to the number of *sardars* you have sent down in recent years?—In 1928 I sent down 62 *sardars;* 26 did not return; I received 57 souls at a cost per head of Rs. 154.

F-1395. *Mr. Clow*: Does that cost per head include the loss on the *sardars* who did not return?—Yes, everything.

F-1396. *The Chairman*: Have you any knowledge of the reason why of those who went down that number did not return?—I cannot say. No doubt a lot of single men come up here with the intention of not staying. They come up just to look round and get a certain amount of advance money. Then they go back with the avowed object of getting their families, but they have no real intention of getting their families.

F-1397. Do you allow a man to go as a *sardar* who has not worked as much as 12 months here?—No, not as a rule. The man works here and we send him down to fetch up his family.

F-1398. Have you any experience of the man who makes a practice of making a profit out of being a *sardar* and going from one garden to another?—No.

F-1399. What is your opinion about wages; do you think the present pay is sufficient for the standard of living of the coolies?—I think the present rate of pay is sufficient for their present standard of living. If higher wages were given to them now they would simply be wasted. It would either go in drink or debauches; it would not be put to any proper purpose. It would probably weaken the man as a labourer and he would not be such a good bread-winner as he would be if he had not that extra money to use in a wrong way.

F-1400. Have your men an opportunity of getting a good deal more than they do actually earn?—Very much more, yes.

F-1401. How much more could they earn?—For instance, I have men working on pruning, which takes them four hours and the average monthly wage is Rs. 9. I have also a batch of men who should be on that work, but they prefer to hoe for 2½ hours during the day on a monthly wage of Rs. 7. They will not do the pruning because it would take them four hours, although their wages would be increased by Rs. 2 a month.

F-1402. Then what is your suggestion with regard to the raising of the standard of living?—I think they have to be educated up to it right from the very bottom, especially the young people. I think that is the only chance. It is going to be very hard to educate the older people who have been imported into Assam as fathers and mothers; it is going to be very hard to change their mode and standard of living. But I think the younger generation might be taught. I do not think they will be taught very much through schools unless it is possible to get masters who can teach not only reading and writing but can tell stories. The coolie is very susceptible to picking up things through tales. I am perfectly certain a great deal of work could be done in improving the standard of living and working by means of the cinema. But the cinema is practically impossible owing to the cost of importation of films. One can buy films at home for 1¾d. a foot, but by the time they get here they cost about 8 annas a foot with the duty.

F-1403. Have you taken any steps by means of stores to encourage the people to purchase little luxuries?—We ran a co-operative store. We started in 1917, and it was doing very well until 1921. That year I went Home, and the non-co-operation movement started. A man was left in charge of the co-operative stores and had strict orders to give nothing out on credit. He joined the non-co-operation movement and gave out everything on credit. When I came back there was no stock and no money and the store had to go into liquidation. The difficulty is to get leaders to run a movement of this kind; we have not got the men and we cannot get school masters in the district.

F-1404. Will you tell us a little about your experiment in education on the tea gardens?—I think our first school was set up in 1910; that was a small school in the lines. The boys were very pleased about it and learned quite a lot, as also did the adults. I make it a point that my headmen, *sardars*, *chowkidars* should be people who can read and write sufficiently to write down names; I always give preference to a man who has been taught to read and write.

F-1405. How many children have you going to school on your estate now?—In this division I think there are 49 on the school books with regular attendance.

F-1406. How many of your 1,750 children would you consider to be of school-going age?—We are feeding the infants daily and the number is 486; if you deduct 486 infants from the figure of 1,760 that would leave about 1,300 children of school age. The total on the books is 44; they are of the garden coolie class. There is also a small class of nine for outside people who want their children taught. In the other division there are about 40 on the books and the attendance is not very good just now.

F-1407. *Miss Power*: It is about 100 altogether?—Yes; on all the gardens of the Company.

F-1408. *The Chairman*: Are the 1,300 of whom you have spoken all potential school children?—They should be. The 1,760 are all what we call children; that is to say, they are not being paid an adult wage. They are under 15.

F-1409. But many of them are earning something?—Yes, a lot of those are earning.

F-1410. Is the reluctance to come to school due to the fact that the children can earn wages?—I do not think so, because practically all the boys at school are workers. At each busy season I give them three months' summer holidays, two months' when I want them and another month when the children are planting on their parents' land. During that time we shut the school down entirely.

F-1411. Do you think parents appreciate your efforts in the direction of education?—They have not expressed any opinion and I do not know.

F-1412. Would the possibility of education for the children of coolies when they come here be a factor in the recruiting districts?—I think it probably would be in some districts; it might attract labour.

F-1413. But your own figures show that up to now the parents cannot be said to be very keen on education for their children?—I do not think the parents really trouble about it. It rests with the children.

F-1414. Do you and your staff take any steps to encourage the education of the children?—Not more than providing a school master and a school room and occasional inspections. Sometimes we run picture shows for them; we have a cinema machine here.

F-1415. There is no persuasion or pressure by parents to get their children to go to school?—No, never.

F-1416. We have been interested in what has been called the bonus, i.e., the Rs. 12 which appears to be generally given at the end of a year's service. Is that the custom here?—Yes.

F-1417. Do the coolies regard that as a reward for steady work during the past year or as having something to do with the coming year?—The coming year.

F-1418. Do your coolies all take the Rs. 12?—Practically all; occasionally some will not take it; they do not want to.

F-1419. Why do they not want to?—We had the Penal Act VI and an Act in which a three years' agreement was laid down and the coolie received a bonus of Rs. 12 a year on guaranteeing to work so many days in each year. That was done away with. Then we had the Local Act XIII, which I think was called the Artisans Act. Then that was done away with, and the actual agreement was abolished. But we kept on giving them their Rs. 12 a year as bonus.

F-1420. I suppose they would have resented the withdrawal of the Rs. 12?—Yes; we could not take that away from them; for one thing, they look forward to it in order to buy cattle, and things of that kind, at the end of each year.

F-1421. But you think that in some cases the old idea still lingers?—Yes; I am quite sure that must be so.

F-1422. It is still regarded as some form of a bond?—Yes.

F-1423. Do you take a thumb print receipt for it?—No.

F-1424. Since when did you abolish that?—As soon as the Act was done away with and we were told not to do it. I cannot remember which year it was. I have not taken a thumb impression on an agreement for 18 years. I used to put a cross against the name.

F-1425. *Col. Garbett*: Who told you not to carry on as you did under the old Act XIII?—I have an idea that a circular came round at the time from the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association.

F-1426. *The Chairman*: Apparently a few coolies do not take the Rs. 12 and remain under that exploded idea. Do you take any steps to point out to them that it implies no obligation whatsoever?—Yes one does, but the trouble is one does not always know when it happens. When a man knows his time is up and he is due for this money he goes up to the office and asks for a little slip with the date on which he got his bonus last year; that is given to him and he takes it to one of my assistants who pays him the money. If a man does not come and ask for it I have no record to enable me to know that he has not asked for it. Last week a man and his wife came to me and asked to be given a chit as he had not taken his money for two years. There was no record in the book for the last two years of his having had that money.

I asked him why he had not taken it and he answered that he did not wish to take it but he wanted it now. I pointed out to him that he had lost Rs. 24 and his wife had lost Rs. 16, but it did not seem to strike him that he had lost anything at all. They are very peculiar in that way. I think undoubtedly it is regarded as a relic of the obligation by most of them.

F-1427. Have you anything to say to the Commission on the question of public and private roads on the tea gardens?—While travelling from England I met Mr. Joshi; he was very strong on that point and said that until all garden roads and paths to the tea estates were open to the public it would be impossible for an outside man, either for his own purpose or in order to start a trade union, to get in and teach the coolies. It is my opinion that the present labour that we are dealing with here is not sufficiently advanced for trade unions. Trade unions would lead to trouble, and for that reason I say that we ought to keep our roads and exercise control over the people that come in. At present there is no guarantee that anybody coming in is really *bona fide* and has the welfare of labour at heart. So many of these people are merely furthering their own interests and do not mind what happens to labour.

F-1428. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What sort of trouble do you contemplate?—Ignorant coolies not understanding if they are told things and not getting hold of the right idea, and then possibly doing things ignorantly which would cause dislocation of work and probably hardship to themselves and others.

F-1429. The idea being that if a trade union organizer comes and forms a trade union, the result of which was a strike, would you be against it?—Anybody at present could cause a strike in the garden if he chose to without wishing to organize the workers. I do not think the workers are sufficiently advanced and are too ignorant at present to be organized in that way. Until they become more educated I think it would be very dangerous.

F-1430. You remember the trouble you had in 1921. You definitely put that down to the situation which existed generally in the country. Supposing the situation in the country became again like that. Do you not think a good sound trade union in the tea gardens would be a bulwark against trouble of that kind?—It might be if you could educate the people to know exactly what the position was.

F-1431. How are they to be educated unless you allow trade union organizers to come in and educate them?—I am afraid they would want to go too rapidly. You have to go very slowly; it takes years and years to do anything with these coolies. I fancy that the people who are keen on trade unionism would try to go too rapidly, and there would be a thin veneer of this so-called trade unionism which would not sink in.

F-1432. A beginning has to be made?—Yes.

F-1433. How do you wish to make a beginning?—I think education should come first.

F-1434. Do you want to wait another 15 or 20 years?—I do not say that, but it is going to take a long time; I do not think they are prepared for trade unionism at present.

F-1435. When you say they are not prepared you mean the tea garden managers are not prepared for it?—No; I am speaking entirely of the coolie; the coolie is not prepared for it.

F-1436. The only objection you have is that there might be trouble?—Undoubtedly.

F-1437. That is all?—Yes; the coolie is not prepared for it; he is too ignorant.

F-1438. If there is fear of trouble that means that the manager is not prepared to face it?—No, the coolie is not in a condition to receive and accept the teaching of trade unionism.

F-1439. Has it been tried?—Not that I know of on a tea garden.

F-1440. *Mr. Cliff*: I want to follow up that point. You say, as the Government says, that what is necessary is to increase the needs of the garden worker; that is the essential thing. There is a conflict of interests between the garden manager and the demand for an increased outlook and increased needs of the coolie. The garden manager says that it will cost more. Many managers might take a short-sighted view and say "we must not bear that cost, and an improved outlook means trouble for us; it means a question of discontent."

Can you help us with regard to this? You spelt out as to what you meant by education, and I am inclined to agree with you. What influence is there to play on the garden worker other than that of the manager in a task which is almost superhuman, if the garden manager has the power to prohibit persons coming into the lines? I feel there must be a beginning. The garden manager says "I must reserve the right to prohibit an educationist from coming into my lines?—I think the best way to get over the difficulty is to have some organization which would take up educational work for a group of gardens. We run now a doctors' association, and we have a doctor who attends to a group of gardens. If there was some such organization which would take up education and welfare work of the tea garden labourers, it would be a good thing. I do not think you can expect the manager of a tea garden to do that as well as his own duties of which he has many. I think you will agree that the labourers require a certain amount of education before a trade union on proper lines can be formed.

F-1441. There is one deficiency, I think, I notice and that is a lack of public-spirited people to try to take upon this task. Do I understand you to say that you would not oppose a public health and welfare board for tea garden workers?—No, I should not.

F-1442. Do you think it would be an advantageous thing?—What I should like to see myself is a board in each district consisting of two or three of the old planters of the district and the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which all matters connected with labour can be discussed and decided, and their decision should be acted upon by all the planters of that district.

F-1443. Instead of the present system of recruitment which has very largely broken down, would you prefer more regulation in Assam itself, designed for the welfare of the garden worker, rather than any elaborate form of recruiting?—Yes, I should. I think it is a waste of money to have an elaboate form of recruitment. That money might be spent in Assam for educational purposes and generally on amusements of coolies to their advantage.

F-1444. I want to ask you a question with regard to the class of persons whose friends and relatives say: "If you go to Assam you are lost for ever" and with regard to the class of person who is dissatisfied with his condition on the garden. Assuming you had a board of that character, might the grounds of repatriation be more extensive than the present Act? Would you agree that the labourer might be free to apply to that board, and if there is sufficient ground he can be repatriated?—Are you referring to the new scheme?

F-1445. Yes. Might that be one of the functions of the public welfare board?—No; I think it should be independent of that.

F-1446. Would it be your view that there might be a machinery which could deal with repatriation?—If the rule regarding repatriation after three years comes into force, I think that could be done irrespective of any board.

F-1447. I am not thinking at the moment about repatriation at the end of a three-year period. A person may come and find after a period of, say, 18 months that the life is totally unsuitable; there might be other grounds during the passing of the time wth regard to home circumstances which he cannot put down in a schedule. Should not that person have a right to go to some board and submit an application for repatriation?—Yes.

F-1448. Do you think that would help at all?—I do not think it would. I was not thinking of a board for repatriation; I was thinking of a board for each district which would discuss matters connected with labour, like wages, welfare work, education and things of that sort.

F-1449. What is the definition of child workers? I saw cases where parents were taking children who were not employed. Will you tell us what is the earliest age that a child is employed direct by the garden?—I think it is from 10 to 12. It is hard to tell. I generally go by the physique of the child.

F-1450. Having regard to the number of children that are employed, do you think that the planters would oppose compulsory education?—I do not think they would, provided it is throughout the province. I think it would not be fair to have compulsory education for children on tea gardens while not having it for boys in villages adjoining the tea gardens.

F-1451. If it were general?—Yes; but I think that in that case it should be up to Government to provide the necessary teachers.

F-1452. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have had it suggested to us that it is hardly fair to take the combined earnings of a man, his wife and children on the tea gardens and that we should treat the tea gardens in the same way as industrial towns where you expect the wage that is paid to the man to be sufficient to provide for the family. What have you to say about that?—I think it is going against their custom which is in existence for hundreds of years. Take, for instance, the aborigines of Chota Nagpur; the women do the hardest work.

F-1453. You feel there is no real force in the argument, at least in so far as the tea gardens are concerned, that only the man should be the wage-earner and not his family?—No.

F-1454. Can you tell me how many acres of land you give for cultivation to your labourers?—It all depends on the strength of the family. I have some very old big families who have a much bigger area than the ordinary people.

F-1455. What is the maximum you have given?—Three acres.

F-1456. Do you give advances to your coolies to any extent?—I give advances for the purchase of cattle and things like that, and occasionally for marriages.

F-1457. Can you say how many of your workers have taken advances at the present moment?—There are not very many.

F-1458. How soon do they repay?—The advances I give are nearly all big advances; Rs. 10 or 20 and sometimes Rs. 40 for the purchase of a buffalo. They pay at the rate of one rupee or Rs. 2 a month, or pay it up in a lump sum. About ten men form into a group and each puts in Rs. 2 or 4 a month into the pool. They draw lots as to who should draw the money in turn. The total may come up to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 or sometimes Rs. 40. Suppose a man's turn comes in the month of February and he wants money in January for purchasing a cow or a buffalo he comes to me and asks me whether I will advance him money which he will repay from the chit amount. I then make enquiries to verify his statement and advance money. In such cases no cut from the pay is made because the advance is repaid in a lump sum.

F-1459. Is this system peculiar to your gardens, or to the district?—I do not know.

F-1460. How many will there be in the pool?—It varies; generally 6 or 8.

F-1461. How many such pools will there be on your estate?—A great many. I cannot give the exact number.

F-1462. Mr. Cliff while putting a question made a remark that the present system of recruitment has broken down. Do you agree with his statement?—No. A very big number of labour is still coming to Assam.

F-1463. It is not meeting all the requirements of the tea gardens by any means?—No.

F-1464. Can you assess the reason for it? Is it because the recruitment system is bad or that the demand for tea gardens has increased during recent years?—I am not in a position to answer that.

F-1465. You admit that the tea garden industry is expanding?—Of course, it is expanding.

F-1466. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is the sight that we saw this afternoon the usual sight to be met with on the tea gardens, men with very little clothing and children practically naked?—Yes. You see them like that in the country too.

F-1467. What is your experience of the type of food that these workers eat?—What caste are you referring to?

F-1468. Take the *Mundas*, for instance?—He is a good feeder; he eats well; he eats a lot of meat.

F-1469. I suppose he buys the meat in the bazaar?—Yes.

F-1470. He takes rice, vegetables and various other pulses, I suppose?—Yes.

F-1471. I think you said that he gets a wage of Rs. 9 a month?—That is the actual monthly wage, excluding his earnings on extra work. For the month of September, the average earning of a man was Rs. 11-2-4 and a woman Rs. 12-1-10. The feeding of children that we do relieves him of a good deal of household expenses. That feeding alone costs us nearly Rs. 10,000 per annum.

F-1472. Let me take a man whose wife is not working. He earns Rs. 11 a month. Would not most of that go in feeding himself and his wife?—In that case I think he would not be able to save more than Rs. 3.

F-1473. He has to purchase rice, ghee, fire-wood?—He does not purchase fire-wood.

F-1474. I saw people selling fire-wood?—They must have stolen that.

F-1475. I think I can say that the cost of feeding may come to 6 annas a day?—The feeding of children costs me Rs. 1-11-6 per head per month; that is about an anna a day.

F-1476. That you would not call a sufficient meal for a worker doing manual work on the field?—No.

F-1477. I take it therefore that generally the amount of money that he earns, if his wife is not earning, will be spent on food?—On his clothes and on his drink.

F-1478. I am coming to that. If the condition of men, women and children is what we saw to-day, do you not think that more wages would mean more comfort for them, better clothes and more clothes?—No; they never change.

F-1479. Suppose they have a surplus?—They will utilize it in drinking.

F-1480. That is a complaint we have heard all over India that more wages would mean more drinking. Let me put that on one side; it is a mere hypothesis. Suppose there was a margin left for him and he bought better clothes, ate better food, would he not be a better worker?—It certainly requires good food to be a good worker. I think our workers have sufficient food and do look well.

F-1481. To tell you plainly I was horrified at their look. You would agree that it is not a good sight to see both men and women workers with torn clothes going about and children with no clothes at all?—You should see what clothes they wear on Sundays or on festival days. In ordinary days they put on their common dress, keeping their good clothes for festive occasions.

F-1482. You said that more wages would not benefit them because they would spend that in drink or in debauch. Your fear is just that and no other?—No.

F-1483. Otherwise you would be willing to pay them more?—If their standard of living could be raised and a desire to earn more money could be brought about, it would be good for themselves and also for the industry.

F-1484. What would you consider a decent and adequate living wage if you were to raise their wages?—At present they have an adequate wage.

F-1485. Suppose you were to give them a wage which would mean a surplus which they could invest in clothes, in good food, etc., etc. What amount would you put it at?—The present food is particularly good.

F-1486. The wage that they get at the present moment is consumed in food which they have to purchase. What I am suggesting is this: Suppose they had a surplus over and above that. What would you put that figure at?—They do get a surplus with which they are able to buy cattle.

F-1487. How many of them are able to buy cattle?—Hundreds.

F-1488. How many of your workers, out of the 3,000 that you have got on your estate, own their own cows or buffaloes?—127 own buffaloes; 714 own bullocks; 274 own cows; 407 own ploughs, and 76 own carts. The rent paid to Company by coolies for rice land for 1929 was Rs. 2,930-15-6.

F-1489. You would agree that if they had more wages and they utilized those wages for purchasing better food and better clothing, it would be an advantage?—Their food is perfectly good now. In the whole of the lines you may find only one or two of a beggar class who will always feed badly; but the majority of them are feeding well.

F-1490. Have you got any statistics to show the amount of money that these workers spend on drink?—No. Generally on pay day many of them go for drink.

F-1491. You have no actual figures?—I have only results.

F-1492. Let me put it this way: If it is shown that the amount of wages that these workers are earning are only just sufficient for them to feed themselves, would you be prepared to give them more wages which would leave them a little margin?—The condition of my people is very good.

F-1493. Let me take you through the figures if you will not agree with me?—I am going by the looks of the people, by the actual property possessed by them. If they can buy goats, cows and buffaloes, surely the wage that is given is not only sufficient for them to feed themselves but it leaves a surplus for them to buy these things.

F-1494. Looks are always deceptive. We should go by the facts. What are the facts? According to your statement, a worker earns Rs. 11 and odd annas a month. Would I be far wrong in saying that if he has got his wife and two children who are not working, his expenditure on food would be about 6 to 7 annas a day?—If a man's children are not working he gets a higher rate of wage.

F-1495. How much higher?—30 per cent. over his monthly wage.

F-1496. That is only where he has three children. Let me go on with my example. Would I be correct in saying that in the case that I cited the actual cost of food would be about 6 to 7 annas a day?—I cannot tell you without going into it. All I know is the result. If they can possess property, the pay must be ample.

F-1497. If it is 6 annas a day it comes to about Rs. 11, which is exactly what you pay?—Yes.

F-1498. That confirms my statement that most of the wages that they are earning go in the purchase of food?—Yes, if your statement is correct, but I have not ascertained from the coolies as to what they are spending daily on food. I doubt very much whether they spend the amount you quoted.

F-1499. Are there any of your tea plantation managers who are Magistrates? —There are.

F-1500. How many of them possess magisterial powers?—I cannot tell you how many. I am one.

F-1501. Considering that an outsider who comes into your gardens, let us say for the purpose of organizing a trade union, can be thrown out because he was trespassing, do you consider it right that you should have magisterial powers?—I cannot use my powers in that case.

F-1502. You can use them on an outsider who comes into your gardens?— No.

F-1503. Suppose I am an undesirable person and I come to your estate?— I have no powers of that sort at all.

F-1504. Do you consider that your workers are free agents?—In what way?

F-1505. Suppose the workers on your tea estate made up their minds to form a trade union and invited me not as a member of the Labour Commission but as a trade union agitator. They are free to invite me, but yet the position is that you could refuse my entry on your tea estate at any time that you choose?—No.

F-1506. Suppose you arrange for a complaint being lodged against me. Do you say that you have no magisterial powers to deal with me?—That is so.

F-1507. Are you quite sure?—Yes.

F-1508. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are you not a third-class Magistrate?— Yes.

F-1509. And third class Magistrates have no such powers?—No. We are Honorary Magistrates to whom petty cases are referred by the District Magistrate.

F-1510. *Lt.-Col. Garbett*: The cases *must* come from the District Magistrate?—Yes.

F-1511. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you not think it would be advisable to throw out your roads to public?—No, except for their use.

F-1512. Under some new agreements that have been entered into and under some old agreements, the Government have the right to take over your roads?— The condition in the agreements refers to those roads over which Government has already a right.

F-1513. Government have also a right to acquire a road under the Land Acquisition Act?—I cannot tell you.

F-1514. Would it not be better to make the roads public property?—For what purpose?

F-1515. There is an impression in other parts of India that once a garden coolie gets into a tea estate he is more or less a prisoner on the tea estate; that is the impression, is it not?—Yes, in many places.

F-1516. *Lt.-Col. Garbett*: Is it not a fact that that impression is dying out?—Yes, it is dying out.

F-1517. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In order to create confidence in the minds of the public would it not be better that the roads on the tea estate should be thrown open to the public?—I do not think so.

F-1518. I am asking you this question in connection with trade unions. It has been impossible so far to form a trade union on the tea gardens?—Has anybody tried?

F-1519. Yes, it has been tried, but the fear has always been that it is impossible because of the attitude of the employers who will not permit an outsider to come in and organize a union?—I do not know of any one who tried to organize a trade union. We have had a very unfortunate example of a man who came up here who said he was sent by an organization of which Mr. Joshi was the president. On his word he was given facilities in every way to come forward, to mix with everybody and to find out everything. But what happened? He turned out to be an undesirable man and an impostor. When Mr. Joshi was informed of this he wrote back to say that he regretted very much that the man was sent up. How are we to know that the outsider of whom you are talking will not be of the same class.

F-1520. If you believe in the freedom of the workers on your estate, would it not be better I ask again to have your roads thrown open to the public?—What do you mean by throwing open to the public?

F-1521. To any outsider?—No; I do not think it would be wise. If he were to come for some good object, then we would not object.

F-1522. Who should judge whether it is a good object or not? You yourselves should be the judge?—Yes.

F-1523. For instance, if an outsider of the type that was suggested by Mr. Cliff to you came in and started trade union activities, what guarantee is there that you would not throw him out?—As I have already said, our labour is not sufficiently advanced to form itself into a well organized trade union. Even in Western countries when trade unions were first started in about 1894 the people were not sufficiently educated to receive them. If that was the case there, how can you deal with people here who are mostly ignorant?

F-1524. In any case you are against giving freedom either to your workers or to outsiders, for the workers to get an outsider to organize them?—The workers are perfectly free to go to different places and to do what they like there; we have bazaars and many other places where they can meet and hear anybody who wishes to preach anything they like. But it is a different matter having such people on the garden.

F-1525. You will not permit it on your garden?—Not at present, when the people are so ignorant.

F-1526. When will you permit it?—I cannot say. I will permit it when I consider that the labour has got to that condition which will enable it to receive it for its own advantage.

F-1527. Suppose the workers now consider that it is to their advantage?—If they consider so, I should then say it is a step towards their education.

F-1528. How is that to be discovered unless some outsider comes in?—It should come from the workers themselves; if they feel that they require a union, they will naturally say so.

F-1529. You would be against it then?—No. If my workers came to me and said "we want to organize a co-operative stores or a co-operative bank or anything of that sort" we would only be too glad to give them all possible help.

F-1530. Not for a trade union?—If it came from themselves, without outside influence, yes. But, as I said, they are at present ignorant to receive it.

F-1531. Suppose a movement of the type that started in 1921 in the Surma Valley starts here—I am putting it as an argument—do you not think that it would be in your interest to have a sound trade union on the tea estates as a bulwark against a movement of that kind?—How am I going to be guaranteed that the organizers of this trade union are not going to be the very people who are going to side with the troublers?

F-1532. Have you any method by means of which you can get into contact with your workers and examine their grievances and set their grievances right?—Yes. Every Tuesday and Friday afternoon I am in my office from 4 o'clock, and it is open to anybody to come to me and represent whatever he wants; there is no middleman between me and the worker. If he makes any grievance it is always enquired into and set right.

F-1533. Do you not think it would help recruiting if the workers were free to organize themselves and to present their demands generally?—No.

F-1534. *Lt.-Col. Garbett*: Do you not think that it might be a hinderance?—I do not think either way. I hold that they are at present very ignorant.

F-1535. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I understand that you have a *panchayat* here?—Yes. If any cases concerning the social customs of the workers arise in which I am not quite sure what should be done, I refer them to a *panchayat*.

F-1536. Did you take the initiative in forming that *panchayat*?—I probably did.

F-1537. How can you expect these people then to take the initiative in forming a trade union unless somebody comes and helps them?—As far as the *panchayat* goes, I think, it is a common thing in their own country.

F-1538. And yet you had to take the initiative to form a *panchayat*?—We import people from various villages, and their social customs vary. They have experience of the working of the *panchayats* in their own country, and I thought it would be to their advantage to have a similar system on the tea gardens as well.

F-1539. You said that it would be easy to create a strike on the tea gardens?—Very easy.

F-1540 You have to look at the other side of the picture as well. The trade constituted trade union as a bulwark against any disturbances that might be created by a few workers?—It would be if the trade union is organized really for the benefit of the labour and not for the self-interest of the organizer. I would require a guarantee for that. Generally I have a great distrust for the leaders in India.

F-1541. You have to look at the other side of the picture as well. The trade union leaders are very distrustful of the tea garden managers?—I am afraid I have not met any of them. I have the experience of only Sahoo.

F-1542. You have met Mr. Joshi, have you not?—Yes.

F-1543. If you have met with Mr. Joshi you have met with all the trade union leaders. Would I be far wrong in saying that you resent interference from any outsider who is desirous of helping the coolies?—No. I do not want to be interfered with by people who want to use labour for their own ends.

F-1544. Suppose their ends are that the coolies should get better wages?—If we think that the coolies should get better wages we would pay them, because the whole industry depends on the coolies. But we do not want outsiders to import trouble. Surely the industry is not going to starve its coolies.

F-1545. *Lt.-Col. Garbett*: Is it not true that certain gardens now are already working at a loss, and with the tea market as it is they may probably have to close down?—Yes.

F-1546. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Obviously the position is that you consider what is good for the workers and you will give them no choice to be organized merely because you are afraid of the outsiders?—I do not wish them to be organized against their own interests.

F-1547. There must be something radically wrong, if you are afraid that at any moment a strike can take place or the coolies may walk out as the result of an outsider coming into the gardens?—I am speaking generally. We have seen extraordinary things happening in various parts of India—not in Assam but in other parts of India—through the so-called leaders. Take, for instance, the railway strike; what suffering did it bring about?

F-1548. Which railway strike are you referring to?—To the big strike in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway two years ago.

F-1549. My experience is that strikes do take place because of the legitimate grievances of Indian workers. We are not discussing that problem. The problem we are discussing is this: If you are so nervous of an outsider coming in and the result of his coming in leads to a general strike here, there must be something

radically wrong with the condition of your coolies There must be certain grievances and I should like to know what those grievances are?—You must be aware that the labour we use is mostly ignorant and is easily led away. What we object to is anybody coming into the garden and telling the labourer "you are really having a very hard time and you should agitate for more wages; why do you put up with your present conditions when you can get more in other places." By doing such things it cannot but create trouble—a position we all want to avoid.

F-1550. *Mr. Clow*: Are there any restrictions on the movement of coolies outside the garden?—You mean from garden to garden?

F-1551. Yes?—We have what is known as labour rules.

F-1552. I am not thinking of the labour rules. Suppose a coolie wants to leave a garden and go to another where he will be taken in, he is perfectly free to do so, is he not?—Yes.

F-1553. Do you know anything about the conditions on the more distant gardens?—No.

F-1554. Suppose this system of repatriation were brought in and a man has served his three years, would you not require some safeguard to ensure that he was not kept on the garden after his three years?—Whatever the organization is, I take it there will be a record showing the date when a coolie came into the garden and when he should be due for repatriation.

F-1555. Suppose a man wanted to stay after three years, do you think it would be advisable that he should be required to testify before a Magistrate that he wanted to stay?

The Chairman: I think the reverse procedure would be possible. If he has a right to be repatriated at the end of three years if he so desired and that right was withheld from him, then he could apply to the Magistrate as he does now on certain other grounds.

Mr. Clow: I understand that in more distant parts people have some difficulty in applying to the Magistrate.

The Witness: I should think that the District Magistrate would be the best solution.

Mr. Clow: He is a hard worked official as it is.

F-1556. *The Chairman*: If there was a general rule and the coolies were all aware of it the cases of attempt to withhold the right would not be many?—No.

F-1557. *Mr. Clow*: As far as our experience goes, the coolies to a large extent are not aware of the changes made in the law; for instance, they are not aware of the changes made in respect of penal contracts. If such a rule were introduced there might be some difficulty?—I think in that case the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, ought to be made responsible for any garden who did not comply with the regulation.

F-1558. But all the gardens are not members of the Association?—90 per cent. are members.

F-1559. *The Chairman*: Will you tell us what has been the cost of your new type of houses which you showed us?—The estimated cost of each house was Rs. 700, but we have been able to build it slightly under that, Rs. 680 or Rs. 690.

F-1560. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are the different kinds of roads in this part of Assam; are there district board roads and private roads?—There are local board roads, Government roads and private roads.

F-1561. With regard to private roads, is it the custom here as it is elsewhere in India to close the road once or twice a year and allow people to pass along on those particular days with a certificate or chit obtained from the owner?—Yes. In my case I keep a book and anybody who passes along the road has to sign in that book.

F-1562. How often do you do that in a year?—Only once.

F-1563. So that in the remaining 364 days in the year anybody is at liberty to walk along your roads?—That is so.

F-1564. Have you ever warned anybody?—Only on one occasion, and that was during the non-co-operation trouble in 1921. My coolies were very much against the Assamese who refused to sell food coming into the garden; a party of these Assamese came through my garden, and as there was a possibility of a breach of the peace, I had to warn them from entering my gardens.

F-1565. Barring that you never directly or indirectly warned anybody using your roads?—No.

F-1566. *Miss Power*: When the penal contracts were done away with did you make any effort to explain to the workers on your tea gardens of the change in the law?—No, not personally.

F-1567. Take the question of this Labour Commission. You of course got letters from your Association and read about it in the papers; you were able to take such steps as you desire to put your point of view before the Commission. Did you take any steps to let your workers know of the existence of the Commission and what it was out to do?—No.

F-1568. Do you think any of them were aware of the existence of this Commission?—Not the ordinary coolie, no; but the people who can read and write and get newspapers must have known.

F-1569. The coolies would not be in that position?—No.

F-1570. As the primary duty of the Commission is to investigate the conditions of the workers, do you feel that it should have been brought to their attention?—I am doubtful; I think they might have misunderstood it and you might have seen conditions which were not natural; I think as it is now you are seeing conditions which are perfectly normal.

F-1571. But are we getting the workers' point of view?—I should think so; as far as I know you are.

F-1572. By observation?—Yes.

F-1573. Supposing they have grievances, you do not feel they should have an opportunity of stating those grievances to this Commission irrespective of whether they may be relevant to our terms of reference or not, so that we may ascertain directly from the workers what their grievances are and sort out the relevant from the irrelevant?—No, I do not think so. I think seeing them as they are now in perfectly normal conditions is the best way. Had it been made public, to begin with they would not have known what the Commission was.

F-1574. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have no objection to Miss Power, or any other Members of the Commission, going and interviewing any of your workers and asking them any questions they choose?—Not at all.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned till Friday, 10th January 1930.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-first Meeting.

JORHAT.

Friday, the 10th January 1930.

PRESENT :

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
MR. JOHN CLIFF.	

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA .. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
LT.-COL. H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budla Beta Tea Co., Ltd. }

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN .. .. *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN .. .. }

Evidence taken at Cinnamara Tea Gardens.

KHUDIRAN (a male coolie), (interpreted).

F-1575. Where do you come from?—From Ranchi.

F-1576. When did you come from Ranchi?—Many years ago, but I do not remember when I came. When I first came I had a son with me. I remained for about a month and then went away back for my wife and family. After that two children were born here. I have five children.

F-1577. Do you like to live here better than in Ranchi?—It is about the same. I work here and I live. At Ranchi I had to work and live. My wife works. I have six children. Three are at home and three are working.

F-1578. Have you any land?—No.

F-1579. How much work do you do?—I prune 8 *dongs*. Each *dong* has five trees on it.

F-1580. What do you get for the 8 *dongs*?—Four annas.

F-1581. How long does it take you?—By the time I finish the sun has set. Every day I do 4 annas worth of work

F-1582. What time do you start in the morning?—I think it is between 6 and 8 o'clock.

F-1583. Do you do any extra work besides the 8 *dongs*?—I do *ticca* sometimes, but sometimes I have not even time to finish my fixed work.

F-1584. Does your wife do any *ticca* work?—She cannot do *ticca* work.

F-1585. Are you able to do *ticca* work when you are hoeing?—When I have got to do double hoeing I cannot do *ticca* work, but when it is light hoeing I can do *ticca* work.

F-1586. Do you have a holiday once during the week?—I get Sundays.

F-1587. How much did you earn last week?—Rs. 1-10. I got Rs. 1-8 for the fixed task and 2 annas for extra work.

F-1588. Do you save any money?—No. It is hard enough to make a living, and I have to buy clothes.

F-1589. Do you get any advances from the garden? If I ask for an advance I get it.

F-1590. Do you borrow money from any one?—I borrow from the shops. I owe between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25.

F-1591. Do you pay interest?—They charge interest, but I do not know what the rate of interest is. When I pay off some of the loan they write it in a book, and when I have paid it all up they tell me it is finished. That is all I know.

F-1592. You cannot read the writing in the book?—No.

F-1593. Do you get a bonus every year?—Yes, Rs. 12 annually.

F-1594. Do you think you are under any agreement?—Yes. I think when I am taking the agreement money I have to work a year—that it is an annual agreement. When I want to go away I will not take the agreement money.

F-1595. Does that mean that you think you cannot leave if you take the agreement money?—I think I cannot leave. If I go away the *chowkidar* will catch me and bring me back.

F-1596. Has any one ever said to you that the agreement has been done away with?—I think there is an agreement.

F-1597. When you go for your bonus money year by year what does the Sahib say to you?—Nothing is said to me.

F-1598. Does the *sardar* call you out to work in the morning?—The *chowkidar* says "Come along quickly."

F-1599. When you do not want to go to work what happens?—I go and tell the *Baboo* that I want leave to stay at home, and the *Baboo* says "Yes, you can stay at home."

F-1600. What provision is made for your wife before and after confinement?—When a child is born I get Rs. 1-8 a week for three months for the wife. When the wife begins to work again I am given Rs. 2 *bakshis*, and afterwards another Rs. 2, until it comes to Rs. 10 in all.

F-1601. Does your wife work every day apart from these periods?—Yes. She takes the little child with her when she goes to work. She puts the baby to sleep in the shade of the trees and she works.

F-1602. Do you and your wife and family go quite freely to the doctor?—I go to the doctor when I am ill.

F-1603. Have you got faith in his medicines?—Yes. I would not go if I did not think he was going to make me well.

F-1604. Have you been a *sardar*?—Yes, twice.

F-1605. Did you bring any one back?—Once I got ill and came back without anybody. The next time I brought 15 recruits with me.

F-1606. What did you get for them?—I have no accounts. I have sometimes got Rs. 20, sometimes Rs. 10 and sometimes Rs. 5.

F-1607. When did you last go as a *sardar*?—The year I came here and I got 15 people.

F-1608. Are they still here?—Some have died, and some have run away. Some are here.

F-1609. Do you know where those who ran away went to?—No. When they run away they go by night when everybody is asleep.

F-1610. Have you ever wanted to go away yourself?—No.

F-1611. What time did you go home yesterday from your work?—I worked until 5.

F-1612. When you get a bonus of Rs. 12, does your wife get a bonus too?—She is given Rs. 6.

F-1613. What do you do with those Rs. 18?—I buy clothes for myself and for my children.

F-1614. Do you ever go to the toddy shop?—No, I very seldom go. When I have money I go. Sometimes I get a rupee's worth of rice, some of which I eat and some of which I make beer from. I only drink on Saturdays and Sundays.

F-1615. Do you eat anything with the beer?—If I have some parched rice I eat that with the beer. If not I drink the beer alone.

(The witness withdrew.)

BUTAN *(Sardar)*, (interpreted).

F-1616. Where do you come from?—I do not remember what country I come from.

F-1617. Can you read and write?—No.

F-1618. How many men have you working under you?—To-day I have 21. Sometimes I have 20, and sometimes I have 25. I have no fixed amount of labour.

F-1619. Do you work with the same labour always?—I used to be where the women pluck the leaves. Now I am with these people. Sometimes the same lot come on and sometimes they vary.

F-1620. What work do you do and what are you paid?—I do 8 *nals*, five trees to the *nal*, and the payment is 4 annas.

F-1621. How long does it take you to do that work?—If I go out late I finish late. If I go out early I finish early. If I go out at 9, I can finish the work at about 4. Every labourer does not finish at the same time because some work more quickly. If he is a good worker he comes at 9 and can finish the work at 3.

F-1622. Do they do *ticca* work then?—Sometimes.

F-1623. Can a coolie earn 8 annas a day if he works all day?—Sometimes. They cannot earn 8 annas a day on consecutive days. They can only earn it on one day. If a worker is strong he can earn Rs. 1-12 or Rs. 1-14 in a week.

F-1624. Do the men under you rest during the day and do they take food?—In the day time they have tea. It comes in carts.

F-1625. How long do they stop working?—I give them about an hour to have tea and then I say "You had better hurry up and finish your task or else it will not be done. If you finish this you can go and get firewood."

F-1626. Do you get paid a fixed rate, and do you get any commission on the work done?—I have fixed wages of Rs. 12, and I get a commission of two pice to the rupee.

F-1627. Do you get an annual bonus?—Yes.

F-1628. Are you under an agreement?—Yes, I am under *girmit*.

F-1629. When the Sahib gives it to you in your hands what do you say?—I take the money and give a thumb impression.

F-1630. Do you save money?—I have no savings because I have to eat and live and buy clothes.

F-1631. Have you any land?—Half a *Pura*, which is 2/3rds of an acre.

F-1632. Have you any bullocks?—I have a pair of small bullocks and three goats. I have a wife who works, a little girl and my mother.

F-1633. Does the little girl work?—No.

F-1634. Do you get leave to go and work your land?—When I have cultivation to do I ask for leave, and then I go and do it.

F-1635. How do you get a lazy man to come to work?—The *chowkidar* drives them out of the house.

F-1636. Are they ever beaten?—He scolds them, but he does not beat them.

F-1637. Do you get your commission out of the wages of the coolies?—No, not out of their wages. If a man does a rupee's worth of work I get paid a commission on that work by the garden.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. H. COPELAND, Manager of the Cinnamara Tea Estate.

F-1638. *The Chairman*: Would you first of all tell us the length of time you have been Manager on this estate?—I have been 8 years in Cinnamara.

F-1639. And Cinnamara is one of the 13 gardens of the Jorhat Tea Company?—Yes.

F-1640. What is the total acreage and the acreage under tea?—Cinnamara and Goeeahabie together have 1,326 acres under tea. Out of this total, 1,096 acres is in Cinnamara. The total acreage of the Cinnamara grant is 4,007 acres (minus Goeeahabie).

F-1641. Of the balance how much is paddy land and how much is jungle?—The area under paddy is 1,807 *bighas* in Cinnamara and 334 *bighas* in the other estate, a total of 2,100 *bighas*. The balance is jungle.

F-1642. You are well off proportionately in the matter of paddy land?—Yes.

F-1643. What is your total population?—We have about 3,047 souls on Cinnamara, a total labour force of 2,257. This does not include Goeeahabie.

F-1644. Have you got them divided into men, women and children?—No.

F-1645. With regard to recruiting methods, you recruit only by means of *sardars*?—Yes.

F-1646. How many *sardars* did you send out, how many returned and how many coolies did they bring with them?—In Cinnamara in 1928-29 we sent out 117 *sardars* and 17 of them did not return. The rest brought 195 coolies.

F-1647. I think that is an unusually large proportion of *sardars* who have returned?—Yes.

F-1648. Did I understand you have a sufficient number of coolies, over 2 per acre or so?—About 2·16 per acre.

F-1649. Is there any reason why you continue your recruiting?—Just to keep touch with the country.

F-1650. You do that systematically?—Yes, every year.

F-1651. Do you send down practically every coolie who asks to go out as a *sardar*?—Very nearly every coolie.

F-1652. In some cases do they take it as a form of leave to go to their own country?—Yes.

F-1653. You recognize that?—Yes, I do.

F-1654. You consider that as a means of giving them a holiday in their own country?—Yes.

F-1655. You are not disappointed if a certain proportion of them come back without any recruits?—No, not at all.

F-1656. Have you any idea of your losses through *sardars* who never return?—Last year I sent down a number of coolies as *sardars* and some of them have not yet returned. They might return after some time, but if they do not return within one year I take them off my books.

F-1657. Have you any suggestion to make as to any improvements in the present method of recruiting?—Personally I should think that if the Assam Labour and Emigration Act is repealed it will help us.

F-1658. You think that the present Act is too restrictive on the methods of recruiting?—Yes.

F-1659. Are you in favour of a system of recruiting by responsible agents who need not be *sardars* besides *sardari* recruiting?—Yes, but I should not like to express a definite opinion without consulting the other manager in the Company.

F-1660. Your Company is a member of the Indian Tea Association?—Yes.

F-1661. I think they have recommended an additional method of recruiting under proper control?—Yes.

F-1662. You give a man Rs. 12 and a woman Rs. 6 at the end of 12 months. In what light do you yourself regard that payment?—As a work bonus.

F-1663. Is that for good work done for the past year?—No, for the coming year.

F-1664. The idea is to give an incentive to the coolie to do good work for another year?—Yes.

F-1665. Do you take a receipt for the amount from the coolie?—We take the thumb impression in a book.

F-1666. We are hearing from the coolies that they are still under the impression that the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, XIII of 1859 is in operation and that it implies an obligation upon them?—It takes many years for an impression like that to be wiped out of the coolie's mind.

F-1667. Do you not think that the thumb print might make the coolie think that there is some obligation?—It might, yes.

F-1668. Have you ever considered doing without thumb impression?—*It is* for the audit to say that. We are audited from Calcutta every year.

F-1669. Do they call for the thumb prints?—They call for receipts when big sums of money are paid.

F-1670. You do not take thumb prints for the ordinary wages?—They are small amounts paid weekly.

F-1671. We have been told that in some cases the thumb print has recently been done away with. Have you heard of any such cases?—No. Two or three coolies have come before me and have said that they did not want to give their thumb prints. I then put my signature to show that the amounts have been paid.

F-1672. Would not your mark be a sufficient verification of payment made in every case?—I think it is more to make the coolie realize that he has got the money.

F-1673. You yourself are aware that the older coolies at any rate think that this is part of the old agreement?—Yes, most of them do.

F-1674. Could you suggest any method of removing that impression from their minds?

Col. Garbett: What do you tell the coolies when you hand over the money?—I tell them that this is a bonus for their good work for the coming year. The coolies all muster together. I crack a joke with them, tell them that this is a *bakshis* for them and hand over the money personally.

F-1675. *The Chairman:* When we were in the recruiting districts we were trying to find out the reasons for the obvious reluctance of people to go or to recommend migration to Assam for tea garden labour. And the impression we got was that they still regard Assam as a very distant country where people disappear if they once go there and are never to be heard of again. Of course an impression of that kind is probably the biggest blot on your recruiting if it is general in the recuiting areas. A suggestion has been made that there should be a system of repatriation at the desire of the coolies. If a family at the end of three years, after having had a reasonable time to learn what the life is like here and what the opportunities are for them, felt unhappy and wished to go back to their own country, they should be repatriated. Do you think that a system of that kind would be acceptable to your Company?—I am not quite in a position to reply to that question. But I do not see why it should not be tried.

F-1676. I suppose you do have a certain number of recruits who are unsuited to the climate or to the conditions of work on the garden and are unhappy here?—Yes.

F-1677. I believe you do actually in many cases pay their expenses and send them home again?—Yes, we have done so.

F-1678. In fact you do not wish to keep a discontented coolie or family here?—I have no wish to keep them here.

F-1679. Therefore you would have no objection to a system where it would be one of the conditions of coming to Assam that a family, after they have had sufficient time to learn the life and conditions here, if they felt unhappy and wished to go back to their home country, should be free to do so?—I cannot say. It is for the management to say that.

F-1680. Supposing it had the effect as it might have, of doubling the number of persons offering to come to Assam, it would give you an opportunity to select the kind of recruits you want for the work on the gardens?—Yes, it would.

F-1681. At present under the *sardari* system anyone whom the *sardar* can persuade by hook or crook and who can pass through the test of the depôt comes up here. Sometimes you find them arriving in a miserable and weak condition?—Yes, we do get them like that sometimes. We generally return them.

F-1682. Return them after all the expense?—Yes. We return coolies of that kind to the depôt within a week of their coming to Assam.

F-1683. That must be a very heavy expense to any tea garden?—We occasionally get people who will never settle down to do any work; they have been beggars in the bazaars and they are not going to work here. We get rid of those undesirable persons.

F-1684. The *sardari* system sometimes results in a considerable number of undesirables being brought right up to the gardens and then being sent away?—Yes.

F-1685. Whereas if you had a larger number of applicants than you desire to take you would be able to make a proper selection at the other end and see that only likely men were sent up here?—Yes.

F-1686. *Mr. Cliff:* Is the cost of returning home such persons paid by the Tea Districts Labour Association?—No, the cost of recruitment and the cost of returning home such persons are paid by the gardens themselves.

F-1687. *The Chairman:* There is a very substantial loss in the present method of recruiting?—It is only very rarely that such cases come up.

F-1688. It is evident from the figures you have given that the *sardars* you have sent down are better men and more effective than those we have heard of in some other cases because you have a larger proportion of recruits through your *sardars*?—Yes.

F-1689. You do not specially pick out men and send them down as *sardars*?—No, they come to my office and say, "I want to go. I shall bring some coolies with me when I return." I put them a few questions and satisfy myself and then send them down.

F-1690. If there was a system which resulted in twice as many men in the recruiting areas wanting to come as your gardens were prepared to take, then your recruiting agents would be able to exercise a much better power of selection and send up people suited to the life and conditions of work here and more likely to settle down permanently?—Yes.

F-1691. Could you give us your health figures? Have you got the birth-rate and death-rate?—For a population of 3,000 the total number of births in 1929 was 86 and deaths 68.

F-1692. What about infant mortality?—I have no figures ready.

F-1693. With regard to still births, are they counted as a birth and a death or are they entered in a separate register?—(*Dr. Mawson*) They are counted as a birth and a death. We show them also in a separate column.

F-1694. I suggest it would be much better not to include them either as births or deaths and show them separately. Could we have these figures to-morrow?—(*Mr. Copeland*) Our doctor will supply them to-morrow.

F-1695. *Mr. Cliff:* What was the maximum number of recruits brought by anyone *sardar* in 1929?—10 or 11 was the maximum. One *sardar* brought 11 recruits and two others brought 10 each.

F-1696. How much did these *sardars* get for this recruitment?—The one got Rs. 180 and the others got Rs. 160 and Rs. 140, respectively.

F-1697. What is the difference due to?—We pay Rs. 20 per head. We pay less for children.

F-1698. Is this apart from all the travelling and other expenses?—Yes. This is what they actually get in the garden here. They often keep the money with me and take it whenever they want it for buying cattle or for any other purpose.

F-1699. *Sir Alexander Murray:* What do the coolies get on reaching your garden?—We segregate them in the depôt for 10 days and then they come up to my office. I give Rs. 5 to each man, woman and working child in order to help them to settle down.

F-1700. *Mr. Cliff:* Take the question of the task to be done by the coolies. They told us just now that a coolie did 8 *nals* or 40 bushes and was paid 4 annas. Is that correct?—The whole thing is a unit. The garden you saw has 5 bushes to the *nal;* it varies according to the planting of the tea. That is the pruning unit. They can do as much as they like.

F-1701. Take the piece of work which we saw them doing just now. Do you agree with the statement made by the coolie?—I disagree with him. The man pointed out 8 bushes and called that a *nal,* but really 5 bushes make a *nal* in that particular section.

F-1702. He does 40 bushes and is paid 4 annas?—Yes.

F-1703. With regard to the time taken to do the work the *sardar* said roughly that he came at 9 o'clock and finished his work by 3 o'clock, the time when tea was brought. Is that a fair statement?—Yes, they spend a good deal of time on the road taking tea and having rest. They spend a full hour like that. It depends on the weather.

F-1704. Could you tell us what wages the man in front of us earned for the last few weeks?—I could give them by referring to the books.

F-1705. I gather that the *sardar* gets 1 anna on some gardens for a rupee worth of work done by his men. How much do you pay on your gardens?—I pay the *sardar* two pice per rupee worth of work done by the coolies besides his own wages.

F-1706. Could you just take two men and show us their respective earnings over a period, any reasonable period?—I have not the books here.

F-1707. *Sir Alexander Murray:* You pay them weekly?—Yes. But the staff gets paid monthly.

F-1708. With regard to the agreement, I think, on one garden to which we went there was a system of taking receipts, on another they took the thumb impression. I understand the old agreement used to be on stamp paper. Do you continue that form even now?—No, we have no stamp paper. We take a thumb impression in a book.

F-1709. I believe the Tea Association sent out a circular when the Act was repealed?—Yes.

F-1710. Did you get a circular?—Yes.

F-1711. What did the circular say?—I could not say without referring to it. Generally it said that the Act was repealed and that agreements under that Act could not be entered into after a certain date.

F-1712. Do the *ex-officio* inspectors, the Government officers inspect the wage books?—Yes.

F-1713. Do they inspect the books containing receipts for advances and bonuses?—They have never asked for them. The Deputy Commissioner inspects the garden and we produce before him whatever he wants.

F-1714. Government publish half-yearly returns in March and September each year showing the average wages of the coolies. Is the bonus included in that?—Yes, everything is included in that.

F-1715. *Col. Garbett:* The coolie by name Bhuta whom we examined this morning used the word "*hazira.*". He said he was paid 4 annas for doing the *hazira.* You are now working on the unit system?—Yes.

F-1716. Why then does he use the word "*Hazira*" now? That used to be the case in the old days only?—It is the unit system we have on our garden. The coolie does four units and gets 4 annas. In the old days he used to call his work "*hazira*" and probably that has clung to the coolie. It used to be 4 annas then for a *hazira.*

F-1717. Your system is purely a unit system?—Yes. We pay 1 anna for so many *nals,* and call it a unit.

F-1718. *The Chairman:* In your view what is the amount that a good worker can earn working 8 hours a day?—It depends on the work. A good coolie can earn Rs. 1-4 to Rs. 1-8 in the plucking and hoeing seasons, but is not capable of doing it regularly.

F-1719. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* What does the average come to?—12 annas in the rains.

F-1720. Throughout the year?—In their half-yearly return for last September Government give the average earnings of the coolies as follows: men, Rs. 13-5, women, Rs. 13-4-7 and children, Rs. 9-13-8.

F-1721. *The Chairman:* These figures I understand are a complete average for your garden?—Yes.

F-1722. They apply both to men who have paddy lands and those who have not?—Yes.

F-1723. I take it that you have not paddy lands for all who would like to have them?—No. But it is our object to provide paddy lands for all.

F-1724. When the men first come here, as a rule they do not get paddy land?—No.

F-1725. It is only after they have worked for 2 or 3 years that they get any paddy land?—Not necessarily. They can have it even after a year.

F-1726. A man who has no paddy land and has no other work to do except probably gathering firewoood in the jungle, and is prepared to work all the working hours with a view to saving money and buying bullocks or paying rent and taking up paddy lands, a man like that will be in a position to earn more money, I take it, than one who has to spend part of his time on his own paddy land?—Yes.

F-1727. You mix up these two classes in your average?—Yes.

F-1728. How much on an average will a man who works on the garden only earn?—An old coolie who has got acclimatized to the place will earn 8 to 12 annas on the average.

F-1729. Have you any number of coolies who do actually earn 8 to 12 annas?—Yes, in the season at this time of the year, it is very cold and they work from 11 to 3 and if they wish they collect firewood and go home.

F-1730. *Mr. Clow*: You have some experience of the recruiting districts?—Yes. I used to go down supervising the *sardars* for the Jorhat Tea Company.

F-1731. Did you notice any reluctance on the part of the people to come to Assam?—Yes, I noticed that in some of the villages where I had been. I could not get to the bottom of it, but I feel sure that the Assam Labour and Emigration Act had a lot to do with it.

F-1732. What years were you there?—Before the War from 1909 to 1914 I went recruiting every year in the cold weather.

F-1733. If there was free recruiting would there not be the danger of the *arkattis* coming in?—That is what we want to avoid. We could adopt measures to prevent that occurring. They would certainly try to sell coolies to those who are doing recruiting work.

F-1734. You showed us this morning a number of lines. I understand the people are free to go down and build their houses where they like?—Yes.

F-1735. Can anyone do that, a new or old coolie?—Yes.

F-1736. You have no *chowkidars* there?—We have *chowkidars* there in the Christian lines, but not in the *busti* lines.

F-1737. What is the function of the *chowkidar*? Is he to see that the coolies do not leave the garden?—No, not at all. A coolie, if he wants to leave, generally leaves in the night. When a *chowkidar* sees a coolie bundling up his stuff he generally asks him the reason for it.

F-1738. If a coolie wants to go does he go to you and ask your permission?—Yes, I have people coming up to me and asking to leave.

F-1739. Are there many coolies who have done this?—Yes. Some of these coolies who have left me like that are now breaking stones and metalling the road. I do not mean old coolies who stay in the *busti* and come and work here whenever they are hard up for money.

F-1740. In connection with welfare work do the managers and superintendents find any difficulty in getting sanction from the Agents to undertake such work?—I do not think so.

F-1741. You have never been refused?—Never.

F-1742. *Miss Power:* Is the expenditure on welfare work debited to capital account or revenue account?—To revenue account.

F-1743. *The Chairman:* Even if it is a capital expenditure such as putting up a new extension to a dispensary?—It comes out of revenue account unless it is the case of a big new building.

F-1744. *Miss Power:* If a manager wanted to build a small school or a small dispensary or anything of the kind it would affect his remuneration through his commission, if the expenditure comes out of revenue account?—Yes.

F-1745. *The Chairman:* Therefore a manager who goes in for improvements of that kind which are not charged to capital account is really doing it at his own expense?—Yes, but one gets only a percentage as commission on profit.

F-1746. *Miss Power:* Suppose a man had no rice land and spent his full day on the garden; would he be better off than a man who spent only a portion of his time on the garden, and spent the remaining portion in cultivating his own rice land?—It depends on the amount of land he possesses. We allot 1 or 2 *bighas* of land to each man according to the number of members in his family.

If a man has more than that it will be a disadvantage to others who have no rice lands. If a man has only one *bigha* he would be better off than a man who works full time on the garden.

F-1747. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Where exactly do you draw the dividing line?—I should say up to 3 or 4 *bighas* a man will be very well off; he would not want to work much on the garden.

F-1748. That is 1½ acres. What is the average holding?—Some coolies have five to six *bighas*. There are some very old coolies who have been here for many years who have big families. Some of them have 5 *puras*. I am trying to cut it down so that everyone may have an equal share of rice land.

F-1749. *Miss Power:* A man who has an exceptionally large area of rice land and works it properly does very little work on the garden?—Yes.

F-1750. The more the rice land the less the work he does on the garden?—Yes.

F-1751. Therefore it pays you to give a man only a moderate amount?—Yes, so that he may have occupation both at home and in the garden.

F-1752. *The Chairman:* A man working on his own land does not necessarily reckon the cash; he is doing his own job?—Yes, that is so.

F-1753. *Sir Alexander Murray:* A man working on his own land is contented?—Yes.

F-1754. It raises his status also?—Yes.

F-1755. Have you many cases of coolies owning *khet* lands and leaving the garden?—No, coolies owning lands very rarely leave the garden.

F-1756. I mean people who have secured a certain amount of money, rented Government lands and left you?—We have cases like that.

F-1757. After how many years' work on your garden do they leave you like that?—It rests with the man. He can do that in 3 or 4 years and probably even less. It depends on the caste of the man also; certain castes are very keen on saving money.

F-1758. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* How many of your people did that last year?—I think in the Hattighue division there are a large number like that. It will be about 60 out of a total population of 3,047.

F-1759. *Col. Garbett:* In other words a family can come here and work for 4 or 5 years and then be in a position to retire on their land?—Yes, if they make up their minds to do so when they come up.

F-1760. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* That means they will be able to buy a pair of bullocks, because I understand they only pay rent for the land and do not buy it?—Yes.

F-1761. *Sir Alexander Murray:* With regard to the commission charges, I believe the Jorhat Tea Company pays the managers a salary and a commission?—Yes.

F-1762. On what basis is the commission paid? Is it before debits of capital expenditure or after debits of capital expenditure?—I think the supervisor will be able to answer that.

F-1763. You gave answers to one or two questions and I thought you said that the expenditure was first debited before the commission was charged?—They have a system in the company by which we get a commission on profit of revenue expenditure but not on capital expenditure. That goes to block account.

F-1764. You do not know how the books are made and what goes to revenue account and what goes to block account?—No.

F-1765. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Do you agree with Mr. Withers that an outsider should not be allowed to come on a tea estate for the purpose of organizing the workers into trade unions?—I think that if anyone wants to come on my garden he should inform me first.

F-1766. You remember the case of Erena Telenga who was charged under section 447, I.P.C., for criminal trespass?—Yes.

F-1767. He denied the charge and said that he had come there looking for work. You laid a complaint against him with the result that he was convicted for having caused annoyance to you?—Yes.

F-1768. Of what did the annoyance consist?—There was a rumour that some people were trying to induce my workers to strike. To prevent that I wanted to stop any outsider coming into my garden without informing me first.

F-1769. The charge against him according to you was that he had come here for the purpose of organizing the workers into trade unions?—I do not know what his purpose was.

F-1770. I have the judgment here. It says that the accused stated that he came here for the purpose of speaking to the workers about their *desher katha*, the story of their own country. He was then caught hold of by the *chowkidar* and the *mohurer* and taken to the police. Then six of your witnesses and the jailor were examined in that case. It was held by the Magistrate that there was no evidence on record to prove that this man was in touch with any trade union organization or was sent here by any trade union. The judgment runs: "I find that the accused entered into the Telenga line of Cinnamara Tea Estate at 7 p.m. on 4th August 1928 with intent to cause annoyance to the garden authorities. I hold the accused guilty of criminal trespass and convict him accordingly..... As a sentence of fine will not meet the requirements of the case the accused is sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for a month under section 447, I. P. C." Do you think that you have power as it is to take such action against any outsider who comes here either with the object of speaking to your workers on the conditions of their country or of their own condition or with the object of organizing them into trade unions?—Yes, if the man comes on my land without informing me first.

F-1771. *The Chairman:* Was this particular gentleman known to you before?—No. I do not know the gentleman himself. But Mr. Sahoo was here at that time and it was given out that he was going to induce the workers to strike. We had to keep out everyone connected with this gentleman.

F-1772. Do you know the previous record of this gentleman?—We do not know more than that it was said he was connected with Mr. Sahoo. Any stranger coming in at that time, we took it that he had some connection with Mr. Sahoo.

F-1773. You know that the judgment says there is nothing on the record to prove his connection with Mr. Sahoo. The annoyance consisted in this that it was said that these people had come here to organize the workers. Such things are easily known all over the country and this particular case was given wide publicity. Could that not have something to do with the unpopularity of migration to Assam?—I could not say.

F-1774. Would you be prepared if it was recommended that the roads on your Estate should be acquired by Government and turned into public property?—I am not in a position to answer that.

F-1775. Do you think a step like that would go far to create a better atmosphere here?—I am not in a position to give any opinion on that point.

F-1776. I take it the practical state of affairs is that the roads are your private property and closed to outsiders?—We do not want to allow people who want to create mischief.

F-1777. In that particular case there was no mischief?—But we were in that pitch at that time; we thought any stranger coming in at that time might do some mischief. The man came here at 7 o'clock. He ought to have come to me first.

F-1778. You are aware that a man seeking work or looking for some relative might come in any hour of the day?—Day, but not night.

F-1779. Is it not possible that a man after a long journey might arrive at 7 o'clock?—Yes.

F-1780. What would a worker who has no paddy lands and who works all the time on the garden earn per week?—It depends on the class of work.

F-1781. Could you take 10 of your workers from your books and give us the total wages they earned during the course of the year?—I see from the books that one man has earned Rs. 201-5 in one year.

F-1782. What is the average earning?—I should put it at Rs. 155.

F-1783. *The Chairman:* That is a man without paddy land and who is keen on work?—Yes, that is the average; but he could do more than the average.

F-1784. Not an exceptional man, but a good keen worker?—Yes.

F-1785. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* The memorandum submitted to us by one of the planters here says that there has been very little increase in the wages during the last few years and that the wages earned by the coolies are not sufficient to keep their body and soul together. Do you agree with that statement?—I do not agree.

F-1786. The man whom we saw just now said that he got Rs. 1-8 last week. Do you think that that is very much of a margin for a man like that?—You saw that the man spent a good deal on liquor. And a man like that does not do hard work; he probably works for two days in the week.

F-1787. You are probably aware that the City of Manchester consumes more liquor than the Province of Assam. As far as this man's consumption of liquor is concerned is it not more or less in the shape of food, a sort of nourishment?—Provided it is taken in the right quantity.

F-1788. Generally speaking on your estate,—I want you to give me your candid opinion—is there very much of a margin for an average worker in the wages that he earns?—An average worker should be able to save between Rs. 21 to Rs. 30 a year.

F-1789. *The Chairman:* In what way is this income registered,—in the purchase of bullocks and so on? Have you any figures to indicate the savings of these people?—I will try and get you the figures.

F-1790. How many cattle are there?—There are 1,171 cattle and 631 goats on the Estate of Cinnamara.

F-1791. For a population of 3,000 souls?—Yes.

F-1792. Any sheep?—There may be one or two; they are included under goats.

F-1793. *Mr. Cliff:* Dealing with cattle, is it possible Mr. Copeland to give us any figures with regard to the people who have been here during the last five years as to the number of cattle, goats and sheep they own?—I could not off-hand give the numbers. But I can say that a good many of the coolies who have been here for five years and less than five years have bought goats, cows and bullocks.

F-1794. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* How is it that at Digboi they are able to get their labour without any complex system of recruiting as you have? They get plenty whereas you are not able to do so?—They do not come under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, I presume.

F-1795. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* No, recruitment generally to Assam is covered by the Act.

F-1796. *The Chairman:* There is no lingering prejudice in that case as in the case of the tea gardens?—Yes, that is so.

F-1797. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Could it be also a question of wages?—I do not think so.

F-1798. The average wage there is 14 annas a day which is obviously not the wage you pay here?—That depends on the class of work. I do not think an unskilled coolie is any better off there.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I refer to an unskilled coolie.

F-1799. *The Chairman:* There is no work there for women in the same proportion as here. There only 300 women out of 8,000, if I remember aright. Here they reckon the joint earnings of a man, woman and possibly a child?—Yes.

F-1800. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* You said a little while ago that you were not against the formation of trade unions?—No.

F-1801. If an attempt were made to form a trade union here you might not be anxious to take action under section 447 of the Indian Penal Code?—I have to do what I am ordered to do by the Company.

F-1802. Suppose the Government of India was under a pledge to allow freedom of association for agricultural workers and took such legislative steps as were necessary to see that trade unions were permitted to be formed without let or hindrance, would you support that action?—I have to discuss the matter before I could express an opinion.

F-1803. You are perhaps aware that the Government of India have ratified the 1923 Geneva Conventions regarding freedom of association of agricultural workers. The Government have taken no legislative step because they said that is not necessary. If it is proved to be necessary, would you support or oppose action of that kind as far as the tea estates are concerned?—That question should be addressed to the association.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. C. K. BEZBARUAH, Boloma Tea Estate, Nakachari P. O., Assam.

F-1804. *The Chairman*: Will you let us have your wages book and advances book?—The wages and advances books for 1929 have been sent to Calcutta for audit.

F-1805. What is the acreage of the Boloma Tea Estate? How much is under tea and how much is other land?—There are 225 acres under tea. There are some 1,000 acres altogether, but I am not able to give the exact figure.

F-1806. What is the population living on the Estate?—I have not got the exact figure. It is between three and four hundred.

F-1807. Do you belong to the Indian Tea Association?—No.

F-1808. How do you do the recruiting for your labour?—I am a member of the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-1809. You obtain your labour through that Association?—Yes.

F-1810. Recruiting by *sardars*?—Yes.

F-1811. How many recruits did you have last year and the year before?—I do not remember—only a few.

F-1812. Now I want to turn to your written statement?—There are some mistakes in the copy which was sent to the Commission. It was written when I was ill and I had not time to look over it.

F-1813. Would you like to correct anything in it?—This is my corrected statement (handing in copy).

F-1814. In the copy supplied to us you said: "The coolies are at liberty to leave the garden provided they clear their debts incurred from the garden taken on emergency." I see you have now struck out the words "provided they clear their debts incurred from the garden taken on emergency"?—That should not have been struck out. That is the rule. They have to pay the advance before they go. If they go it is because they run away without paying. It is the rule of the garden that they shall pay up their debts and then go.

F-1815. Does this garden give Rs. 12 at the end of a year?—I give Rs. 10 bonus to the men and Rs. 6 to the women. If some of them want the money as an advance they can take it beforehand.

F-1816. That is one of the advances which must be repaid before they can leave?—That is not an advance. It is quite separate from an advance. It is a bonus.

F-1817. When the Rs. 10 bonus is paid to them, do they give a thumb impression as a receipt?—Yes.

F-1818. May we see the book with the thumb impressions in it?—Yes. (The book was produced.) This is not this year's book, but last year's book. This year's bonus has not yet been given out.

F-1819. You say that you have labour living in the *bustis*. How much labour comes from the *bustis*?—Of the *faltu* labourers which I get some live on our own land and some on Government land. They come in batches of 50, 60 or a hundred. (These figures indicate the number of outside *busti* coolies only.)

F-1820. When they come do they work under the same conditions and at the same rates as the other labourers on the estate?—I have the same rates for the men on the coolie lines and for the men in my own *bustis* and for the men in the outlying *bustis*.

F-1821. What wages do you pay? Do you pay on the unit system or on the *hazira* system?—I give wages on the daily *hazira* system and not on the unit system.

F-1822. How much a day does the coolie earn on your system?—I give 6 annas to the men for the *hazira* and 5 annas to the women. At that rate a man gets Rs. 9-12 and a woman gets Rs. 8-2 per month. But above that they can do *ticca* work.

F-1823. How long does the fixed work take to do?—If a man is healthy and he is doing light hoeing he can finish it in four hours. Otherwise some take 8 hours to do it.

F-1824. You say in your statement: "thus a labourer can earn double wages *per diem*"?—I do not say that for every consecutive day a man can do double work. He may do it for one week but not for the next, or he may do it for one day and not for the next. He cannot do double work for every day in every week.

F-1825. You speak rather strongly about the amount which is spent on drink by the coolies. Is there a drink shop on the estate, or near by?—There is no liquor shop on the estate. The nearest liquor shop is six miles away. Sometimes they go to it on a festival or anything like that, but otherwise they do not go.

F-1826. You say: "A coolie spends more money on liquor than he should, leaving only a fraction of his weekly or fortnightly wages with which to buy the necessaries of life." Does that mean that they make liquor themselves on the estate?—That sentence is wrong. A man generally saves enough to buy the necessaries of life, and then he drinks with the rest. There are some who are habitual drinkers—about 5 per cent.

F-1827. You say "Under the prevailing rates of wages in tea gardens, it is my honest conviction that the present wages are quite inadequate for the average coolies to keep their bodies and mind together"?—From my experience, the 6 annas and 5 annas which I give are not sufficient for them to live on. It may be sufficient for a man and his wife, but if they have children it is a case of starvation. If they want clothes it means going without a meal in order to get them.

F-1828. Then you say "If the coolie can accumulate a little sum he stays in the *busti* permanently." That seems rather to contradict the previous statement?—About 10 per cent. of the labourers do that. Some of them make their money in the plucking season. That is the time during which they save money. It is only a hard working labourer who can save money.

F-1829. About 10 per cent. of them do save money and live in the *bustis*?—Yes, those who have been a long time on the garden.

F-1830. You say: "Deductions ranging from 2 annas to 8 annas are made for an advance taken or for small loans taken on emergent cases." Does that mean the repayment of the loan, or is that interest on the loan?—It is not interest. It is a deduction from the actual advance.

F-1831. For what purpose do the coolies get advances?—Sometimes they take advances for their *poojas* or to buy cattle. Sometimes if a man is not working for a week he wants an advance to carry on.

F-1832. How many cattle are there on the estate?—I do not know; many of the people have cattle.

F-1833. *Mr. Cliff*: How do you get the people to come out to work in the morning?—The *chowkidars* are supposed to call for the men and get them to come to work. They begin calling them from about 8 o'clock and between 9 and 10 they arrive at their work.

F-1834. If a man is a lazy man and does not want to work what happens then?—He is asked "If you do not work how will you be able to earn enough to eat," and if he does not listen—if he still wants to stay away—he is left alone.

F-1835. Does he continue to live on the garden if he will not work?—He is told "If you will not work on the garden you had better go."

F-1836. Have you ever known of a man being dismissed because he would not work?—I had an instance about a week ago of a man like that. He said he could not work at all. He said he would rather beg than do work, and I told him to go.

F-1837. Do the *chowkidars* ever get cross and hit the men?—I have not heard of things like that. When things occur like that and some *chowkidars* beat or abuse the men, the matter is taken up and compensation is paid to the man who has been beaten.

F-1838. Does that mean that some men on this estate have been hit by a *chowkidar* and have had compensation paid to them?—I have not had that occur for a long time. Cases like that are very rare. I do not remember when I had a case like that.

F-1839. Does the *sardar* ever get cross and hit the people?—I have no instance like that.

F-1840. *Dewan Chaman Lall*: Would it be brought to your notice?—Yes, they would come and tell me.

F-1841. *The Chairman*: There is an appeal, is there not, on the part of the coolie, if force has been used. He can go to the magistrate?—Yes, he can go.

F-1842. *Mr. Cliff*: How far is the nearest magistrate from here?—The police station is four miles away from here. I had an instance of a *mohurer* beating one of the men and so I told him to go and lodge a complaint, and it was done. I dismissed the *mohurer* afterwards and the coolie is still on the garden. He was paid compensation.

F-1843. Is any agreement used when advances are given?—No, there is no agreement.

F-1844. Who is responsible for keeping this receipt book?—An office clerk.

F-1845. Does he enter this book up in the form in which it is entered up under "Instructions," namely, date of old agreement and date of new agreement, in pen and ink?—For the last year and a half it has not been done like that. Some of them have been taking advances, but not all. Since the last year and a half I have not given any advances like that.

F-1846. Have you got a receipt book for the bonuses other than this particular one?—No.

F-1847. Is this the only one?—Yes. Sometimes they want more than the advance allowed to them—say for two years. In that case a stamped receipt is given and the thumb impression taken on it.

F-1848. A civil agreement?—Yes.

F-1849. In the book there is stated, in 1928, the date of the new agreement. In the book we have had does the date of the new agreement refer to the civil agreement which is now instanced?—It is the new civil agreement.

F-1850. Would it be possible to see the civil agreement to which this book refers?—It is only when they want more money than the bonus that they take the agreement form.

F-1851. Written in this book, 1928, is "date of new agreement." I want to know what agreement that refers to?—It is a mistake of the clerk. It should not have been "new agreement." It should have been "bonus."

F-1852. Have you seen this book?—I have not personally seen it.

F-1853. Is the bonus given for the succeeding 12 months' work?—They are told "We give you Rs. 10 and you have to work the next 12 months."

F-1854. In 1928 there are a whole number of bonuses given on the 4th of the seventh month. There have been no bonuses before that date. Then there is entered another set of bonuses on the 3rd of the eighth month, and then a few on the 16th of the eleventh month?—These have been given to them at different periods when they have asked for them.

F-1855. The record shows that there is no entry for any date earlier than July. Then there is another series of bonuses given in August, and another series given in November. They have no relation to the year 1927 in regard to the 12 months. I want to find out how it comes about that the bonuses are given under three separate periods without any relation to 12 months in 1927. I want to know how this book proves that you give a bonus for 12 months?—All those people who have asked for the money have been given it.

F-1856. Are there a number of people who do not get the bonus?—Yes.

F-1857. Can we see some of the stamped civil agreements?—Yes.

F-1858. You say that extra *ticca* work is done. Can we have the wages book. Will you take the month of September last year and show us cases of extra *ticca* work?—That book has gone to Calcutta for audit.

F-1859. Your memorandum shows that the coolies used to work 8 hours a day. Now it has changed over to a new system of work. When was that change made?—I used to pay monthly, and then I started fortnightly payments. Now I pay weekly. I used to find when I gave monthly payments that the coolies used to take advances quite a good deal, not knowing what they were going to get in the month. Out of the three sorts of payments, I find the weekly payment is the best.

F-1860. Reading your memorandum it appears to me that the average man, if he is healthy, can hoe a *hazira* in a day. Is it an average man's day's work hoeing a full *hazira* of land?—An average man can do that amount of work.

F-1861. Is it clear that *hazira* here agrees with what is stated here, namely, that a man is hoeing 30 *nals*?—For his light hoeing a man does 30 × 1; for a little harder hoeing than that it is 25 × 1, or even 20 × 1.

F-1862. Is that equivalent to the *hazira*?—During April, May and June a man can do 30 × 1 as his day's *hazira*. When the rains start he can only do 25. But it is according to the time of the year.

F-1863. If you say that a man cannot live on the wages you pay, why do you not pay him a higher wage?—I have not raised the wages because I can get labour at 6 annas, and I find that all the surrounding gardens are paying the same amount. I do not see any reason why I should raise it.

F-1864. Do you pay a fixed rate to the *sardars* and do you pay a commission. If so, how much?—I pay weekly wages to the *sardars* according to their grades. They have fixed rates, but also grades.

F-1865. Do they get a commission?—They are allowed commission for *ticca* work—one anna in the rupee. They get that commission because they remain on the field longer if *ticca* work is being done. It is only for the *ticca* work that they get commission.

F-1866. It is one anna in the rupee on the *ticca* work?—Yes.

F-1867. *Mr. Ahmed*: Does that come out of the coolies' wages?—No.

F-1868. *Mr. Clow*: When did your books go to Calcutta for audit?—On the 4th or 5th.

F-1869. Did the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1922 visit this garden?—No.

F-1870. They made no enquiries from you?—No.

F-1871. *Col. Garbett*: Who are the auditors in Calcutta?—My own office.

F-1872. What name?—The Boloma Company.

F-1873. What address?—26, Park Lane.

F-1874. *Mr. Clow*: It is not true that when the Labour Enquiry Committee came round in 1922 your books had been sent to the auditors' office?—No.

F-1875. Just now a number of coolies came up to me and complained that they were severely beaten with whips. A woman said that to me too. Is that true?—I do not know about it.

F-1876. Can you suggest why they should have said that if it is not true?—I do not know.

F-1877. Do you pay higher wages than the other gardens round about?—I am not sure, but as far as I have heard I think I do pay more than the other gardens.

F-1878. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have any outsiders access to your garden without your permission?—There is no right of way, but everybody can come in.

F-1879. If you do not want anybody to come in you can prevent him from coming in. The roads are private?—The roads are my own so they are private.

F-1880. Is it within your experience that the magistracy in this Province generally favour the tea planter in cases where the tea planter takes action against the workers or where the workers take action against the tea planters?—I do not know for certain, but I think sometime ago there was a case and it was decided in favour of the planter. I saw it in the papers.

F-1881. What case was that?—I do not remember.

F-1882. Does the magistrate usually side with you when there is a case between a coolie and you?—I have not had a case against a coolie for a long time.

F-1883. If you consider that the wages are starvation wages, why do you not pay the coolies better wages yourself and make a move in the matter, and get all the tea planters in this district to give better wages to their workers?—Not being a member of the Tea Association I have not proposed anything.

F-1884. Have you anything to say about recruitment?—I find the present system of recruiting very expensive. Each recruit costs from Rs. 125 to Rs. 150.

F-1885. *The Chairman*: Will you show us your book for recruiting expenses for the last two years?—I cannot give you an account of what each individual has cost.

F-1886. Do you keep, like other planters, a book showing each *sardar* and the expenses of each *sardar*?—Yes.

F-1887. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What suggestion have you to make about recruiting?—There are several Indian companies. They want to form their own recruiting office and apply for a licence. They have applied during the last two years, but they have not received sanction.

F-1888. *Sir Alexander Murray*: To whom did you write the letters?—The Calcutta office wrote to the Government of Assam.

F-1889. Asking to be formed into an association?—Yes.

F-1890. What reply did they get?—The Assam Labour Board recommended it, but we have not heard anything more from the Assam Government.

F-1891. When did you make the application?—About two years ago.

F-1892. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Are you in favour of a re-constitution of the Assam Labour Board, provided it is recommended that it should continue to exist on the basis of an equal representation of workers and of employers?—I do not agree with the present scheme. We suggest raising the number of members from 9 to 16. But I have not got the scheme with me.

F-1893. Is that the scheme providing that each recruiting area should have a representative on the board?—Yes.

F-1894. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say you are in favour of raising the wages of the coolies. Do you think they will be more efficient if they receive higher wages?—It is very hard on the coolies that their wages have not been raised, because the cost of living has risen.

F-1895. If their wages are raised and thereby they get more to eat, do you think their efficiency will be increased?—I think if they had better living they would be able to work better, because better living will produce better health.

F-1896. If they are given the opportunity of primary education do you think they will take advantage of it, and thus uplift their condition?—I think that education will be good for them, because they will know how to live better, and they will know their rights, and so on.

F-1897. *The Chairman*: Have you a school on your garden?—No.

F-1898. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say that the present system of recruiting coolies is very expensive. Do you think that if a public employment bureau were established, it would be a better system?—I do not mind.

F-1899. *Miss Power*: Is there any maternity benefit scheme in operation here?—I have no hard and fast scheme, but when a child is born I give Rs. 5.

F-1900. During the time a woman is at home on account of child-birth does she get any compensation for lost wages?—No.

F-1901. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say in your memorandum that you give two months' leave before child-birth and three months' leave after child-birth. Do you keep the woman without any pay for those five months?—Yes.

F-1902. *Col. Russell*: Have you a doctor on the estate?—Yes.

F-1903. What are your main diseases here? Do you get malaria?—(*Dr. Chakravarti*) Yes, we get a good deal of malaria sometimes.

F-1904. There is a good deal of hookworm on the estate?——One or two cases.

F-1905. Do you know a hookworm case when you see it?—There are none here.

F-1906. I have seen half a dozen cases already myself. Besides malaria and hookworm do you get much dysentery?—Rarely. In June and July there are dysentery cases here.

F-1907. How many births did you have on the estate last year?—Ten.

F-1908. What is the total population on the estate?—From three to four hundred.

F-1909. How many deaths did you have on the estate last year?—Eleven.

F-1910. Were all the births and deaths registered?—Yes.

F-1911. What was the total expenditure on medical supplies for the year 1929?—I cannot give it for 1929 as the accounts have not been made up, but for 1928 I can give it to you.

F-1912. *Sir Alexander Murray*: From the Government returns I see that the average pay in September was about Rs. 10 for a man and about Rs. 10 for a woman. That is about Rs. 20 for a man and a woman. Is not that sufficient for them to live upon?—For a man and woman it is quite enough, but when they have children it is not enough.

F-1913. Is not Rs. 20 sufficient in this country for a man and woman with two children to live upon?—No. They may be able to get enough to eat with the money, but it is not possible for them to buy extra things such as clothing.

F-1914. *Rev. Saikia*: Do you give any pension to the old coolies on your garden?—No.

F-1915. During the winter do you give the coolies blankets, etc.?—Yes.

F-1916. You say that you consider that education is necessary. Why have you not provided school arrangements on this estate for educating the children?—None of the other gardens have done it, and I have not done it either.

F-1917. On the wages they receive, after paying for the necessaries of life, do you think that the coolies can afford to pay for the education of thier children?—No, I do not think that is possible.

F-1918. *Mr. Cliff:* I see that in March 1929 loans were given amounting to over Rs. 1,000. Was there any special reason why over Rs. 1,000 should be given in that month?—It is the time to buy cattle and other things.

F-1919. Where do you keep a record of repayments of the loans by individuals? The deductions appear in the wages book.

F-1920. Can you identify *that* signature (handing document to witness)?—No.

F-1921. One of your staff said I could have the original of that. Will you hand it in?—I will get a copy made and send you the original.

F-1922. Can you let us have a signed agreement which shows the consideration for which a man signs a document of that character. I would like a signed agreement with the amount stated?—I will send it on to you. The man who is in charge of office is not here at the moment.

F-1923. *Rev. Saikia:* Do the coolies know that there has been a repeal of Act XIII of 1859?—I do not know.

F-1924. *The Chairman:* When did you begin the use of this civil agreement? Since the repeal of the Act I introduced this agreement.

F-1925. Would you be in favour of giving a right to every coolie to be repatriated at the Company's expense at the end of three years if he was unhappy in his work here?—Yes. I am quite willing to send him back at the Company's expense after three years.

F-1926. If that were generally known do you think that would add to the contentment of the people, and also tend to freer recruiting in the recruiting districts?—Yes. I thoroughly believe that if the coolie and his wife could go back after three years they would be more contented, and that we should also be able to get more labour. Considering the present fall of the tea market, though it may be hard on the tea gardens to raise the present wages of the coolies, yet some sort of device should be adopted, such as reducing the crop or prohibiting bad teas to be sold in the market, or burning of bad teas, to save the tea industry, and thus to enable the gardens to raise the wages of the coolies.

(The witness withdrew.)

KADAMONI (a woman coolie).

F-1927. How long have you been on this garden?—Three years.

F-1928. Where did you come from?—Raipur.

F-1929. Did the *sardar* bring you here?—No, I came of my own accord. I came from the Noakachari garden with my husband.

F-1930. Do you work on the tea garden?—I work on the garden every day.

F-1931. How many hours a day do you work?—I go to work between 6 and 7, and I return home at 5.

F-1932. How much did you make last week?—My weekly wages I got to-day, and that was Rs. 1-2-6.

F-1933. Was that for working six days in the week?—Yes.

F-1934. Did your husband work six days?—Yes.

F-1935. What did he earn?—He got Rs. 2.

F-1936. Have you any land?—When I came here I did so with the idea that I would get one *pura* of land, and a pair of plough cattle, but I have been given two-thirds of an acre of paddy land, and as I have no plough cattle I take half and the person who supplies the cattle takes half. I get no time to do the paddy cultivation.

F-1937. If you want to work on your land, and not on the garden, on any day are you free to do so?—No. I get no leave.

F-1938. If you want to take a day off and work on your land are you not allowed to do so?—No, I get no leave.

F-1939. Are you ever beaten on the garden?—Yes, the babu and *chowkidar* beat. Everybody beats except the manager of the garden.

F-1940. What were you beaten for?—If I do less work I am beaten. An employee who gets Rs. 4 also beats me.

F-1941. What are you beaten with?—With a cane.

F-1942. How often were you beaten last week?—I have never been beaten, but the other women have been beaten.

F-1943. Why were you not beaten?—I am not frightened of speaking, so I do not get a beating.

F-1944. Have you ever asked to leave the garden?—Yes. If my name is struck off I will go away. I have not got any advance, and I have never taken any *girmit* money.

F-1945. Have you ever asked for your name to be taken off the books of the garden?—Yes, I have.

F-1946. Who did you ask?—I have spoken to the manager to strike off my name, but he has not done so, so I have not gone.

F-1947. Do you wish to stay here or go back to your country?—You can send me to Raipur, or you can send me to my old garden. I came from another garden to this garden.

F-1948. Was the condition in the other garden better than here?—The conditions of the gardens are the same. There are the same troubles, only I thought when I came here I would get land for cultivation. That is why I came here.

F-1949. Will you go back to the other garden if the sahib sends you?—Yes.

F-1950. You would prefer the life on the other garden where you were before?—Here I get for my *hazira* 6 pice. At the other garden I used to get 5 annas, so I was better off there. Can I have my name cut off the register here so that I can go home?

F-1951. Do the *chowkidars* come round at night to see if you are there?—Yes, he comes round at night to see if we are at home. He flings the door open even if we are not properly dressed. I am even made to work when I am ill.

F-1952. Would you prefer to go back to the garden where you were before, or to go to your home country?—I do not mind where you send me, whether to my country or to the other garden. I want to leave this garden. Since I have been on this garden I have been having a life of great severity, hardly getting a handful of rice to eat. I would be quite pleased to go back to my old garden if I am allowed to go.

BHANO (a woman coolie).

F-1953. How long have you been on this garden?—Two weeks.

F-1954. Where did you come from?—Balijan Tea Estate.

F-1955. Who did you come with?—The *arkatti* enticed me here.

F-1956. Does he work here?—Yes. He is here in the garden. He brought four of us. Two have run away, and me and my husband are here.

F-1957. What did the *arkatti* say to persuade you to come to this garden?—He told me that if I came here I would be able to earn a lot of money, and after earning that money I could go home to my own country.

F-1958. Do you wish to go back to the other garden?—Yes.

F-1959. Do the others who came with you want to go back?—They have run away. Me and my husband have remained.

F-1960. Do you know the name of the *arkatti*?—Yes, Janumeah.

Would you and your husband go back to the other garden if you were sent by the sahib?—Yes.

F-1961. Have you had your weekly wages?—No.

F-1962. Have you been beaten since you were here?—No.

F-1963. Have you any children?—I have no children with me. They are in my country.

F-1964. How long have you and your husband been away from your country?—Three years.

F-1965. Have you not had your children with you?—Since I have been here I have not had my children with me. They have been in my own country for the whole three years. Because I cannot go home I am very uphappy at not seeing my children.

F-1966. You would wish to go home with your husband?—Yes, I would like to go home.

F-1967. When you were on the other garden, from which you were enticed, did you want to go home?—Yes, even on the other garden I wanted to go home.

F-1968. Did you ask to go home?—Yes, I asked to be sent back.

F-1969. Would you bring your children here if you went home?—I would not bring them here, but I would go every year and see them.

F-1970. Have you had any children here?—No.

CHUTTAN (a male coolie).

F-1971. Where do you come from?—From Ledo. I really belong to Sitapur near Lucknow.

F-1972. How many years have you been in this country?—One year in Ledo, and ten months here. An *arkatti* brought me here.

F-1973. What work did you do at Ledo?—I was a waterman in the cookhouse of the manager.

F-1974. Why did you come here to the tea gardens?—The sahib got angry with me and told me he would send me to the mine. I have never done work in the mine, and I got frightened and ran away.

F-1975. And then you came here?—I came to Nakachari first. Then I met the *mistri* at the station who told me "You can come and do water carrier's work" and he brought me here. He said "It is very good work, and it is a very good place." When I came here I was given a brass plate and a brass cup and a little iron cooking pan, and some rice and *dal*, and my name was written in the books and I was sent to the lines.

F-1976. Did you have to put your thumb print?—No.

F-1977. Do you like to work in the tea garden?—No, I do not. I will die if I stay.

F-1978. Did you come alone or with your wife?—My wife is in my country. I have come alone. I have got my family and mother and father in my country.

F-1979. Do you wish to bring your wife and relations here, or do you wish to go back to them?—I would rather go back to my country. I will not remain here.

F-1980. What was the name of the *mistri* who brought you?—He has gone away. I only know he was a fair man.

F-1981. Do many men run away from here?—A lot of people do run away, but I have not run away because I am frightened in case I am beaten with a whip. The skin all comes off your back.

F-1982. Have you been beaten?—I have never done any bad work.

F-1983. Have you seen any other people beaten?—Yes, I have seen a lot of people being beaten.

F-1984. You have not been beaten yourself?—No.

F-1985. Have you been to hospital with your hand?—I have gone to the hospital for a week. You are not given any money while you do not work?—They send me to work, but I cannot work with this hand.

F-1986. You said you were sent to the lines. Who do you live with?—I live alone in the lines.

F-1987. What wages do you get?—I work from six to five, and I get ten pice. Even when I go for a call of nature the *chowkidar* keeps an eye upon me in case I should run away.

F-1988. Have you saved anything?—When I was working as a servant I saved a little money, and sent it home—Rs. 25, but here I am starving, and sometimes I go without food.

F-1989. At any time you want to leave this place you can leave. There is no law which compels you to remain on. Have you any debts?—No, I have no debts.

Evidence before Sub-Committee, at Baloma Tea Garden, 10th January 1930.

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E. — DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. — MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.

(1) Mt. Miriam Musulmani (woman coolie).

F-1990. *Mr. Clow*: Where do you come from?—From Ballia district.

F-1991. When did you come here?—A year ago.

F-1992. What do you wish to complain about?—I want to get my name cut off the books so that I can go back to my own country.

F-1993. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Were you beaten?—Yes, by the *babu*.

F-1994. When?—A week ago.

F-1995. What were you beaten with?—With a cane.

F-1996. Have you any marks?—Yes, on my arm. (The witness exhibited a bruise in the form of a double line several inches long on the lower arm, which in Col. Russell's opinion was probably not caused by a cane.)

F-1997. Why were you beaten?—I was plucking old leaves at the end of the season and I had finished one block. I asked the *sardar* if I could go on to another block. The *babu* said I was to finish that block, turning round at the head. I wanted to go to another block.

F-1998. *Mr. Clow*: Was your boy beaten too?—Yes.

F-1999. Why?—Because he came to save me he was beaten too.

(The boy, Suleman had what were, in Col. Russell's opinion cane-marks on the thigh and hip and corroborated this statement of his mother.)

F-2000. When did this happen?—Two weeks ago.

F-2001. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Did you get any advance of money?—No.

(2) Suleman, (Musulman).

F-2002. *Mr. Clow*: Is this your mother (Mt. Miriam)?—Yes.

F-2003. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Are you watched here?—Yes, even when we go to answer the call of nature.

F-2004. Can you not leave if you wish?—No, we cannot leave.

F-2005. Did you get a *girmit* advance?—No.

(Miss Power left.)

(3) Babu J. Chakravarti, Doctor.

F-2006. *Mr. Clow*: You are doctor on this estate?—Yes.

F-2007. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you know this woman (Mt. Miriam) and her son?—I have known them for six or seven months.

F-2008. Did they come to you when they were injured?—The boy showed me two cane marks, one on the thigh and one on the hip. They could have been caused by one stroke.

F-2009. Did the woman come to you and show any mark?—She said "I was beaten on the lower part; how can I show you?"

F-2010. What is this mark on her arm?—I cannot say whether that is a cane mark or not, but she didn't show that to me.

F-2011. *Mr. Clow*: Did you beat a man for eating cow's flesh?—They eat rotten cow's flesh, and I warned him thrice. Then when I went to him he caught my neck and pushed me, and then I beat him.

(The man's back and back of the left arm exhibited a number of bruises which, in Col. Russell's opinion were made by a cane.)

(4) Ramswami, labourer.

F-2012. *Mr. Clow*: Where do you come from?—From Waltair district.

F-2013. If you wish to leave the garden, are you able to do so?—The manager and the *chowkidar* keep us back.

F-2014. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How do they keep you back?—We are kept here by the *chowkidar* and sometimes beaten, and the *chowkidar* goes round at night with a lamp, and even opens the door to see if we are there.

F-2015. *Mr. Clow*: How could you get away without money?—I would do it by begging and would work if I could find it on the way.

F-2016. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why do you not go to another garden?—They do not allow me to leave.

F-2017. Did you get a *girmit* advance?—No.

F-2018. Never?—Not in the three years I have been here.

F-2019. *Mr. Clow*: Has your thumb impression been taken?—My mark was taken when I came to the garden.

F-2020. How did you come to Assam?—I came to Chaprai garden near Nakhwa in Sibsagar.

F-2021. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How long did you stay there?—One year.

F-2022. How did you get here?—At Amgur station an *arkatti sardar* told me that if I came and worked on this garden I would be able to save money.

F-2023. Did he give you anything?—No.

F-2024. Where is he now?—He has run away.

ASSAM.

Fifty-second Meeting.

JORHAT.

Saturday, the 11th January, 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMAD, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
MR. JOHN CLIFF.	

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA. .. .. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
LT.-COL. H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budla Beta Tea Company, Limited. }

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN, ... *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN. .. .. .. }

Mr. W. G. McKERCHER, Chairman, Mr. J. M. KILBURN, Vice-Chairman, Mr. E. J. NICHOLLS, Mr. E. S. ROFFEY and Dr. McCOMBIE, representatives, of the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association.

F-2025. *The Chairman*: We have a short paper from your Branch giving us your membership and the acreage of tea that you cover; am I to take it that you come also in support of the memorandum submitted to us by the Indian Tea Association?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Yes.

F-2026. Did your Branch take part in the drawing up of that statement?—Yes.

F-2027. And therefore we may take it that that represents the views in the main that you wish to put before the Commission?—Yes, in the main. Under "The need of retention of control" I propose to substitute the word "control" for "legislation"; that is the only thing.

F-2028. *Colonel Garbett*: Do you agree that legislation is necessary as a safeguard?—No, I consider the necessary form of control can be obtained without legislation, namely, by the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association and the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-2029. Do you agree with Mr. Brett's evidence at Patna as reported in the *Statesman* on the 19th December objecting to the un-controlled system of recruiting?—No. I understand Mr. Brett objected to the uncontrolled recruiting because (1) of the impossibility of a coolie returning home against the will of his employer, and (2) labourers could not be traced by their relatives.

With regard to the first objection, I consider his statement is a libel on the tea industry, as the coolie can and does leave the estate for other work whenever he likes; as to his second point, every recruit is and can be registered in the recruiting depôt.

F-2030. *The Chairman*: My recollection and that of some of my colleagues is that the newspaper report is not to be taken as an authentic record of what Mr. Brett said to us.—Then I beg your pardon.

F-2031. That caveat should appear on the record?—Yes.

F-2032. Will you complete what you were saying?—There is a register kept of every coolie brought in and every *sardar* sent down.

F-2033. *Colonel Garbett*: It means that a labourer leaving the recruiting district can be traced if required?—Yes. Of course, I agree there should be a system of registration.

F-2034. *The Chairman*: Will you tell us a little more about this Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association; you have told us in your statement that your Association was formed in 1889 and the present membership represents 251,277 acres of tea?—(*Mr. Roffey*) Since that note was sent in, the acreage has increased; it now amounts to 280,139 acres.

F-2035. How does that affect the percentage which you represent?—The percentage is practically correct; we represent 89½ per cent. of the total area under tea in the Assam Valley.

F-2036. Is it possible for a tea garden without being a member of your Branch still to be a member of the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Yes.

F-2037. There is no necessary connection between the two?—No.

F-2038. How often do you hold meetings of your Branch of the Association? —(*Mr. McKercher*) The General Committee meet twice a year and sometimes three times; if anything important crops up it meets more frequently. Then there are 15 Sub-Committees which hold meetings periodically: every month when the rains will permit it or when there is anything important to discuss. They are responsible for reporting to the General Committee anything unusual, and then, if necessary, a General Committee meeting will be called.

F-2039. Will you tell me the kind of business that is conducted?—The Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association was formed on the 29th October, 1889, with a membership representing 76,692 acres of tea. Its objects are (1) to take up all matters connected with the Tea Industry needing attention, (2) to keep as much as possible in touch with Government and other associations and bodies having the same or like objects in view and (3) to maintain a united feeling in the province. All companies, proprietors or persons having or owning tea estates in the Assam Valley are eligible as ordinary members. For administrative purposes the Assam Valley is split up into 15 centres, namely (1) Doom-Dooma, (2) Dibrugarh, (3) Panitola, (4) Tingri, (5) Moran, (6) North Lakhimpur, (7) Sonari, (8) Nazira, (9) Jorhat, (10) Golaghat, (11) Nowgong, (12) Bisnath, (13) Tezpur, (14) Borsola and (15) Mangaldai. Each of these centres containing members of the Association, elects a District or Sub-Committee annually from their number, and each of these District or Sub-Committees is entitled to one representative on the General Committee for every complete membership area of 9,000 acres within its jurisdiction, but no District or Sub-Committee may be represented on the General Committee by less than two members. These representatives form the General Committee who manage the affairs and funds of the Association and select their own Chairman and Vice-Chairman whose duties, like those of the other members of the General Committees and Sub-Committees are honorary. The present membership of the Association represents 280,139 acres of tea.

F-2040. In addition to what I may call protecting the industry and looking after the interests of the industry in matters of legislation and administration, does your Association consider the constructive improvement of the tea industry? —Yes.

F-2041. You have told us that your whole executive only meets two or three times a year?—That is the General Committee; the other Committees meet monthly or approximately monthly.

F-2042. Are there meetings of the whole Association at any time?—Yes, there is a General Meeting once a year.

F-2043. Have you any means of encouraging individual managers to bring forward their ideas for the improvement of conditions generally in the tea

industry?—Yes; the Sub-Committees represent the gardens in the different small areas, and any garden of any size has representation. Anything brought forward is considered by the Sub-Committee and forwarded to the main body or headquarters.

F-2044. Clearly in such a widespread industry there must be a good deal in the nature of experiment for the improvement of conditions in the industry by individual planters?—Yes.

F-2045. I am anxious to know if your Association affords a means for bringing into the common stock the ideas of individual planters so as to try and bring all the estates up to the level of the best?—If there is an estate rather behind the rest, or any complaint against an estate, it would come before the Committee.

F-2046. How would it be dealt with?—It would be sent to the Sub-Committee for enquiry and the Sub-Committee would report to the General Committee. (*Mr. Roffey*) Although there may be only three meetings of the General Committee in the year, an enormous amount of opinions is obtained and forwarded to the General Committee by circular. I think during the last year I have sent out upwards of 150 circulars for the opinion of the General Committee. The difficulty is that members of the General Committee live days journeys from each other and therefore it is very difficult to hold meetings of the General Committee, but the opinions of the members of the General Committee can always be obtained by circular or letter if not at meetings.

F-2047. Let me take a particular instance, *viz.*, the question whether or not a thumb print should be taken, or what is called a civil agreement should be used, when what is called the bonus of Rs. 12 is paid at the end of a year's service. Is there any common policy in your Association on that matter?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Generally speaking there is no civil agreement at all, but it is quite a common practice to take the thumb print. That bonus follows on from the old agreement bonus, but at the present time it is considered in our part of the world to be a privilege to give a coolie that bonus; he has to be a good working coolie in order to get that bonus. It is given to him annually in consideration of work he is going to do in the coming year, and unless one is reasonably sure he is going to do that amount of work, there is no object in giving it to him. For instance, in my own individual concern, when a man has worked for 12 months, he comes up to the office and asks for the bonus; his record is then looked up, and if during the last year, which consists, say, of 313 working days, he has not worked 220 days, his absence being not on account of sickness or leave, he is told he cannot get the bonus because he has not worked up to that total of 220 days, that he can go on working and can have the bonus when he has worked that number of days. It is not necessarily given to him at the end of one year, but is given to him when he has completed 220 days of work.

F-2048. Now you are describing the practice on your own particular estate?—Yes, and, so far as I know, in Upper Assam that is the general practice.

F-2049. In the course of our investigations we have already come across three different practices in regard to that bonus.—There is a big variation; it is a very large area. We actually would much prefer to give that bonus say monthly to every man who has worked for 20 days during the month, giving him Re. 1 for the month, but the coolie much prefers to get a lump sum of Rs. 12 which goes towards buying cattle or jewellery; he says that if he gets Re. 1 monthly he never notices having it, and fritters the money away, but if at the end of the year he gets Rs. 12 and his wife gets Rs. 10, which is our custom, he gets a lump sum in his hand at one time and is able to buy cattle.

F-2050. But we are persuaded from some of our investigations that in the mind of the coolie there is an idea that this bonus involves some tie or obligation?—Quite so, and I should think that is perfectly justified; otherwise, why should he be given the money? If he is not going to do anything in return for it, why should he have it?

F-2051. You have been describing to us a system by which it is given for good work during the past year?—No; that is the qualification for getting it. He would not be given the money if he were not likely to do good work in the coming year; his past record is a guarantee for his future.

F-2052. But the three different practices which we have come across are these: in the one case taking what is called a civil agreement from the man on the payment of the bonus; you are aware that that practice exists?—I was not aware until very recently; I did not know that it did exist; I thought it had gone entirely.

F-2053. The second is the taking of a thumb print as a receipt for the money; is that done on your estate?—That is done on our estate; that is fairly general.

F-2054. And the third is where no thumb print is taken; the money is simply paid. We have come across those three different practices, and I am asking whether your Association has any common policy on a matter of some importance of that kind?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I do not know of one.

F-2055. The matter has not been discussed?—No, not to my knowledge. (*Mr. Roffey*) May I draw your attention to the local Government's Immigrant Labour Report for June 1926; in paragraph 6 it says this: "During the year Act XIII of 1859 expired. Both Commissioners agree that this has had no effect upon the industry, as the Act had long been dropping into disuse. In the Assam Valley only one agreement in 842 came into Court. The practice of giving advances continues, but they are given merely as bonuses, and upon the freedom of labour in Assam there is no longer any legal restriction."

F-2056. That is perfectly correct and we understand that; I am not at the moment dealing with legal restrictions but with the impression in the mind of the coolies generally. There can be no question from the evidence that we have already had that the impression lingers in the minds of the coolies that they are bound for a year by the acceptance of this bonus?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I think that is correct; I agree with that.

F-2057. And am I correct in saying that some coolies decline to take or do not ask for the bonus?—Yes, 25 per cent. in some gardens. It depends on the status of the coolie on the garden very frequently, but I should say 25 per cent.

F-2058. And they decline to ask for the bonus because they think it will have some effect in restricting their freedom?—I would not say that; they do not take it when they have land, or because they may like to work when they like and that sort of thing. I do not mean to say that they do not take an agreement when they intend to go away; permanent people who have possibly been on the garden 30 years say: "No, I am not going to take it," but the next year they may come and ask for it.

F-2059. But still it is quite clear that your Association has not made an endeavour to get a common policy?—No.

F-2060. You will appreciate that it probably has a substantial effect upon recruiting in the recruiting areas if the idea still lingers that there is a tie?—Yes. We have never had this brought up before; it has never come before the Association in my time.

F-2061. *The Chairman*: That is the very reason why I am suggesting that the usefulness of any employers' association to a large extent is in the opportunity to develop common policies for the good of the industry as a whole and not merely looking at the individual estates. Further, with regard to the question of recruiting, we have, of course, been paying visits to the recruiting areas and endeavouring to satisfy ourselves as to what the feeling is in the recruiting areas and what reason there is for the difficulty in recruiting and the reluctance to come to Assam. I take it that all of you, or most of you, could still do with much more labour than you are able to obtain through the present recruiting system; is that the case?—Yes.

F-2062. And we have found that there is still a feeling, in spite of the improvement of communications, that Assam is a country so far away that once people have gone to Assam they are lost. It may be an unjustified feeling, but there it is; it undoubtedly exists. Now it has been suggested that if everyone who came to Assam had the right of repatriation at the garden's expense after three years, that would make a very substantial difference to the feeling in the recruiting areas and greatly increase the flow of recruits, it may be so that there would be more wishing to come to Assam than you have room for. It is the case, I believe, with regard to emigration to Ceylon that there are more would-be emigrants than can be taken, and I suppose that is the ideal which you would like to reach in Assam?—I think that would be very excellent; subject to the opinion of the Association, I would agree to it.

F-2063. You would agree to it being a distinct established right of coolies, if at the end of three years they felt themselves unhappy and did not wish to settle, that they should be repatriated at the expense of the garden?—Yes: But what would happen after three years in the event of a strike? You would have a definite period; you would not have it so that if there were a

political strike or anything like that, the gardens would have to pay the fares of the whole labour force back to their home countries. There is a danger there. There might be a general exodus.

F-2064. I am well aware of a danger of that kind; I am only for the moment putting a broad proposition. There would have to be certain protective conditions so that it would not lead to a mere mass movement for a temporary reason. But speaking generally may I take it that if a system were worked out which gave that right to the coolie, you would be in favour of it?—Yes, personally I favour it.

F-2065. I understand that under the present system you do get a certain number of coolies sent up here who are so obviously undesirable that you yourself repatriate them after a few weeks?—Yes, on arrival. I will not say that happens very often. They are supposed to be medically examined in their country; occasionally we find some have been missed, or a man or woman is unhappy; it pays to send them back.

F-2066. You want to have a contented and prosperous labour force?—We want a happy labour force.

F-2067. And you want the system to be such that your agents in the recruiting areas could exercise much more discrimination than they do at present?—Yes, that would be a very good proposition.

F-2068. On the question of the feeling in the recruiting areas and the distance that Assam is away, can you tell us anything about the amount of correspondence there is between coolies on your estates and the people they have left behind in their country?—There is a considerable correspondence.

F-2069. Do you as managers take any interest in encouraging interchange of letters?—Yes, and the *baboos* also write for them.

F-2070. Have you ever considered the question of encouraging that by, for instance, providing the stamps, providing some body who was prepared to write letters, to facilitate and encourage inter-communication?—No, I cannot say I have, but the office staff do a lot of work of that description. We have not a special man for that; the coolie may have to pay a pice or two for it; I do not know anything about that.

F-2071. We had a case the other day of a man who had left his wife behind him, and in 11 months, except that he had sent Rs. 10, there had not been a single letter exchanged between the man and his wife, so he told us; that seems rather a long time?—It does seem a long time.

F-2072. *Colonel Garbett*: I have known several gardens where the managers do take particular interest in this subject. In my own garden we have a separate little building with a writer there ready in case any labourer wants to write to his relations.

F-2073. *The Chairman*: That is an exact illustration of what I am suggesting. It is not a fault which is peculiar to this Association of employers, it exists in other industries; it may be this Association is not being as useful as it might be because ideas such as we have just heard of are not brought forward for the advantage of all the others in the industry, and the Association does not achieve its full constructive possibilities unless that is done.

The witness: I will make a note of that; it is not an expensive item. (*Mr. Nicholls*) Letters and messages are also carried by *sardars* when they go back to their country to relatives to a very large extent.

F-2074. *The Chairman*: But having regard to the quality of the *sardars* that you send down, it is rather doubtful how far that is useful; no doubt it is the main channel of communication at present?—Yes.

F-2075. Take the case of maternity benefits; I observe that many gardens give very liberal maternity benefits; but, as far as you are aware, is there any common practice in your Branch?—(*Mr. McKercher*) We have had correspondence on that. They are given full pay for three or four months; it varies a little. The medical officer generally recommends what leave the woman should have; he sees her weekly or twice a week when he comes round and he gives the leave; the manager has nothing to do with the leave. That is the case in our own gardens, but I cannot speak for the other gardens.

F-2076. There is no agreed minimum benefit?—Yes, we passed a resolution recommending three months. (*Mr. Kilburn*) The general practice is to give much more than that. (*Mr. McKercher*) Four or five months is given according to the health of the woman.

F-2077. In that regard you have passed a general recommendation to your members as to a minimum?—(*Mr. Roffey*) On the 28th March, 1925, the following resolution was passed by the General Committee at a meeting: "That a minimum maternity benefit of three months full pay should be granted by all members of this Association."

F-2078. Since 1925 how far has that been carried out?—(*Mr. McKercher*) It is general so far as we know. (*Mr. Kilburn*) Most do better than the minimum. (*Mr. McKercher*) I think our average is 4 months; it all rests with the medical officer.

F-2079. Do you agree that the *sardari* system of recruiting is not very satisfactory?—In 1895 there were 154,789 acres of tea in Assam and the labour force was 194,661. To-day both the acreage and the labour force is three times what it was then.

F-2080. But in the memorandum submitted by your Indian Tea Association it is admitted, I think, that the *sardari* system of recruitment is very expensive and not very effective; I think the statement is made that something like one-third of the *sardars* do not return?—Yes, I agree.

F-2081. Then would you agree that the system to which you are restricted by law at the moment is unsatisfactory?—Yes.

F-2082. And you yourselves suggest that in the first place alongside the *sardari* system there should be an additional method of recruitment?—Yes.

F-2083. That is, recruitment by authorised and responsible agents who at the same time should be subject to the licence and control of Provincial Governments; that I think is your own suggestion in your correspondence with the Government?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) The system of *sardari* recruitment is satisfactory without the restrictions of Act VI; our objection is to the restrictions under Act VI, which are so unfair to Assam. *Sardari* recruitment without the Act as it is done by the Tea Districts Labour Association for the Dooars is entirely satisfactory while under the restrictions of Act VI Assam is entirely dissatisfied. A scheme which gives such poor results for such heavy expenditure is entirely unsatisfactory. There are agents established for supervising *sardars* and forwarding coolies. They cannot be treated as employment bureaux or anything of that kind; that is against the law. They are not allowed to do any propaganda work; that is against the law. Suppose a man has been on a garden, and wishes to return to it. After being some years on a garden he wishes to return to his own country. He returns to his own country and finds conditions in his own country are not what he thought they were, and then wants to go back to the garden on which he had previously worked; he is a voluntary emigrant. Except in Bengal and the Central Provinces, the only course open to the local agent is to wire to the garden asking them to send a *sardar* to recruit this man. That is an absurd proceeding and the waste of money is dreadful.

F-2084. I think I may say we are well aware of the extreme restrictions under the present law which are partly due to interpretations of the law by the Courts which stand now as binding legal decisions; but that confirms my suggestion that the present system is not satisfactory?—Exactly; it is not satisfactory; we are entirely agreed on that. It is not the system so much as the restrictions imposed by the Act. The system of *sardari* recruiting is proving entirely satisfactory to the Dooars though it is exactly the same system as the Assam system, except that in the one case it is under the restrictions of Act VI, while in the other case it is without any restrictions at all. The organization which supervises the Dooars recruiting is an organization built up by Assam, but it is not trusted to carry on the recruiting for Assam.

F-2085. Have any of you experience of this short-term recruiting for 6, 9 and 12 months which has been for the last few years chiefly from the Ranchi district?—Yes, there is quite a lot of it in Assam.

F-2086. In that case the coolie is guaranteed repatriation at the end of the term even if it is as short as 6 months?—Yes, and that includes the journey both ways.

F-2087. Why did you institute that system?—Because we were short of labour; we had to get labour to do the work; the other system failed to produce the labour.

F-2088. Have you any figures to show us what percentage of these short-term coolies claim what you promised: repatriation at the end of the term? Did they nearly all go back?—Practically all. They get a bonus and a free

journey backwards and forwards to their country. Having done the 6 months they think they might as well go back home and see what things are like at home, and then come back again to the same tea garden. From their point of view it is money for nothing; from the garden's point of view it is a very expensive form of labour and it would only be done under necessity.

F-2089. Does not that prove that if you had a general system of recruitment under which at the end of a reasonable time in which the coolie could get to understand the life and decide whether or not to settle, he could go back, that would be much cheaper to you than going on with this short-term recruitment?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Yes, personally we think so, but we are not in a position to reply on behalf of the Association. It has to be considered generally because the conditions are so varied throughout the Valley; but our own personal opinion is that we think it would be an excellent thing.

F-2090. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can a man be a member of the Indian Tea Association without being a member of the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Yes.

F-2091. And can a man be a member of the Tea Districts Labour Association without being a member of the Tea Association?—Yes.

F-2092. The two are absolutely separate?—Yes, with regard to membership, there is no connection whatever.

F-2093. Is the Tea Districts Labour Association run for a profit in any way?—No; any surplus is refunded.

F-2094. So that nobody benefits by the high expense of recruitment so far as the Tea Districts Labour Association is concerned?—No.

F-2095. You say they have 42 agencies?—Yes.

F-2096. Are there many officials?—No. I have reckoned it out and establishment charges come to Rs. 18 per coolie.

F-2097. If any other organization were set up to take the place of the Tea Districts Labour Association and maintain 42 agencies, do you think they could do it for less than the Tea Districts Labour Association?—No, certainly not.

F-2098. So that so far as the expense is due to the Tea Districts Labour Association as a recruiting body, that expense would continue?—It must continue.

F-2099. Therefore the heavy expense of recruitment is presumably due to the restrictions that are imposed?—It is due to the small number of coolies per *sardar* owing to the restrictions under Act VI.

F-2100. We have been told by the oil people in Upper Assam and we have had evidence here that the coal and mining industries in Upper Assam recruit very much more cheaply than you do?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) I come from that neighbourhood; our gardens are situated between the oil-field and the coal mines. I have not the slightest doubt that the recruiting for the oil-field is considerably cheaper than that of any garden; that is due to the fact that the gardens contribute most of the oil-field labour and they get all the labour they require with practically no recruiting. The neighbouring gardens have to recruit very heavily to supply that labour. We have been victims of that; we have lost hundreds of coolies during the last few years to Digboi. It is not only the coolies employed directly under Digboi for whom they consider themselves responsible, but we consider they are also responsible for the coolies employed by contractors doing work on the Digboi Oil-field. They put out big contracts with contractors for building works and making roads, etc. In many cases the contractor comes along to do this work without any labour; the first thing he does is to recruit the necessary labour which he does by sending round and offering higher rates than the neighbouring gardens can offer. Naturally he can afford to offer higher rates if he is getting a good contract rate and has no importation expenses to pay.

F-2101. *The Chairman*: Then your recruiting expenses are spread over oil-fields and coal mines?—Yes, and we are populating the Valley. In the vicinity of Digboi there are thousands of acres of very good rice land under jungle, virgin land. My experience is that the ambition of the garden coolie is to become a settler on Government land; they try to achieve that ambition as quickly as possible. Digboi affords a very good starting point for them; they probably have friends or relations in the vicinity who help them to take up the land and can point out good land to them. While the coolie is building a house and cleaning the land he can get work at any time at Digboi for Re. 1 per day.

That suits the coolie very well. The coolies can work at Digboi and make money while they are getting established as landholders. We have hundreds of coolies passing through Digboi in that way; we keep on supplying Digboi with labour at an enormous expense. That is what we object to.

F-2102. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What happens to coolies who are taken away from your garden by a contractor, after the contract is finished?—I think they usually go on Government land; it is an exceptional thing for them to return to the garden on which they have been working before; that is the one thing they do not do. They may go to another garden or live on garden lands.

F-2103. Can another garden take them?—Yes, after a certain period.

F-2104. What is your experience with regard to the coal mines?—We have suffered in the same way with regard to the coal mines, though not nearly to the same extent because the coal mines do not have contractors working for them to the same extent. But the coal mines pay high rates and our experience has been that once a garden coolie has gone to the coal mines and earned these higher rates we cannot get him back. The coal mines are quite prepared to say: "We will not employ your coolies." We communicated with the coal mines about this; I wanted some redress for this, and I suggested that these coolies should be transferred to the collieries. I did not want them back, but as they had left the gardens we asked the collieries to compensate us for the cost of recruiting them. They said: "No, we will not do that, but we will not employ them." If we point out that a certain coolie of ours is working in the colliery, they say: "All right, we will stop his work." But then the coolie goes to the saw mills or some other employment; he never comes back to the garden.

F-2105. As I understand, in the coal mines the miner working underground gets an average wage of about As. 12 a day, the man working above ground gets about As. 10 a day, while no woman can be employed in the coal mines. That means that the miner out of his As. 10 or As. 12 a day, as the case may be, has to keep his family. What is the attraction of the coal mine as against the tea garden?—The rates which you quote strike me as being low.

F-2106. I have before me a circular which is handed by the mining company to the *sardars* when they send them out to recruit?—Is that the minimum rate, because I am perfectly certain they pay much higher rates than those.

F-2107. It is attached to the statement that Mr. King sent in and I hand it to you?—That is the guaranteed minimum wage; the ordinary rate is higher than that. A new coolie coming up from his country is nothing like so efficient at work as a coolie who has spent years in a tea garden and is acclimatized and has more sense.

F-2108. Do you know whether the coal mines send out recruiting *sardars* to Bihar, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces?—I believe the Assam Railway & Trading Company are the largest importers of labour in Assam for any individual concern; they do import labour through the Tea Districts Labour Association, and also outside the Tea Districts Labour Association; they import a lot of labour from Karachi and that neighbourhood.

F-2109. When a *sardar* is sent away to recruit they evidently give him a printed note indicating the attractions of employment in the coal mines; you have in your hand a copy of that note. Do you do anything like that in connection with the tea gardens?—We give the usual question sheet, but nothing like that, not a printed circular. I consider this is a very good system but it is not done by the tea gardens.

F-2110. Do you not think it would be a good idea if you were to print suitable circulars and hand them to your *sardars*?—They might be printed in the vernacular of the recruiting district and would set out the attractions of the tea gardens?—I think it would be an excellent thing. (*Mr. McKercher*) Would that be regarded as propaganda?

F-2111. Not if the *sardar* took the circulars with him. If that were an objection, it would apply to the coal company as much as to the tea gardens. In a garden yesterday a man said he was paid As. 4 or As. 6; when the recruiting *sardar* tells the coolies in the recruiting district that that is all they will get in cash, I suppose the additional advantages which are given by the tea gardens to their coolies will not appeal to the coolie so much as As. 10 or As. 12?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) No, the tea industry seems to be peculiar in that respect.

F-2112. Were you under the impression that you could not do that because it would come under the head of propaganda and therefore would be objectionable?—So many things are open to objection under the Act.

F-2113. Apparently the coal mines repatriate their coolies after they have done 428 days work. Does that appeal to you?—Yes, I much prefer it to a period of time. We consider 220 is a fair number of working days in a year; it is about two-thirds of the number of days in the year.

F-2114. The 428 working days prescribed by the coal mines works out at about two years on the tea gardens?—Yes, but our efficiency is very low.

F-2115. Would it be a good thing if you repatriated at the end of a certain period of time and earlier if the coolie has done a certain number of days work?—I can only speak personally in that respect; it would have to be considered. ((*Mr. McKercher*) I think that is a good idea.

F-2116. *The Chairman*: It is an alternative suggestion which might be considered?—Yes.

F-2117. We have had information here that one garden in what you call the question sheet refers to repatriation at the end of three years. That is an individual garden; it is not a common policy?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) We can hardly form a common policy because some gardens are very much more in need of labour than others, and a garden that needs labour very badly is naturally prepared to go further than other gardens. There are a few favoured gardens which are not particularly anxious to recruit labour and they are not likely to make the terms for recruiting so attractive as a garden which must get labour if it is going to keep going and produce its crops.

F-2118. But if you are to remove once for all the old impression in recruiting areas against Assam, it would be very desirable to have a minimum policy which applied all round to all recruits?—Yes.

F-2119. Any gardens then could do better than that if they chose?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I like that suggestion.

F-2120. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The present system of recruiting is so expensive that it has really broken down?—I would not say it has broken down; last year we recruited 73,000 souls.

F-2121. Can you give us any figures over a period of years to show what has happened to the coolies you have brought in?—There are 600,000 settled on Government land.

F-2122. Where do you get that figure from?—I got it from Shillong for the Simon Commission; it is the figure for 1926.

F-2123. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: According to the memorandum of the Government of Assam actual workers are settled on 159,000 acres.—(*Mr. Nicholls*) The amount of land held by labourers still on the garden books in the Assam and Surma Valleys is 166,229 acres.

F-2124. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I am talking of the number of people not on your books, who have left you?—(*Mr. Roffey*) The amount of land settled direct and as sub-tenants with ex-tea-garden-coolies is: in the Brahmaputra Valley 333,639 acres, in the Surma Valley 47,963 acres, making a total of 381,602 acres. That figure is taken from the Land Revenue Administration (Assam) Report of 1928-29, the current report.

F-2125. *Mr. Cliff*: When you gave evidence before the Simon Commission you said that half a million ex-tea-garden-coolies had been colonized?—That was speaking for the whole of Assam.

F-2126. The statement is: Apart from this, the industry has assisted in the colonization of the Province to the extent of half a million ex-tea-garden-coolies who have settled in the Province?—Yes, but I think the actual figure is 600,000. (*Mr. Roffey*) Paragraph 57 on page 39 of the Census Report says: "In the result I estimate that the total number of foreigners now in the Province on account of the tea industry is about one and a third millions, that is to say, one-sixth of the whole population of Assam." That is in 1921.

F-2127. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That does not take into account children born of those people?—(*Mr. McKercher*) No, and a large number have gone out since.

F-2128. Have you figures that will show us the number of people who came into Assam to the tea gardens within the last 20 or 30 years and how many are now employed?—(*Mr. Roffey*) The total number from 1885 to date is 2,294,143.

F-2129. Where have you got that from?—Between the years 1885 and 1905 I get 931,920 from the 1906 Labour Enquiry Report. For the years 1905 to 1921 the figures of 1,054,181 is obtained from the 1921 Labour Enquiry Report. The total for the eight years 1921 to date, 308,042, I obtained from the Immigrant Labour Reports of Assam.

F-2130. What is the net natural increase of population over the same period?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I think it is 12 per 1,000. I took the difference between births and deaths and put it at that figure. I learn now that Dr. McCombie has calculated it at 7 per 1,000.

The Chairman: We are in the main concerned with the question how it has developed since the last enquiry of 1922. I do not think we want to review again what other people have done before us.

F-2131. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have been told that the coolies are perfectly free to go from garden to garden. But I understand that you have agreed amongst yourselves not to recruit each other's labour. If a coolie who is recruited by A and employed by him goes to B what happens?—The coolie is perfectly free to go and there is nothing to check his movement. But what happens is that B pays a compensation to A to cover the cost of his recruitment.

F-2132. We went to a garden yesterday and we got proof, I am afraid, that the coolies did not consider themselves free to move like that?—That garden is not a member of our Association.

F-2133. Why have you this agreement amongst yourselves?—The Robertson Commission of 1906 recommended this.

F-2134. Does that explain why you have got this agreement?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Owing to the excessive cost of importing coolies we have agreed amongst ourselves that the garden which incurs the expenses and imports the coolie should have the benefit of his services and that if another garden takes him away it should pay compensation to the garden which originally recruited him.

F-2135. *The Chairman*: I take it that this mutual agreement amongst yourselves was really to assist the free movement of labour?—Yes, that was so.

F-2136. So that amongst yourselves it is recognized that it is a fair basis?—In days gone by the custom was that if a coolie wanted to transfer from one garden to another, then another coolie must be transferred from the second garden to the first garden. It took a long time to arrange this mutual transfer and so this system was abolished and a cash compensation was fixed to be paid to the garden which imported the coolie in order to cover their cost of importation. This no doubt assists the free movement of the coolies.

F-2137. I have understood that the motive of the agreement amongst yourselves was to assist the free movement of labour?—(*Mr. Roffey*) May I just quote what the Robertson report of 1906 stated on the subject?—In paragraph 252 they say: "In the Dooars this is secured by voluntary agreement amongst employers, and the ideal would be to see a similar arrangement come to in Assam. From what the Committee learn, however, there seems no prospect of any effective voluntary agreement being adopted. They therefore put forward the suggestion that the Legislature should step in and secure what cannot be secured otherwise." Lower down in paragraph 254 they say: "Were there any possibility of the matter being arranged by agreement amongst the planters themselves the Committee would not have suggested its being legalized." In 1908 the Indian Tea Association, London, framed their labour rules and the Labour Rules agreement was first signed in 1910. Legislation was drafted by the local Government and approved by the Government of India in 1913. But it was rejected by the Secretary of State.

F-2138. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Under the old Act unless a coolie got a discharge certificate he could not get away from the garden. He used to be stopped at the ghats and the railway stations. Does that fear exist to-day?—(*Mr. McKercher*) No.

F-2139. Otherwise we do not understand why the coolies fear to leave the garden?—There are many coolies who leave the garden. (*Mr. Kilburn*) Regarding Dum-Duma I can give figures of the number of coolies who have left the garden which will show that no such fear exists.

F-2140. You have the family system of reckoning wages. But the coal mines, the oil-fields and other industrial concerns pay wages to the man sufficient for him to maintain his family. Have you anything to say on that point?—There is work available for women and children also on a tea garden but not in a coal or oil mine. When such work is available it is good for the labourer if he lives

with his family rather than live alone. It is a much better system and leads to health. There is for one thing less venereal disease when you do not have a large number of single men.

F-2141. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are in favour of removing all restrictions on the free movement of labourers and your Association is prepared to remove any restrictions if they still exist?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) At the present moment all the restrictions in Assam have been removed and they are concentrated in the recruiting districts.

F-2142. With regard to the Assam Labour Board have you any objection if a representative of the workers, any reasonable man, is put on the Board?—(*Mr. McKercher*) We do not want the Labour Board. It has served its purpose and cost us Rs. 25,00,000 in 14 years. (*Mr. Kilburn*) It is an unnecessary expenditure on recruiting.

F-2143. With regard to the roads on your estates, have you any objection to a representative of a union—not a political exploiter—passing through those roads?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Speaking personally I have no objection to a non-political welfare worker visiting my garden. I would personally welcome him.

F-2144. Representative of a trade union?—I do not mind that. I would welcome a non-political welfare worker.

F-2145. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Let us say a representative of an All-India Trade Union Organization?—On that point I agree with Mr. Withers entirely. I support every word of what he said.

F-2146. If a trade union organization recognized by Government sent up its representative what objection would you have?—I will have to consider that question.

F-2147. *Mr. Ahmed*: My friend Diwan Chaman Lall suggested yesterday that the roads in your gardens might be acquired by Government and made public property. What do you think of a step like that?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Government cannot keep even their own roads in repair. Why do they want to acquire our roads also?

F-2148. Inspite of that you have no objection if a representative of a trade union passes along your roads with your permission?—No.

F-2149. What have you done to impart education to the children of the workers?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Most of the estates provide schools. The number of schools has been increased this year by 16 and attendance has increased by 483. The results are not encouraging due mainly to the objection of the parents to allow the children to go to school, because the children also are bread winners of the family. I cannot say that the coolie takes any interest in the education of the child. I may say in this connection that though Assam is 100 per cent. behind other provinces in the matter of general improvements, roads and funds it is only one per cent. behind in the matter of education.

F-2150. *Mr. Cliff*: In their memorandum the Indian Tea Association deal with working conditions, and with regard to wage rates they refer us to up-country associations. It says that "the work is so arranged that the minimum wage is obtainable for a matter of three hours work per day." Would you give me the minimum wage that is obtainable for three hours per day?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) The minimum wage in Dum-Duma is 8 annas for a man and 6 annas for a woman. In addition to that they are allowed 4 annas *ticca* at any time of the year if they are prepared to do that, so that the actual wages are 12 annas and 10 annas. But that is not for three hours work.

F-2151. I understand that your wage standards are a little higher than the standards in the Valley?—Yes. (*Mr. McKercher*) In this district on light hoeing a man can earn his minimum wage in one and a half hours when the garden is clean and two hours when the garden is not clean. Deep hoeing will take a longer time. This must be left to the management because a lot depends on the class of work done by the coolie. After the coolie has finished this task he is given an extra task and he could do whatever he liked. We have the unit system here.

F-2152. I want to take an old standing labourer and see how much he earns in three hours in order to get a measure of minimum wage for three hours work per day?—This question of a minimum wage for three hours work seems to be very much of a phrase at the moment?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) In pruning the minimum wage is 8 annas a day. A man works 23 days a month and gets Rs. 11-8. I have figures of men drawing those wages.

F-2153. But is that 8 annas for three hours work?—A good coolie can complete the work in three hours.

F-2154. That is speaking generally. Take first of all an average old standing labourer. Can he do that in three hours?—Not in pruning but in light hoeing, certainly. Pruning is light work, but takes time. Light hoeing is quite easy work and they can do that quickly, more quickly in the beginning of the season when the garden is clean than later on. On light hoeing at any time of the year a man can earn 8 annas in three hours, and under.

F-2155. I have got deep hoeing, light hoeing, heavy pruning and light pruning, some of the things I have picked up. I want a fairly general statement of the kind of work a man can do to earn his minimum wage in three hours?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I have a statement here from each garden showing the wages earned by 10 best workers. I wrote to the managers and got this statement.

F-2156. My difficulty is this. I have been to several gardens and talked quite frankly with the managers. I saw some tasks rated at 6 annas which the managers have admitted to be 5 or 6 hours work. I have a lot of figures before me; but speaking generally at the moment I have seen no evidence to show to me that I can place any value on this statement which says that a minimum wage can be earned in three hours.—I calculated that a man will earn 1½ annas and a woman 1 anna per hour. We pay them, for one standard of pruning 2 pice a *nal* in the beginning and after they have finished the 4 anna worth of work we pay them 3 pice a *nal*. On that basis I said that the minimum wage could be got for three hours work.

F-2157. I see that men get paid at a progressive rate. But a practical man has got a basis with regard to his payment which he relates to time and I wanted to get this measure of minimum wage. You say that a man or a woman can earn 1½ annas in an hour?—On plucking they can earn 2 annas and more. May we put in a statement of the actual earnings of certain workers on the gardens?

The Chairman: Yes. (Statements put in.)

F-2158. *Mr. Cliff*: I was trying to get information in another valley but I failed to obtain it. Can you give us an approximate idea of the average duration of your labour force?—Some have been here for thirty-six years.

F-2159. What is the average duration?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) In our garden in one case without increasing appreciably the labour force we had, we found we had to import the total labour force in 10 years. That would come to 10 per cent. per annum.

F-2160. With regard to cost of recruitment you have stated before the Simon Commission that it works out to £20 per head at a conservative estimate and that you have spent thirty million pounds on recruitment. Do you accept those figures?—As an example of that in the case of one garden we imported 590 coolies including 166 short-term coolies for 6 months. The expenditure incurred was Rs. 78,248, or Rs. 132 per head. That is in a good recruiting year including a large proportion of short-term coolies. These are our actual figures for one garden. (*Mr. McKercher*) It would be Rs. 260 per head including the *sardar's* commission, loss on *sardars*, etc.

F-2161. It is stated that "the colonization of the Province is the predominant factor in its development. Putting the cost of importation of labour at a conservative estimate of £20 per head the industry has made a contribution of thirty million pounds to the development of the Province." Is that statement a fact?—Yes, taking also into consideration loss of *sardars* and so on.

F-2162. At the present wage rates £20 a head represents the wages of a coolie for 20 months?—Yes.

F-2163. Having regard to the expenditure which the Tea Association incurs for recruitment may I ask whether it is proposed to go on recruiting on the present standard of life that obtains in the tea industry?—We improve them bit by bit every year. You must remember that the industry was in a very bad state. I came out in 1894. Since 1923 we have had some good years I cannot tell you what this year is going to be like.

F-2164. I know there has been a great deal of advance in the earnings. But as a matter of fundamental policy is the tea industry going to pursue the system of recruiting on the existing standard of life in the tea gardens, having regard to the expenditure which you incur on recruiting?—We would be very pleased to see an improvement in the standard of life.

F-2165. That I gather from many memoranda. The Government says that apart from physical welfare there is practically no welfare in the tea industry. Do you accept that fact?—What other kinds of welfare do you refer to?—We have some schools for the education of the children. Some gardens have cinema shows, sports and games like football.

F-2166. It is rather in a spirit of co-operation that I am putting it. I want to share the difficulties of the Commission with the practical planters on the spot. Government say, " It is impossible to introduce suddenly measures suited to the educated labour of other parts of the world. The ground must be prepared before the seed is sown. It is the preparation of the ground that at present demands the most attention." The planters say: We are up against one of the most difficult problems in the world; the obstacle to advancement is the labour force themselves. And the planters also say they would welcome welfare work. What I am anxious to find out for the benefit of the Commission is what is being done. Let us leave the question of hospitals and medical facilities. What is being done by the tea industry to tackle this almost superhuman problem?—The first step is education and we have provided schools.

F-2167. You say as an Association that the first step is education. What is the character of the education that you think is necessary for the tea garden population. Have you any views on that?—I think we have to begin from the bottom with kindergarten work, games and so on. I have no other suggestions to make.

F-2168. I think it is claimed on behalf of Government and on behalf of the tea industry that in looking at the standard of life of the tea garden population the joint earnings of a family must always be taken into consideration. And it has been calculated that on an average a family may be taken to consist of one working man, a working woman and 3/10ths of a working child. I want to apply practical measures to the problem of education and ask you whether as a tea industry you are prepared to increase the rates of wages of the parents in order that they may not require the earnings of their children who may be left free to go to school?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) I do not think it is necessary. The coolies themselves will not increase their wages. The working efficiency in one garden is 54 per cent.; in the case of another 59 per cent.; and in the case of a third, which is a new garden and has a small labour force of 300, it is 70 per cent. The figures of absenteeism are 31, 30 and 11 per cent., which means that these people can earn in 3½ days per week enough money to suffice for their needs. Over and above that they have no ambition to earn. They are perfectly happy. The only people who have a desire to increase their wages and raise their standard of living are the youths between 15 and 18. They want to buy shoes, fine clothing, bicycles and so on. But the old coolie, if he has got his food and drink, is content. He is very happy to spend his time amusing himself in his own way and cultivating his garden. We do provide schools free of all charge. We do not ask Government even for the small allowance they give us. We erect schools ourselves and appoint school masters. But we find that the coolies are quite keen at the beginning, but gradually their interest decreases in the school and nobody attends it. We then start it again and after a period the same thing happens once more. That is the difficulty.

F-2169. That is a difficulty which the Commission has to take into account as well as the planters?—(*Mr. McKercher*) In one garden absenteeism accounts for an annual loss of wages of Rs. 22,131; in another Rs. 57,055, in a third garden Rs. 18,806 and in a fourth Rs. 22,070.

F-2170. Can I go back to my question and ask whether you are prepared to increase the earnings of the two parents in order to free them from relying on the earnings of the child so that he may be educated?—I do not think it would help the child going to school.

F-2171. Have the managers power to increase the rates of wages?—Yes, with the sanction of their Board.

F-2172. I will pursue the question with them. It is suggested that it is not necessary to increase the wages because of the fact that the garden population will not work all the time they might work?—Yes, certainly.

F-2173. In what way do you suggest that the problem can be tackled?—Increase their standard of living. But the difficulty is that with these old people their requirements are very limited and the more the pay the less the work they put in.

F-2174. You say that we must increase their needs. And most people say that the first step is education and education must begin with children?—Yes.

F-2175. Addressing ourselves to the adult population is it within the competency of the managers and have they the necessary qualification to take the immediate steps necessary of their own volition and within themselves?—Yes, the majority have. I have, for instance.

F-2176. What progress has been secured by the managers in securing an increase in the number of hours of work done by the coolie and improving his outlook?—There is no progress. It is going down. (*Mr. Kilburn and Mr. Nicholls*) Yes, that is so.

F-2177. Is it within the competency of the managers themselves—I am saying this in no insulting way at all—and are the managers prepared and qualified for the work of improving the outlook of the adult population and increasing their desire to work harder?—(*Mr. Nicholls*) I think it is. (*Mr. McKercher*) The managers are quite capable of doing that, but to get the coolies to do it is a different thing.

F-2178. That is the crux of the problem and a beginning must be made this year or the next year to solve that. What measures have your Association evolved for dealing with this?—Nothing except education for the present.

F-2179. I tell you my own view at the moment. I have formed the impression that managers themselves, apart from the active co-operation of people outside, are faced with a task which they cannot perform. I do not know whether you agree with that.—(*Mr. Kilburn*) I personally think there is no solution.

F-2180. You have spent a considerable amount of money, an almost unbelievable amount on recruitment. There have been answers to questions with regard to cost of recruitment. It does appear to me that a very large proportion of that cost has gone to individuals—*sardars* to wit?—(*Mr. McKercher*) The *sardar* gets Rs. 20 per head as commission.

F-2181. I understand he gets varying amounts?—But the average is Rs. 20.

F-2182. I have heard complaints that one garden in its anxiety to get labourers is out-bidding another and so on?—Yes, that might be done.

F-2183. What I am concerned with is that a very large proportion of the cost has gone into the pockets of a few individuals?—This is agreed. The *sardar* when he is in his country has 5 or 6 months without pay. He is on leave.

F-2184. It seems to me to be an uneconomic proposition?—(*Mr. Kilburn and Mr. McKercher*) It is not an economic proposition, we agree.

F-2185. We must make a beginning to improve the outlook of these people and better their standards. Much has been done with regard to their health and there is room for much to be done in many districts, that is admitted?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Yes.

F-2186. Would you be prepared to support a machinery, you might christen it what you will, but machinery there should be—designed to deal with the health, welfare and standard of living of these people, within Assam itself? Would you rather have control and regulation within Assam itself instead of the very elaborate system of control and regulation outside?—Personally speaking I would welcome it.

F-2187. Would your Association be prepared to consider this suggestion and tell the Commission whether as an Association faced with this problem they would be prepared for the establishment of a machinery within Assam itself to deal with the health, welfare and standard of living of the tea garden workers?—Yes, we would consider the suggestion.

F-2188. I see that your labour rules are designed to protect the manager from losing his labour from one garden to another. He has paid for his labour and has got to protect himself from losing it?—Yes.

F-2189. We find that the bazaar is the fruitful field of enticement?—Yes.

F-2190. And that within the bazaar itself you have many of the evils of the old *Arkatti* system?—Yes, that is the place.

F-2191. With regard to the labour that is free to move within Assam itself would it be possible to arrange that garden managers should be able to employ such labour only through recognized channels?—We asked for an Act like that. (*Mr. Kilburn*) That is one of the evils of Act VI. A new garden connected with another garden can borrow *sardars* and send them down recruiting, but an independent garden has no other source but to recruit from other gardens. That is the only source of labour for them.

F-2192. You see instances first of all of gardens themselves; if I may use a rough word, stealing another man's labour. Would you agree that no garden should employ labour which was in Assam itself except through recognized channels?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I asked for an enticement Act in 1926. A notification under Act VI is already in force in two districts in the Assam Valley and we cannot recruit labourers from those districts, while they are free to recruit from ours. We asked for an extension of the notification for the whole province, but it was refused.

F-2193. That is one side of the problem which the managers themselves have to tackle and see that they do not lose their labour. On the other hand there is the problem of the workers; they have to see that they are not enticed away by false promises?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) I do not think it is possible to work a system of that kind. There is so much of *faltu* labour (casual) in this province on which no garden has any hold. They wander in the bazaars and whenever they are in need of money they go to a garden and do some work. When they have sufficient money they leave the garden. If it is only a question of permanent garden coolies living on the garden it might be possible.

F-2194. Let us confine ourselves to garden coolies willing to reside permanently on the garden. Would it not be possible that such coolies should be employed only through recognized channels within Assam itself?—It would be a very good idea. (*Mr. McKercher and Mr. Nicholls*) We should consider this.

F-2195. How much does it cost you per head for short-term recruits?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Rs. 80 to Rs. 85 including travelling and other expenses.

F-2196. Why is that less than the total average of Rs. 160 or Rs. 180?—We do not pay the same commission for short-term coolies as for others. A *sardar* recruits nearly 30 short-term coolies, whereas he recruits only one ordinary coolie.

F-2197. The cost of recruitment approximates very closely to his earnings during the short-term?—In that case, yes. He earns 12 annas a day.

F-2198. *The Chairman*: The fact that in the case of short-term coolies one *sardar* brings as many as 30 coolies seems to bear out the suggestion I made at the beginning that if you held out a definite promise of repatriation at the end of a reasonable period, say three years, then one *sardar* would bring far more recruits than he does now and your recruiting cost would be considerably lowered?—I agree it would reduce the cost of recruitment, but the short-term coolies are not an economic proposition because they do not remain with us in the plucking season—May to October and November—when we would like to have them. (*Mr. Nicholls*) But short-term coolies are almost all of them males and it affects the sex proportion tremendously.

F-2199. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the activities of the Tea Districts Labour Association, do they circularize the managers?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Yes, a lot of money is spent on that. They circularize the gardens.

F-2200. I saw a note of one of the Tea Districts Labour Association agencies containing some general observations. It was an advice to the managers in sending *sardars* for recruiting. It said something like this: in sending *sardars* for recruiting it is well to bear in mind that there should be some security, that security of wife and family should not be regarded as enough, and that account should also be taken of his property and cattle. Has any of the managers present here received a circular from some officer signing for the Tea Districts Labour Association agency giving advice of that kind?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) It is entirely against the principle of recruiting. A man must have been some time on a garden in order to be able to acquire some property. The longer he has been on a garden the less successful will he be as a recruiter; the shorter the time he has been on a garden the more recent will be his connection with the village and the brighter will be the prospects of his recruiting.

F-2201. I am going to discuss it when we get the Tea Districts Labour Association before us?—(*Mr. McKercher and Mr. Kilburn*) We are on the committee of the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-2202. Has any of the managers present here received a similar note containing such general observations?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I think there is something wrong with that. Was it on Tea Districts Labour Association note paper and signed by the secretaries, because every circular will have to be signed by the secretaries?

F-2203. We will get that letter on Monday. It was on plain paper and the signature was illegible.—We would like to see that.

F-2204. With regard to the Tea Districts Labour Association agency, is it the practice that when a man has been recruited in a district you get advice from the agency with regard to the man's family and his relations and you are told that you can judge from that as to whether it is worth sending another *sardar*?—(*Mr. McKercher*) For the information of the manager, generally a note at the bottom of the recruiting form is made that the man has his wife or relations in his country.

F-2205. With regard to the tea managers themselves proposing schemes of welfare, I understand that the tea garden manager on the spot says to himself "well so and so would be a good thing" and then he sends up the proposal to the agents. I would like, if you do not mind telling me, to get an idea as to the willingness or otherwise of the agents to support their managers and the schemes that they have on hand?—(*Mr. Nicholls*) They are very willing indeed; they give their full support. (*Mr. Kilburn*) There is no obstruction from the agents.

F-2206. Suppose you want hospitals and schools, you get the support of the agents?—(*Mr. Nicholls*) Yes, their full support.

F-2207. Is the amount for this work charged to revenue or to capital?—(*Mr. McKercher*) It all depends upon the work. Formerly we were charging to revenue but since the last five or six years if it is an improvement of a permanent nature, we charge it to capital.

F-2208. What do you exactly mean by " a permanent nature "? Take the maintenance of a hospital; is that capital or revenue?—Revenue. I was referring to the erection of buildings.

F-2209. Suppose you build a school; is that capital or revenue?—It depends on the cost of it. If it were, say, Rs. 300 I should put it to revenue. All capital expenditure must go before the Directors.

F-2210. Maintenance of houses in good repair, is that revenue or capital?—Revenue.

F-2211. Suppose you build new houses?—It is capital. If, as I said, the cost for, say, the erection of a shed for a school or extension of a hut, is not very heavy we charge it to revenue, otherwise we place it before the Directors.

F-2212. *Mr. Clow*: Roughly, what is the dividing line on an ordinary estate?—My Directors have given me discretion to charge to revenue anything under Rs. 500; if it is over Rs. 500 it is capital. (*Mr. Kilburn*) I am not in the same position as Mr. McKercher. I always put it to the Board if I want to charge anything to capital.

F-2213. *Mr. Cliff*: It has been said that a margin of Rs. 500 has been left. Can we take it that that would be a fair dividing line for the whole of the gardens in your Association?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I cannot answer for all.

F-2214. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you get pay or commission; if commission, is it on the gross or the net earnings, so to speak?—On the gross.

F-2215. Excluding these capital debits?—Yes. (*Mr. Kilburn*) It is excluded in our case. (*Mr. Nichols*) I do not receive any commission.

F-2216. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it the practice to have civil agreements on the gardens?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Certainly not. (*Mr. Roffey*) What do you mean by civil agreements?

F-2217. While we were on a garden yesterday, there was brought to our notice a civil agreement which a man signs for a certain consideration; it is a stamped agreement to work for a certain period and which is liable to enforcement in a civil court?—I have very considerable experience, and I say that that is an exception; I have not seen one myself since 1915.

F-2218. *The Chairman*: We had another case where it had only been recently stopped. You do not endeavour to get uniformity in your Association on that point?—My firm represents, I think, 75-80 per cent. of the tea gardens in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts for the last 60 years and I have never seen a stamped agreement paper in my office since Act XIII of 1859 was repealed.

F-2219. Do we take it that your Association is opposed to the continuance of the stamped agreements?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I do not quite understand what these agreements are.

F-2220. *Sir Alexander Murray*: It is practically the old agreement form under Act XIII without the penal clauses?—Yes, our Association would oppose the continuance of such forms.

F-2221. *Mr. Cliff*: When we were in Mr. Withers' gardens, Mr. Withers said that the wages given were sufficient for the present standard of life. I want to know whether your Association can help me. What does it cost for an adult man for food for a month?—I have got the figure of the cost of living for a family consisting of a man, a woman, a working child and an infant; it is Rs. 19-1-10. (*Mr. Kilburn*) I think we can put Rs. 5 for food only.

F-2222. We are going to the bazaar to-morrow morning, and if Rs. 5 is the accepted figure I would like to buy it myself in the bazaar. Do you say that Rs. 5 a month for an adult man is sufficient for his food?—Yes.

F-2223. Can you tell us the constituents of this Rs. 5?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I have not got that information here.

F-2224. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In connection with the question of education which Mr. Cliff was asking you about, could you tell me whether it is a fact that, it would not benefit you to advocate compulsory education for the children on your plantations because that would rob you of the labour of those children?—I do not think it will affect us; on the other hand, it will improve the intelligence of the labour, and it would be very useful to us. Even now we give them facilities to attend our schools, but most of them do not take advantage of the facilities offered.

F-2225. I am not at the moment thinking of the existing facilities that are offered by you. But suppose it were advocated that there should be compulsory and free primary education on the tea gardens?—What about the villages outside?

F-2226. Let me, in the first place, take the question on your tea plantations? —I do not approve of the question being separated as between the villages and the tea plantations.

F-2227. Then let me take the villages also. Suppose the Assam Government decide upon a system of compulsory primary education, would I be correct or incorrect in stating that that would rob you of the labour of the children employed on the tea plantations?—Up to what age would you educate them?

F-2228. Let us say up to the age of 13 or 14?—Then it would certainly affect us. (*Mr. Kilburn*) The Government have already passed a Compulsory Education Act.

F-2229. This is what the Assam Government say in their memorandum: "Most of the children of school-going age supplement the family earnings and the loss of this additional income, necessitating perhaps a little more work on their own part, condemns the scheme in the eyes of a large majority." It was because of that fear that Mr. Cliff was asking you whether you would be prepared, if a scheme like that were actually introduced, to supplement the earnings of the man and his wife up to the extent of the loss caused to him by the loss of the labour of his children?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Our experience is that coolies are very much reluctant to send their children to school.

F-2230. *The Chairman*: Would it not be possible in any system to have school holidays to correspond with the period when there was most work on the gardens, that is, during the plucking season?—But the season extends over a period of six months. In any case, I doubt very much whether the coolies would ever allow their children to go to school.

F-2231. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: From the figures you have given us and also from the statement made by the Government it is clear that no progress has been made in the matter of education; the numbers of schools have declined and the numbers of school-going children have also declined. Therefore it seems to me that the only way out of the difficulty is for a compulsory scheme to be introduced. Let me repeat Mr. Cliff's question: Having the welfare of the workers at heart—let me put it that way—would you be prepared to supplement the earnings of these workers by the amount that they would thereby lose?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) If you increase their total income they would do less work again. (*Mr. McKercher*) They only work for 3½ days now, and if you increase their earnings they would probably work for a less period.

F-2232. I will not go into the details of the reasons why you will not do it. My question is would you not be prepared to do it if the Government decided to take that step?—Personally, no; but if the Government decided to take that step, I think most of the parents would work more and thus earn more.

F-2233. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Generally at what age does a child do a man's work?—16 to 18.

F-2234. When do you employ children for the first time?—They are employed when they are 11.

F-2235. You will not object to their education up to 11?—Certainly not.

F-2236. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Children are employed before that age?—It depends on circumstances.

F-2237. You made a statement just now that increase in the earnings would lead to the lowering of the efficiency of the worker. The Indian Tea Association also in their memorandum say: "It is considered that increased earnings result in a lowering of efficiency." What do you exactly mean by the lowering of the efficiency of the worker?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) We were referring to the labour force in general and not to the individual.

F-2238. Can you give me the figures of absentees, let us say, at the time when the last increase in wages was given by you and the figures of absentees since then?—I cannot give you any figures.

F-2239. It seems to me that that statement of yours can be considered to be correct only if the figures for those periods are compared side by side?—(*Mr. McKercher*) For instance, in 1928 the price of rice was more than it is now; in 1929 there was a fall in the price due to good crops; in one garden only there was a difference of Rs. 6,000 on this account.

F-2240. But that figure hardly corroborates the sweeping statement that you have made. The only way in which it can be corroborated or contradicted is by a comparative table showing us the absentees before and after the increase was given?—I am afraid you will have to accept my experience.

F-2241. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In the 1921-22 report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee figures are given showing the percentages of attendance of the labour force; detailed figures are given on pages 32 and 33 of that report, but taking a round figure it comes to about 75 per cent. A moment ago you gave the figures as 50 or 65 per cent. Can you give us figures corresponding to those given on pages 32 and 33 of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee's report?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) The figure I gave is the actual for 1929; I was speaking for my gardens and not for the Association as a whole.

F-2242. Are the figures of 65 and 50 per cent. comparable with the figures given in the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee's report?—Our last increase of pay was given about 1925; we could compare the figures for the same gardens prior to and after the increase was given.

F-2243. What we would like is that the 1921-22 report should be brought up-to-date by actual figures?—That could be done. (*Mr. McKercher*) In the old days we had 20 absentees but now we get 200.

F-2244. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Can you tell me whether, since the increase of wages—a very small increase of wages that has been granted to the men—there are any statistics available to show that they are doing actually less work per man?—At the present moment we do require 1/4 coolie per acre more than we did before the improvement in wages.

F-2245. Could you give us any figures to show that?—I have not got them at present, but I can give them later on. Our absentees for the last few years have gone up from 30 and 40 to 250.

F-2246. Leave the question of absentees on one side for the moment. Let us take a good worker who was, let us say, getting Rs. 10 a month in 1921 and Rs. 12 in 1929. Is he doing less work to-day?—I would not individualize on any one man, but I might say that at the present time we require more labour to do the same work than we did in 1920 or 1921.

F-2247. But you are getting a very much bigger yield at the present moment?—That is largely due to manuring.

F-2248. *The Chairman*: Is not part of the decrease due to the increase of *khet* land?—Yes; if they have more *khet* land they will do less work on the gardens.

F-2249. It is not strictly absenteeism; the men may be doing less work for you and more work for themselves?—That is so.

F-2250. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If a man finds it more remunerative to do work on his own little plot of land than on the tea estate it is natural that he will devote more time to his own work. So that efficiency qua increase in wages resulting in less work is not necessarily to be gathered from the figures of absenteeism?—Why?

F-2251. For the simple reason that your increase in wages may not be as much as the increase that he would get by working on his own little plot of land. If a man finds that by working on your estate his earning is 4 annas but by working on his own little plot of land he gets 5 annas obviously he would utilize his spare time on his land rather than on your estate; but on the other hand if he finds that he can get more on your estate than on his own land he will naturally spend more of his time on your estate. So that if it is shown that he is making more out of his own little plot of land than he is making on your estate, and that is coupled with the increase in absenteeism, would it not prove that this absenteeism is a factor which shows that he is working harder to get more money and not working less because he is getting more money?—No. *(Mr. Kilburn) Khet* work is only seasonal.

F-2252. I am putting a hypothetical proposition?—*(Mr. McKercher)* I cannot follow that because I do not agree with you.

F-2253. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it not a fact that he will work on his *khet* land whether it gives him 4 annas or 5 annas?—*(Mr. Kilburn)* That is so. Putting in more work does not mean an increase in crop.

F-2254. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: The Indian tea planters at Jalpaiguri in their memorandum state that there has been a slight increase in efficiency. You do not agree with that statement?—*(Mr. McKercher)* If you take the Government records, the attendance of work for last March, I think, on some gardens was 19. while in September it was 16; you will find that from the Government returns.

F-2255. I am only pointing out to you that you have used the word "efficiency" and they have also used the word "efficiency"; and they say that there has been a slight increase in efficiency?—My experience is that if you have more *khet* land you have more absentees.

F-2256. You base efficiency on the question of absenteeism?—Yes.

F-2257. Could you give me a rough idea of the land tenure system under which you have obtained these estates from the Government?—*(Mr. Roffey)* There are several forms of grants; some are fee simple grants, some are 30 years leases, some periodic leases and some annual leases.

F-2258. Have you to pay anything for the fee simple grants that you get?—We pay the local rate.

F-2259. Out of these lands that you have got, you have given out certain lands to the workers on your tea estate who are tenants-at-will?—Not necessarily; they may be annual tenants.

F-2260. They have not entered into agreements?—Some have.

F-2261. But the majority of them?—*(Mr. McKercher)* They are supposed to have given a chit that they would pay one rupee rent.

F-2262. Yesterday on one tea estate the manager said that he was gradually reducing the area that he had allotted to a particular worker on the estate; that is to say, when one man has broken the soil and prepared it for his paddy it is the manager's discretion whether to relieve him of that particular plot at any time he chooses, or to reduce or increase it at any time he chooses?—I should not like to do that at a time when I knew it would affect the man's family earnings. But if a man did anything wrong, say, this year, I should exercise my option of getting him rid of his land early next year.

F-2263. The manager about whom I was talking is a manager of a very big tea estate here and this is what he told us from which I conclude that his statement must obviously be correct that it is at the discretion of the manager or of the proprietors of the tea plantation to give or to take away and that there are no tenancy laws that apply to these people?—I do it in another way. As I said, more *khet* land means less work on the tea estate. We are short of *khet* lands for the number of labourers. The old men who started 20 years ago have got rather a big holding; normally they have anything below one acre. If it is anything over one acre they pay a higher rate; I think it is Rs. 4-4 or Rs. 4-8 an acre.

F-2264. The point that I was driving at is about the security of tenure of these labourers who are given this *khet* land. There is no tenancy law that applies to them?—*(Mr. Roffey)* There is no special tenancy law.

F-2265. Most of the workers on your tea plantations come from those parts where they do live under the rule of tenancy laws?—That I cannot say. I do not know what tenancy laws there are in other provinces.

F-2266. Would you be in favour of a tenancy law because it seems to me that it is a difficult process for a man to break in a plot of land and prepare it for paddy and then to have to face sudden dismissals from that plot of land?—(*Mr. McKercher*) It is not done.

F-2267. If it is not done, then you can have no objection to have some law in that respect?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) The necessity does not arise.

F-2268. The necessity obviously does arise because the evidence given to us shows that it is the sweet will of the manager to take away or to decrease the acreage that he leases to a particular individual?—It will be very foolish of him to do that.

F-2269. The fact is that it has been done. Would you be in favour of legislation to prevent that sort of thing happening?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I do not want any legislation.

F-2270. *The Chairman*: Where a man has developed more land than you think he should have because you desire, with the amount of land available, to distribute it amongst the largest possible number of workers, do you provide him with any compensation when you take back from him a part of the land that he has developed in order to let it to another worker?—I have never taken back the land when once it was given. As I said, if one has more than one acre he pays a higher rate; I think it is Rs. 4-8. (*Mr. Nicholls*) When land is given for cultivation for the first time, the man does not pay rent for three years.

F-2271. You think he has had his compensation having got the land free for three years?—Yes. (*Mr. Roffey*) May I point out that when Government gives land on lease for a year and takes it back at the end of that period, the tenant does not get any compensation in respect of the land except the cost of the buildings that he may have erected on the land or the trees that he may have planted. You may ask the Deputy Commissioner for confirmation of my statement.

F-2272. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You have made a statement in your memorandum that the strikes which took place a few years ago in Assam were the outcome of political propaganda. Do you mean to imply by that statement that there were no economic causes which led to the strike of 1921? Let me refer you to the statement made by the Government of Assam in their memorandum. They say: "There was on the one hand a serious depression in the tea industry which crippled the resources of all but the wealthy companies, and curtailed the work and in consequence the wages which could be earned." Would you agree with me that the reduction in wages caused acute economic distress?—(*Mr. McKercher*) I think there was famine then and the prices of foodstuffs rose. But all the same the strike, I think, was more political than economic. I think even the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee attributed it largely to political propaganda.

F-2273. You do agree that there was acute economic distress?—Not acute. The cost of living went up, but I do not think the wages went down. The wages might have been curtailed in one or two cases but not in all cases.

F-2274. You do not agree with the Government statement?—If you read the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee you will find the whole thing laid out there.

F-2275. *The Chairman*: It seems to have been admitted that there was a certain amount of loss in actual earnings?—There was a certain amount of hardship, and we raised the earnings; there was an increase and not a reduction in wages.

Diwan Chaman Lall: May I qualify that by saying that there was economic distress?—

Sir Alexander Murray: The Enquiry Committee of 1921-22 say in their report that the unrest was due to a combination of economic and political conditions.

F-2276. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Dealing with dietary you say that it is bound up with caste questions. What exactly do you mean by that?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Some castes will eat meat; other castes will not.

F-2277. How would that prevent giving them a better type of food, or rather giving them more food value? Is that a difficulty in the way of increasing their wages or providing better facilities?—No.

F-2278. So what you have made is a general statement?—Yes.

F-2279. You would agree with me that if the workers had better wages and better conditions of life on the tea estates, it would increase their efficiency?—I think it has increased the efficiency individually, but speaking for the labour force as a whole it has decreased the efficiency because they do less work. (*Mr. Nicholls*) The cost of living is low. (*Mr. Kilburn*) When the cost of living goes up I know I will get better efficiency and better attendance.

F-2280. *The Chairman*: Have you taken any steps by way of shops organized by yourselves on your estates to increase the demand for little luxuries and comforts?—In my garden I started a two-days Kali Puja show which is now being run by the workers themselves, the estates contributing.

F-2281. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Can you tell me whether the recruiters keep a register showing the names of depositors and the amount deposited with them?—(*Mr. McKercher*) No.

F-2282. You make a statement in your memorandum that large sums are remitted through recruiters. Have you any record to prove that? How do you make that statement?—I have a record here showing that Rs. 1,069 were remitted during the course of six months by the coolies who were recruited for two years; these coolies worked for one year and then went home. The records were kept personally by the manager subsequent to a complaint that money-orders were not being acknowledged by the payees.

(The statement was handed in.)

F-2283. Roughly, what will be the number of workers who sent that amount? —You can count it from the statement.

F-2284. I see from the statement that the usual amount sent is Rs. 4 to 5?—One has sent Rs. 50.

F-2285. Yes, but the usual amount is Rs. 4 to 5. Would you consider this a very large amount after six months' work?—It depends on who is sending it.

F-2286. As regards the *large* sums that they remit through recruiters, I take it that you have no record?—No.

F-2287. It is a general statement without any figures or facts to prove it?—(*Mr. Roffey*) I have some figures. Hundred new coolies who arrived in January, 1929, sent to their homes Rs. 1,650 from February to November, 1929. I also have further figures that about 20 short-term coolies sent Rs. 271 in the six months from February to September, 1929.

F-2288. These you consider large sums?—That is a matter of opinion.

F-2289. You make a statement in your memorandum that "Work is so arranged that a minimum wage is obtainable for a matter of three hours work per day, thus leaving ample leisure for private cultivation and relaxation such as fishing, woodcutting, etc." Do you consider woodcutting on the part of a worker as relaxation?—(*Mr. McKercher*) He might be selling that wood.

F-2290. With regard to inspections, do you consider that the method employed for inspections of your tea gardens is satisfactory?—I am scarcely in a position to judge.

F-2291. I have got a statement here that in six districts out of 274 of the plantations 256 were not inspected during 1928?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) They are inspected every two years by Government. (*Mr. Mckercher*) If you are on the black list then inspections are done more often than is the usual case.

F-2292. Would you recommend a better system?—No; it is not necessary.

F-2293. Would you recommend some system whereby there may be some control over the planters and their relationship with the workers?—In what way? Could the District Magistrate take any action, apart from the Indian Penal Code, if they found that the conditions of labour were not satisfactory? —They could.

F-2294. What law is there which could compel any District Magistrate or any outside agency to take that action and make that action mandatory on you?

F-2295. *Lt.-Colonel Garbett*: Is it not a fact that when the inspection of a garden has taken place either by the Deputy Commissioner or by any other authority, the man who inspects the garden writes a report on it and submits to the Government?—That is so. (*Mr. Kilburn*) Under Act VI, the Deputy Commissioner has wide powers to suggest drastic improvements.

F-2296. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it not a fact that in the event of any trouble between a garden coolie and an employer in Assam, the District Magistrate sends a report to the Government of Assam who in turn send it to the Government of India?—(*Mr. McKercher*) That is so.

F-2297. Is there any industry in other parts of India where conditions are more carefully watched than in Assam?—We do not think so.

F-2298. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you know how many cases have taken place during the last year?—(*Mr. Roffey*) From the emigrant reports for the last seven years you will see that there were nine complaints by coolies of managers using force against them and all those complaints were not found true.

F-2299. Would you be in favour of action being taken by, let us say, a trade union organization in organizing tea plantation coolies in order that there should be better contact both with Government and public opinion, and also with the employers, regarding their conditions of work and employment? —(*Mr. McKercher*) You are dealing with an inflammable material and, I think, more harm is likely to cause than any possible good.

F-2300. If a trade union organization were set up and it considered that the wages paid were very low and demanded an increase in wages and represented the matter to you and fought the matter out with you and obtained an increase in wages, would that be a harm to you or to the workers?—I have had no experience except the political experience.

F-2301. You are averse to the utilization of the ordinary civilized method of collective bargaining between the workers and the employers?—If four or five of my coolies were to come and complain to me of anything, I would certainly look into it.

F-2302. Yes, but you yourselves as tea planters are against the method of collective bargaining between the employer and the employees?—At the present time, seeing their condition of literacy, yes.

F-2303. You are against the free combination of the workers into a trade union?—It is impossible.

F-2304. I never asked you whether it is possible or impossible, but are you in favour of it?—Under the existing conditions, no. I consider the labour is not educated to that extent.

F-2305. You are against it?—I am very much against it.

F-2306. Even if the Government of India ratified a convention in regard to this matter and are in honour bound to carry out the mandate of that recommendation?—I suppose, in due course, with the spread of education it will come. I would not object to that then.

F-2307. Under that ratification the Government of India have to take certain steps. And they cannot take those steps if they find that there is this objection on your part to a free combination and collective bargaining on the part of the workers in regard to their conditions of employment. You would not assist the Government?—No.

The Chairman: I am not sure that you are rightly interpreting the convention.

F-2308. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If legislative action is taken by the Government of India to make it penal on the part of any employer to object to the formation of a trade union on the tea plantations, what would be your attitude? —The Government of India would make enquiries.

Mr. Cliff: The witness is claiming for the tea plantation community something that has never occurred in any other country in the world.

The Chairman: All they mean is that they would use their influence against such legislation.

Mr. Cliff: I am not thinking of legislation, but of trade union before there was education.

F-2309. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You will see that in other countries trade unions were formed in spite of the fact that the workers were not educated? —My past experience has been otherwise.

F-2310. *Colonel Russell*: On different estates apparently different types of houses are built for the labourers and improvements are being made in the structure of these houses. Can you give us any idea as to the types that you think advisable or most suitable for the coolies in regard to health and so on?

—(*Dr. McCombie*) There is the ordinary type with thatched roof and mud and plaster walls; I have no objection to that type at all as a house for a coolie provided it is kept in repair; it is a perfectly good healthy house and such a house as the coolie would build for himself. The type of house which I prefer, because it does not require to be kept in repair, is the one with iron framework brick walls and corrugated iron roof, with the proviso that the corrugated iron roof must be covered with a layer of thatch. It is because it often has no layer of thatch that the brick house with the iron roof is very often considered to be unhealthy.

F-2311. The memorandum of the Indian Tea Association refers to a difference of opinion among medical officers on this point?—I think some medical officers consider that the brick house with the corrugated iron roof is unhealthy, and I agree it is if it is not covered with thatch which prevents extreme variations in temperature.

F-2312. Supposing the roof were made of asbestos, would you thatch the asbestos?—As a matter of fact, I think they are rather hot, but thatching would obviate that objection.

F-2313. I suppose the chief constituents of the diet of the coolies are rice and *dal*?—Yes.

F-2314. Are these supplemented by other articles?—Yes, they have vegetables which they grow themselves; they use spices, onions and of course mustard oil is a very necessary ingredient. Certain types of coolies eat eggs with it. The jungly types of coolie use any kind of meat that happens to be available.

F-2315. Can you give us any information as to the amount of milk that is consumed by the coolies and their children?—I have no exact figures, but my impression is that the milk supply is occasionally rather on the short side for the children.

F-2316. I do not know whether you have any experience of the ordinary districts in India, but would you say that the milk supply in the tea plantation areas is a larger supply per head?—Yes, I should think so, on account of the number of coolies that keep their own cattle.

F-2317. They do use the milk that they get from their own cattle?—Yes.

F-2318. *The Chairman*: For how many gardens are you responsible and what is the area you cover?—17 gardens, and the area I cover is about 40 by 10 miles.

F-2319. Are those 17 gardens all under one agency?—No, they are under four or five agencies; there are one or two private gardens.

F-2320. Do they combine to employ you?—I am engaged separately by each garden, as a matter of fact there is no association; I made my terms separately with the various agencies in the various gardens.

F-2321. And what is the population?—I am dealing with about 30,000 coolies I think.

F-2322. What is the length of your experience?—25 years in Assam.

F-2323. *Colonel Russell*: I take it you have a more or less standard diet for the hospitals?—Yes.

F-2324. Could you give us details of that with the cost per month per head?—I can give you the diet more or less, but I have not the figures of cost.

F-2325. You could send that information to us?—Yes. The cost of my hotel charges comes to about Rs. 5 a month.

F-2326. It is said in the memorandum of the Indian Tea Association that as regards conservancy little progress is recorded. Do you adopt any principle in getting gardens to build latrines or do conservancy work?—I have tried on two of my gardens to establish a latrine system in the lines. It has been an absolute failure in both cases. When it was first started the manager and the assistants were keen, the coolies were very strictly watched, and the latrines were used to a certain extent; but gradually, as the keenness evaporated the use of the latrines became less.

F-2327. What type of latrines were they?—In most of my hospitals I have got septic tank latrines and those are the only latrines I can get used.

F-2328. Do you think latrines to which septic tanks were attached would be used on the ordinary garden?—No, I have tried them but they have not

been used by the coolies. In another garden I am trying portable latrines with the deep pit. Each day the pit is filled up with a certain amount of earth and when the hole is filled up we remove the latrine to another place.

F-2329. That is simply an earth privy?—Yes.

F-2330. You do not recommend that type, do you?—No, I do not.

F-2331. How are the water-supplies ordinarily obtained on estates?—Every estate has got a protected water-supply. The usual thing is a well which is covered in; the water is pumped up to a tank and is distributed to the lines by pipes. There is usually one well and a tank and a set of pipes for each lines. That is one system I have; in another garden we have a large well in the tea house compound with two large overhead tanks and the water-supply is piped to all the lines. What I am advocating now is the deep tube well, which, as you all know, gives an absolutely unpolluted and inexhaustible supply. I am sinking one such well now and I have two gardens where there are such wells. That to my mind is the ideal water-supply; it is not necessary to purify that supply as it is unpollutable. The well goes down 200 or 300 feet; it is practically an artesian well and one can get a supply of 8,000 or 9,000 gallons a day.

F-2332. What does a tube well cost?—Sinking the well costs about Rs. 8,000, but you have to add to that the cost of the tanks and the pipes. The last estimate for one of my gardens which has rather scattered lines is about Rs. 30,000 for one well. The area of that garden is about 800 acres with a population of about 3,000.

F-2333. I take it that in some gardens you still do not have a protected water-supply?—No, every garden has a protected water-supply.

F-2334. With regard to general diseases I think you have some statistics which will be of use to the Commission. Do you estimate your sickness by taking the incidence of individual diseases such as malaria and hookworm as separately or do you estimate the health of an estate by the general diseases figure?—By the total sickness figure and total mortality.

F-2335. Can you give us any figures comparing the Provincial with your garden birth and death rates, and the incidence of diseases like bowel diseases, fevers, infantile mortality and so on?—I have some figures here; they extend from 1911 to 1925. They are all taken from the Assam Sanitary Reports which give the Provincial mortality including the tea garden statistics and the tea garden statistics separately. I have also figures for my own practice which, as far as I know, are perfectly accurate.

Colonel Russell: I think it will save time if you will send in those figures.

F-2336. *The Chairman*: Do you agree with the figures presented to us by the Tea Planters' Association in their memorandum?—Yes.

F-2337. How is the still birth rate dealt with?—In the Government figures still births are not shown at all either as births or deaths and on the estates we do not show still births.

F-2338. Do you not regard the figures of still births as a very useful indication of the general health of the population?—Yes, I do; I think they should be shown separately.

F-2339. *Colonel Russell*: Have you any figures showing the natural increase of the population in the Assam tea population?—Yes, my graph shows that in 1911 in the Province the births were more than deaths by 6 per thousand while in tea gardens the birth rate and death rate were equal. The chart is rather vitiated by the appalling epidemics of influenza which caused a great decrease in the population; but in 1920 we find that the tea garden natural increase of population was steadily going up while that of the Province remained about the same. The tea gardens lines on the graph meets the Provincial line in 1922 and since then we have exceeded the Provincial rate; we are now 2 per thousand above the Provincial natural increase in population. In 1911 we were 6 below the Provincial figure while in 1925 we were 2 per thousand above, and, although I have not got the figures since then, I am certainly convinced that that increase has been maintained.

F-2340. *The Chairman*: Do you regard that as an indication of a substantial improvement in the health conditions in the gardens?—I do.

F-2341. *Colonel Russell*: Have the gardens in your area done anything in connection with the training of midwives and *dais*?—We have realized that it is useless to try to train the old traditional midwife; but we are trying to

get hold of their daughters who continue their mothers' profession; we are having them trained at St. Luke's Hospital, Chabwar, where they take a three months' course at the expense of the gardens and are sent back to the garden. Then they are attached to the hospital under the Indian doctor, attend cases in the lines and in their spare time are used as nurses in the hospital.

F-2342. In your experience has the use of these midwives been of benefit to the mothers?—It is very difficult to estimate the results because it is rather in the experimental stage at present.

F-2343. What do you think the Indian Tea Association mean by the references in their memorandum to the idiosyncracies of the labourer, first in connection with infantile mortality, and, secondly in connection with the use of midwives and *dais*?—I think they mean exactly what they say, that the coolies do object to having midwives of a different caste attending them; it is therefore very difficult to train up enough midwives on the garden to be acceptable to the coolies. I mean, you may train a midwife and then find that a certain class of coolie will not employ her and stick to their own *dais*.

F-2344. The memorandum states that cholera is endemic in Assam; do you agree with that statement?—No, I do not agree with that; I think it is imported.

F-2345. Then how do you prevent the importation of cholera into Assam?—I think that is one of the best things Government did for us; they introduced compulsory cholera inoculation in 1919, when a large number of famine stricken and infected coolies were imported into Assam and there was a serious outbreak on the way up. The incidence in that year was 82 per thousand, which is colossal. Then the Government took the matter up and it is now compulsory for every coolie to be inoculated for cholera in the depôt before he leaves. My figures show that since then cholera has practically disappeared from Assam. I certainly have not seen a case of true cholera for years. I might explain that a lot of diseases classified under cholera are really choleraic diarrhœa and not due to the cholera bacillus.

F-2346. It is also said in the memorandum: "Malaria is prevalent, but everything possible under the circumstances is being done to mitigate its ravages."—The best attempt to deal with malaria was made by the Doom Dooma Company who obtained the assistance of Sir Malcolm Watson who laid down a scheme which is being carried out. The results up to date of that experiment have not been particularly satisfactory, I understand, and anti-malarial work in our district is rather hung up awaiting more definite results of the Doom Dooma experiment.

F-2347. Is that not perhaps due to the fact that the study of malaria is a special subject requiring special experience and training, and busy doctors like yourself have not the time to devote to anti-malarial work?—I agree. As a matter of fact, I have a scheme under consideration at the present moment and I am trying to carry on propaganda work at home among the leading people in connection with tea. The scheme is that we should have here attached to the Tocklai Station of the Indian Tea Association a malarial bureau, which would consist of a director, an expert malariologist, an entomologist, and what one might term a malarial engineer, that is a man who has had great experience of drainage works in anti-malarial operations. We then have a central authority here on malaria. Any garden that wished to obtain any anti-malarial advice and could not go to the very great expenditure of the Doom Dooma Company would apply to the bureau; the anti-malariologist would then go to that garden and make a mosquito survey and with the engineer would lay out a scheme of drainage and anti-malarial work with estimates. When the work was in hand they would be in constant touch with it; they would have reports of spleen, sickness and fever rates. If they found the garden was not responding to the treatment by showing a decrease of malaria, they would at once go and investigate.

F-2348. So that it comes to this, that for what might be termed preventive work a separate organization is required?—Yes.

F-2349. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You would set up a malarial research station on the lines of the research work which is at present being carried on at Tocklai in connection with land and plants?—Yes.

F-2350. *Colonel Russell*: Do you agree with the statement in the memorandum of the Government of Assam: "Dr. Jameson is of opinion that hookworm is mostly contracted on the garden"?—Not entirely; a lot is imported; that is shown by examination of the stools of imported coolies.

F-2351. We have found in various gardens a considerable amount of hookworm?—It is very prevalent; about 80 per cent. are infected though not necessarily showing signs of the disease. It resolves itself to a question of conservancy; if one could get coolies to use latrines hookworm would disappear.

F-2352. So that you agree with the statement in the Government's memorandum as to the necessity of introducing conservancy systems?—Quite.

F-2353. The Government memorandum says: "Many of the labourers and their dependents arrive from their country in a very poor condition but they are treated carefully and given no work or only light work until they have recovered their strength." How do you deal with coolies of that class?—I see all new coolies on my next visit after their arrival; if they are obviously debilitated, under-fed or ill clothed, they are kept in the hospital or fed in the hotel and they get suitable allowances of clothing and money before they are sent away to the lines until they are in a better condition.

F-2354. What proportion of the imported coolies arrive in such a condition?—Speaking very roughly I should think about 5 per cent.

F-2355. The Government memorandum says: "In some of the smaller or newly opened estates the hospital accommodation is inadequate and in a few only untrained compounders are in charge." How many would be indicated by the word "few"?—I do not think it occurs in Upper Assam; it usually occurs in places where there is a small out garden with 100 or so coolies; but they are trained compounders; they may not actually be qualified but they have been trained.

F-2356. I think some of the compounders we have seen might easily be called untrained?—Yes, and these compounders are always under supervision from the central hospital.

F-2357. But in the smaller or newly opened estates would they be attached to a central hospital?—Possibly not.

F-2358. Do you recommend that they should be?—I certainly recommend that fully qualified compounders should be employed.

F-2359. Do you recommend that groups of gardens should be arranged so that there should be for each individual group a central hospital properly equipped and well staffed to which patients should be sent from the outlying stations?—Certainly, but the garden hospital should not be abolished. The central hospital should be reserved for serious and observation cases.

F-2360. The Government memorandum says: "Unhealthy gardens are also inspected by the Civil Surgeon every year until they obtain a cleaner bill of health." Would you not prefer that a public health officer should be substituted for the Civil Surgeons?—Yes, I think we might have a more regular system of inspection from the health point of view.

F-2361. As you know, the Civil Surgeon has usually little experience of public health work?—Yes.

F-2362. Would you prefer to have a trained public health officer coming round and advising instead of the ordinary Civil Surgeon?—Yes, I think I would.

F-2363. *The Chairman*: How does it come about that the Government medical officer takes no notice of the large population on the tea gardens? Apparently he has no responsibility?—None whatever. Under the old Act VI the Government retained a right of inspection of any garden in which the death rate was over 7 per cent.; the Civil Surgeon could then come in and make recommendations which had executive effect. Apart from that there is no regular inspection of tea gardens by the Civil Surgeon as a health authority. There is a regular inspection by the Deputy Commissioner or the police officer which they have every two years, but that is not necessarily from a health point of view.

F-2364. There is no inspection by the Medical Officer of Health except in the case of unhealthy gardens?—Yes.

F-2365. Therefore the tea garden people are a part of the population set apart and outside?—Yes, in a sense they are.

F-2366. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are they not the bulk of the population?—But the Government knows quite well they are all very well looked after medically; each tea garden has its own medical officer.

F-2367. Would not your suggestions involve the maintenance of a very large establishment in a Province like Assam?—The Civil Surgeon must be there; the only extra person employed would be the public health officer of the district.

F-2368. *Colonel Russell*: And at present in Assam there are no public health officers?—No; there is one member for health and education I believe.

F-2369. Have you any experience of kala-azar in the area in which you work?—No, none whatever.

F-2370. Perhaps the Indian Tea Association would tell us what amount of money they subscribe to the Calcutta Tropical School in aid of that?—(*Mr. Roffey*) Rs. 27,200 per annum; that is the Indian Tea Association's contribution.

F-2371. The Annual Report on the Factories Act in Assam says that in the tea districts in many cases the atmosphere of the factory is impregnated with tea fluff and the women and children employed there work with a cloth tied round their eyes and nostrils. It says in fact that "the concensus of medical opinion is that the dust acting as an irritant is liable to cause throat and lung diseases." Have you anything to say about that?—(*Dr. McCombie*) No, except that the incidence of throat and lung diseases due to the inhalation of tea dust is very small and in most well equipped factories they have very efficient fans which extract all the dust from the room as soon as possible.

F-2372. Is that general?—Yes, very general.

F-2373. *The Chairman*: Is that a thing that the factory inspector could insist on in every factory?—I presume so, but I do not think it is necessary because from the point of view of efficiency of working the planter wants to get the fluff out. (*Mr. Kilburn*) Yes, that is so; it has been in force ever since I have been in Assam.

F-2374. Is it enforced by the factory inspector?—No. It has been in force for the last 25 years; under the Factory Act sufficient fans must be provided to remove the dust.

F-2375. But if there were a case of a laggard in that respect, the factory inspector has power to make them come up to the standard which is generally set?—Yes.

F-2376. Is there any consumption of opium in the tea gardens?—(*Dr. McCombie*) Yes, that is very extensive; it is worse on some gardens than on others.

F-2377. Is that a detriment to health?—I am not prepared to say that opium is the deadly drug that it is supposed by the League of Nations to be; I think coolies do very well on a moderate quantity of opium.

F-2378. Do you think there is any abuse of opium?—Of course there is excessive opium taking; the habit tends to grow and if it is excessive it is detrimental to the health of the coolie.

F-2379. Have you observed any considerable abuse among the tea garden population?—A certain percentage of them become excessive opium eaters and suffer in consequence, but it is not a large proportion. I think the average opium eating coolie goes on steadily eating a certain amount of opium every day just as his friend in another house takes his *pan* every day; he takes it as a sedative.

F-2380. *Colonel Garbett*: Is it true that the Government have now a policy under which they are reducing opium consumption?—Yes, the policy of the Government of Assam is to reduce opium consumption to nothing in 10 years time. Medical officers are co-operating. When a man applies for the renewal of his pass his ration of opium is steadily reduced and he comes before the medical officer.

F-2381. *Mr. Cliff*: Are all your opium takers registered?—They are supposed to be.

F-2382. Is it an effective registration?—Yes, I think it is, or will be in time.

F-2383. *The Chairman*: Do you mean to say that each opium taker on a tea garden estate is registered?—Yes, everyone in Assam; a man cannot buy opium now unless he produces his licence.

F-2384. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is the dosing of children with opium prevalent here?—No.

F-2385. *Miss Power*: Does that mean there is no doping of the children by the women, for instance when they go into the fields, as there is among some of the industrial women workers?—The work in Assam being out of doors, they nearly always take their children with them and there is very little infantile doping as far as I know.

F-2386. They do not dope them to keep them quiet?—No.

F-2387. *The Chairman*: Then you do not think opium is an appreciable factor in lowering the efficiency of the tea garden worker?—No, I do not think so.

F-2388. *Rev. Saikia*: Are there any Indian Assistant Managers in any of the European gardens?—(*Mr. McKercher*) There may be. I trained one last year for two years. They must be engineers. Our men are all engaged at home and they must go through a course of engineering, farming or tea testing. Different agencies have different customs. There are one or two in the Jorhat Company.

F-2389. Why do you not appoint more assistant managers from Indians?—I must refer you to the home board for that.

F-2390. Why do you not recruit *baboos* from the recruiting districts along with the coolies?—Because there is an abundance of them in Assam wanting work.

F-2391. Some of the Telegu coolies cannot understand some of the *baboos*?—If I dismiss a *baboo* there are about 40 applicants every day from Assam without going to Telegu.

F-2392. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I think the Padre's point is that you bring different *jats* of coolies including Telegu coolies and he thinks it would be advisable to have *baboos* who would be able to speak intelligently in these different languages?—There are the *sardars*.

F-2393. The *sardars* are suspect now-a-days?—I prefer to assist Assam; there are too many unemployed in Assam now.

F-2394. *Colonel Garbett*: Just now you alluded to the anti-malarial work done by the Doom Dooma Company in their gardens; could you give the Commission any idea as to how much money they have spent on the work?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) The associated gardens, that is 5 gardens with an approximate area of 6,000 acres, from 1924 to 1929 have spent a total of Rs. 2,36,285; that is an average of Rs. 41 per acre. The Doom Dooma Company, with approximately the same area and the same number of gardens (i.e., 5 gardens) to the end of 1927 have spent Rs. 2,42,379 on anti-malarial measures; that is for one year less than the other group. The Assam Frontier Company have also undertaken anti-malarial work; I have not any figures relating to their costs. (*Mr. McKercher*) We all do a little; I spend Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000 a year on oiling.

F-2395. Can you give us any figures showing the average monthly income of the tea garden labourer as compared with that of the Assamese living in his village?—Yes. The monthly income of the Assamese raiyat is Rs. 12-9-4; that is taking the average Assamese raiyat with 3 *puras* of land and taking the average yield of the Sibsagar district which I got from the Settlement Officer. Speaking subject to correction, I believe there are about 4,000,000 Assamese raiyats in Assam. I am speaking of the raiyat living in the village. The income of the tea garden labourer, taking the average of our figures for last year for whole months, was Rs. 34 for a family. As to the concessions, I must again speak subject to correction as they vary on different gardens, they come to Rs. 10 per family. I have omitted firewood and various concessions which make the figure higher. There are 2,402 cattle on our estates, 202 buffaloes, 22 horses, 120 sheep, 349 goats, 396 ploughs, 41 carts. Pigs are not counted. I estimate the value of free building material for them at Rs. 23,000.

F-2396. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What is the wage of an unskilled labourer—a coolie hiring himself out for casual labour outside the tea gardens, say in Jorhat. In Jorhat what is the average wage of unskilled labour?—I live some distance away and I could not tell you. But in our district we pay our villagers wages a little lower than those of the garden labour. The villager works when he likes occasionally while the garden coolie more or less belongs to me so that the casual labourer does not get the progressive rate which we pay to the tea garden labourer.

Rev. Saikia: Coolies working in the village earn 8 or 10 annas a day. A woman in the village gets 8 annas. In the town a man gets 12 annas. I do not know what a woman gets in the town.

The Chairman: That is casual labour and not work guaranteed all the year round?

Rev. Saikia: It is for casual labour.

F-2397. *Mr. Cliff*: You have given the figure of Rs. 34; is that the figure for the whole valley?—No. That is a calculation I made from my own experience.

F-2398. *Colonel Garbett*: Can you give the Commission any idea of what your medical expenses come to?—On my estate which consists of 3,300 acres of tea, the average for three years was £3,430, which works out at over £1 per acre. In the Doom Dooma district, where they have rather more coolies per acre, the cost is £1-13-0. Taking my figure of £1 per acre, Assam is paying £400,000 on our population of over a million, as compared with the Government's budget of £70,000 for 5/6 of the Province, our proportion of the population being 1/5. That is our total expenditure annually; it includes all foods given to sick coolies and the medical officers' pay. That is an average over three years on our own garden.

F-2399. I did not quite catch your reply to Mr. Chaman Lall when he asked you whether you would be agreeable to having a trade union on your garden?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) We say we object to it under present conditions and having regard to the representatives whom we have seen up to date.

F-2400. You would not receive a delegate from the All-India Trade Union Congress?—The constitution of that body is at present rather doubtful; if the newspaper reports which we have obtained are correct, there has been a split in the All-India Trade Union Congress, and I believe Mr. Chaman Lall and Mr. Joshi have dissociated themselves from that Congress.

F-2401. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Did you read about a new Federation being formed?—Yes, I have seen something about that in the papers.

F-2402. I suppose you are referring to that body?—I am referring to the split in the All-India Trade Union Congress. If labour leaders are not prepared to accept the All-India Trade Union Congress as it is, it is rather a lot to expect us to accept it.

F-2403. *Mr. Cliff*: It seems there are some tea garden managers who do not accept your Association?—They are not members of the Association. Generally speaking, if the trade unions sent representatives who know the conditions in Assam and who we had reason to believe would do good welfare work, I think they would be welcome. But at the present time that is very doubtful. It is rather hard to commit oneself because one has to consider the question.

F-2404. *The Chairman*: I gather that you have had a rather unhappy experience which makes you cautious?—Yes, we have; we are very suspicious about it.

F-2405. *Miss Power*: I want to know how the manager of a garden conveys any important piece of information to the coolies which they may wish them to know; what is your usual method of conveying information?—(*Mr. McKercher*) We either tell the coolies or inform the establishment.

F-2406. You sometimes tell the coolies?—A small thing, yes. We all talk to our coolies every day. They come to the office for this purpose twice a week; there is one of the managers sitting in the office twice a week. Otherwise we give instructions to our senior Indian staff and they convey the information to the coolie through the *chowkidars*.

F-2407. We have been to certain gardens where we find there is considerable confusion in the minds of the coolies as to whether the penal contract, for instance, still exists or not. What was the policy of the Association in regard to conveying to the workers the fact that the penal contract had been abolished by legislation and that their terms of service had accordingly been radically altered?—Nothing.

F-2408. Do you know what action was taken by individual gardens?—No, I do not know; it is not in my department. (*Mr. Kilburn*) In our particular gardens the chief difference was that under the Act a thumb print was taken on an agreement form. That was stopped and no thumb print was taken except in the book; it was not taken on a separate agreement form; it was just taken in the book as an acknowledgment of receipt of the money.

F-2409. But what information was conveyed to the workers to inform them that there had been a radical change in their terms of service; how was the discontinuance of the penal contract conveyed to the workers?—(*Mr. McKercher*). The issue of stamped papers was stopped. Originally we had a stamped paper which the coolie signed.

F-2410. Would the mere stopping of stamped paper convey that information to the coolies?—No, I do not think it would.

F-2411. You think they might continue to believe they were under the same contract?—I think they would and I think they do. I should like to say that in the course of 36 years I have never brought a coolie into court under any Act.

F-2412. They still think they are under a contract?—They think they are under a privilege or under an obligation; it is a privilege for the coolie to get the money, and they think they are under an obligation to work.

F-2413. And many of them still think they are under a definite obligation?—Under the obligation to work for one year when they get the money. The gardens do not all pay the same amount of money. I do not think we as an Association have taken any definite line in the matter. I have only been Chairman for the last two years. I remember the Act was withdrawn, but I am not sure whether we learnt about it from the *Gazette*.

F-2414. Was there any discussion at all as to conveying to the workers the fact that a Labour Commission had been created to look into the question of their conditions of labour?—I could not say; there have been no orders from head-quarters.

F-2415. Do you feel that in view of the importance of the fact to them they should have been told about it?—No, I do not. If we had told them, a political man might have come in and we might have had strikes. I am now speaking from my own personal point of view. When the last Commission came in 1922 I believe the coolies came out on strike.

F-2416. Some of you have said that you do not think the coolies should be accessible to outside influence which aims at organizing them into trade unions lest it should lead to strikes; and you also say that for the same reason you do not think information as to the existence of the Labour Commission should have been brought to their attention. If they are to be as carefully protected from outside influence as that because of the mere possibility of rioting or anything similar, of which you may be afraid, how are they to get to know what legislation might exist or could be brought about for their greater protection?—I cannot tell you. They may get it through the establishment who can all read and write English.

F-2417. *Colonel Garbett*: If the tea garden labourers had been told that the Royal Commission was coming round, do you think they would have understood what a Royal Commission was?—No, I do not think they would have understood the significance of it.

F-2418. *Miss Power*: Would it not have been possible to explain to them what this Commission was?—No. I know what I should do if I were a coolie in that case; I should ask for more pay and anything else I could get.

F-2419. You say that "as so few labourers work the full number of days, it is considered that the statutory establishment of a minimum wage is unnecessary and would be difficult to enforce." Would you explain why you associate the practicability of establishing a minimum wage with the question of working the full number of days; what exactly is the meaning of that sentence?—It means that if they require more wages they would work more days. I think the present average is 65 per cent.

F-2420. But the extent to which they work has nothing whatever to do with the question of the establishment of a minimum wage; most of you already pay on a uniform system, do you not?—Many do, yes.

F-2421. I think one of you said to-day that the rates were based on 1½ annas for a man and 1 anna for a woman?—We had a minimum wage under the penal contract, but it was done away with when the penal contract was abolished. If you guaranteed an 8 hours or 7 hours day I should be very pleased to have a minimum wage, but it is very difficult where coolies sometimes work 1, 2, 3 or 4 hours. I am afraid there would be terrible confusion. If you could lay down a minimum wage for so many hours' work I should agree with you. In the tea house or in the factory work where there is a stated time, I quite agree it might be done, but it is very different in the garden where the coolies come and go.

F-2422. But I do not know of any minimum wage with regard to which a certain amount of work is compulsorily required. On a piece-rate you fix the rate for the piece so as to yield so much an hour, or in the case of a time rate so much an hour. Under both schemes there is nothing that compels a worker to work so many hours, and yet the system of regulating wages by means of a minimum rate on those lines has proved feasible all the world over?

The Chairman: May I take it that the essential difference between your case and that of factory labour in which the minimum wage is fixed sometimes in other countries, is that the employer in that case will discharge the worker who only puts in half time, whereas you do not discharge your workers although they may work only 60 per cent. of the possible hours?—That is the position.

F-2423. *Miss Power*: Is not the position the same in your case as in the case of Ceylon?—I have never been to Ceylon.

F-2424. Is there not a minimum wages board for garden coolies in Ceylon?—I think there is more discipline there.

F-2425. But the point is that the wage in Ceylon is not coupled with any compulsion to do so much work?—I think there is an 8-hour day.

F-2426. They are not compelled to work an 8-hour day although that is the legal day?—Then where does the minimum wage come in if they do not work 8 hours?

F-2427. They are paid on a piece rate, at so much per hour?—We practically do that.

F-2428. Then why do you feel that it would be impossible to have a minimum wages board?—I thought you meant that you would give a woman so much per day whether she worked or not.

F-2429. No, I meant a uniform piece-rate or hourly rate?—The rates must vary according to the conditions of the soil. If you have a piece-rate which will yield so much an hour, the piece-rate may vary in different gardens.

F-2430. But each piece rate task would be fixed so as to yield so much an hour?—On tea gardens there are different kinds of soil; some soils are stiff while others are light and the task is adjusted accordingly. Then there are medium and large bushes and in that case the task is adjusted accordingly.

F-2431. If you had a legal minimum rate throughout the whole of the industry all that each garden would be required to do would be to fix the piece rates to suit the conditions prevailing in their garden so as to yield the coolie of ordinary capacity the legal minimum rate?—But condtions vary throughout the year.

F-2432. Then you would alter the piece rate task to suit the season; it would mean that everybody would have to fix the piece rates according to the conditions prevailing in each particular garden so as to yield the coolie not less than whatever minimum rate was fixed?—I do not think we should object to that.

F-2433. You would not object to a wage board for the industry?—Should we have to pay for it?

F-2434. I do not think that is customary; normally the board, as in Ceylon, would consist of a number of workers' representatives, employers' representatives and independent persons selected by the Government?—I believe the conditions in Ceylon are very different from our conditions; they have ample labour from one very small area very near the base. In Assam communications are difficult. In Assam employers are compelled to treat their labour properly because an employer who does not do so will lose his labour.

F-2435. *Colonel Garbett*: Where do you get your labour from?—We have 42 depôts spread all over India.

F-2436. *Miss Power*: If you had a Board of that kind the result would be, I take it, that in respect of wages the bad gardens would have to come up to the level of the good. Do you not think that the good gardens would profit thereby?—Yes, but there are so many things to take into consideration. The conditions vary so much from week to week and from year to year that you would need to have a Board sitting on every bush in order to make the necessary adjustments.

F-2437. In each of the cases which you have in mind you are already making the adjustments so that the worker earns so much per hour. You are doing already in individual gardens exactly what would be required of you under a statutory rate. Why, therefore, do you say there would be so many difficulties?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) One great difficulty is the difference in natural conditions. Some districts are popular with coolies. Others are unpopular. A popular garden with natural conditions can keep sufficient labour for its requirements on a certain rate of pay. A garden with not such favourable natural conditions has to offer some inducement. The only possible inducement is higher wages. That is why the wages are higher in Upper Assam. There you get huge blocks of tea, extending

in one case to 16 miles—garden adjoining garden the whole way through, with no jungle and very little rice land. There is great shortage of firewood in the middle of that piece of tea land. Also there is no land to cultivate. The tendency is for the coolies to leave the central gardens and come out to the fringe, because there they have a garden to work on which is adjoining the jungle land, with new land ready for cultivation, and with plenty of firewood. The gardens on the edge have plenty of labour. The ones in the middle are short of labour, and the only thing they can do to make the conditions as desirable as possible for the coolies is to increase their pay. The conditions vary so tremendously, as does the cost of living, that it is very hard to generalize.

F-2438. But the variations to which you refer already exist?—Yes; and they are dealt with in that way—by different rates of pay in different districts.

F-2439. Why do you feel that a statutory minimum wage Act, which compelled all gardens to pay a piece rate or a time rate of not less than so many annas per hour, would create difficulty? In so far as it would compel all gardens to pay not less than a certain amount (presumably a living wage) would you not be in favour of it?—I would if it could be done, but I doubt if it could be done.

F-2440. *The Chairman*: How many Inspectors do you think would be required for Assam?—You would want one for every group of gardens at least, and he would be kept fairly busy.

F-2441. *Miss Power*: You say that certain concessions which are given to the workers amount to a large increase on the money wages. Has the Assam Branch of the Tea Association ever worked out the cash value of the concessions on their tea gardens?—(*Mr. McKercher*) It is impossible to give you a fair figure because, again, the conditions vary on each garden. Taking my own garden it is Rs. 10 approximately, not taking into account the grazing, vegetable gardens, the material which we give for making cattle houses, and so on, which comes to another Rs. 3.

F-2442. *Mr. Cliff*: Between a garden which gives these various facilities and a garden which does not, is there a variation in the rates of wages to the extent of Rs. 5 a month?—(*Mr. McKercher*) Yes, I should think there would be that variation. (*Mr. Roffey*) The Government return shows that in this district the figure is Rs. 11-9 and in the Dibrugarh district, where there is no *khet* land and firewood, it is Rs. 17-3-10, so that really the difference is over Rs. 5.

F-2443. *The Chairman*: May I take it, quite broadly, that your answer is this: that where there is no *khet* land, or very little, increased wages have to be paid to correspond with the equivalent that a coolie gets on more favourable estates by the allocation of *khet* land?—Yes.

F-2444. *Miss Power*: Referring to the question of schools, does your Association make any recommendation to its members as to the minimum age at which a child should be allowed on the gardens to work?—No.

F-2445. Do you think the schools would be better patronized if children under the age of 11, say, were not allowed on the garden?—You would never keep them off the garden.

F-2446. There is a very great deal of patient educational work being done with these people in order to make them, against their natural instincts, avail themselves of western medicine. It seems to outsiders, like myself, that that work has met and is meeting with remarkable success, and that it has paid you to bring about that success. Why has it not been equally possible for you to do the same patient educational work in regard to getting these people to send their children to school. Admittedly at the moment it does not pay you to deprive the garden of child labour. Is it a fair deduction, therefore, that the absence of that patient educational work in regard to school attendance is due to the fact that it would not pay you, whereas the patient educational work in regard to medical attendance does pay you?—There would be great trouble in preventing children plucking with their mothers or plucking on their own. As an old coolie will tell you the educated son will not bury his father. We have to get over that. There are infants and cows and chickens to be looked after by the children. I think it will come after a time. It is improving. We are only 1 per cent. below India in the total.

F-2447. Would not you be prepared to make any rule of that kind?—I should not like to enforce it; I could not. We do encourage education. Three circulars have been sent out urging managers to provide schools, and many more schools have been built.

F-2448. Where there are a number of gardens under one firm, employing a large number of women, and in view of the proverbial hesitancy of women suffering from specifically female diseases to go to men doctors, do you think it would be advisable that a qualified woman doctor, whether Indian or European should be employed?—(*Dr. McCombie*) Yes, there is a scope for a qualified woman doctor in the treatment of midwifery cases and diseases of women. (*Mr. McKercher*) Our bishop brought out a lady doctor. First of all he brought out a nurse. He suggested training *dais*. I sent eight for training in two years, but the difficulty I found was to get exactly the type of women I wished, because I had to consult the whole of the people of different castes and customs. If you make one mistake it immediately prejudices the system. The coolies were pleased with the idea. We paid the fees and we gave so much if the child lived for one year. We provided a maternity home with four rooms, two beds in each, so that the man and his wife could come and live there during the period. I found that only the bad cases came. It was not the woman who objected. The man said there was no one to look after his cattle. There is a slight improvement now. The other day there was one case which made a wonderful recovery. I have seen two cases on one occasion in the maternity home, but that is the most I have ever seen. (*Dr. McCombie*) The coolie woman, like her sister the world over prefers to have her confinement at her own home. I think it is a matter of time.

F-2429a. *Mr. Clow*: Do you still keep up the practice of selling rice at concessional rates?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) Not in Upper Assam. It is exceptional for a garden to give rice at a fixed rate.

F-2430a. Or even at a concessional rate?—They usually pay cost price. When the rates were increased from Rs. 6 and Rs. 7 per month to 8 and 6 annas a day, the concession which had existed up to that date of selling rice at Rs. 3 a maund when it cost us Rs. 8 a maund, was abolished, and the higher wage was given to balance it.

F-2431a. The practice is not common of selling rice at a certain amount below the market price?—Not in Upper Assam.

F-2432a. With regard to the minimum wage, suppose it took the form of stating that for a certain reasonable piece of work, say four hours' work, a certain number of annas must be paid, would you anticipate great difficulty in conforming to such a provision?—Not in our district; the conditions vary so much throughout Assam that I am not prepared to give a general answer.

F-2433a. Suppose you were able to go to Ranchi, for instance, and say definitely to the labourer: "For a task of so many hours you are guaranteed a wage of so much," would not that assist recruiting?—We should get into trouble for enticing. If it was legal I should love to do it.

The Chairman: That is one of the matters under our immediate consideration —whether the question of inducement ought not to be wiped out.

F-2434a. *Mr. Clow*: The average earnings are of very little value, because the ordinary coolie cannot guarantee that he will be up to the average, or have all the advantages that the other man has?—I agree.

F-2435a. If he knew there was a guarantee of a certain daily wage, provided he did a reasonable day's or even half a day's work, would not that be a much more powerful inducement to him than merely telling him that the average earnings on the estate were so much?—I agree. The only difficulty is the *khet* fellow. If you push him out of the picture I agree with you. He is the man who pulls our average down.

F-2436a. Do the *Munias* who come up in very large numbers, do so without any inducement whatever?—They have no license or agreement. The contractors pay them and pay their fare. I cannot do it because I am an employer.

F-2437a. They come willingly in very large numbers?—Yes, in thousands.

F-2438a. Do you think it is merely the existence of Act VI which prevents other labourers doing the same?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) To a very great extent. This short-term labour costs us Rs. 80 to import. If we could add that Rs. 80 to their wages we could make the wages so attractive, and still save money, that they would come to the gardens and apply for work if it were not for Act VI.

F-2439a. Suppose you had a system of free recruitment on very short terms, do you think you would attract a very large amount of labour?—We can get as much *six-months* labour as we require.

F-2440a. Does an average coolie who has no knowledge of tea garden work do efficient work during the short term of six months he is here on your garden?—(*Mr. Kilburn*) He does this when hoeing and flushing. The short-term labourers are nearly all of them ex-tea garden coolies. They come up in the cold weather when our wage earnings are at the lowest. They earn some money and go away. They will not come up in large numbers in the rains when we can afford to take any number. The more the coolies we have in the rains, the more the leaf we get and make better the tea from it.

F-2441a. Mr. McKercher or yourself spoke of a system of control without legislation. The same statement was made to us at Silchar. I do not see how it is possible. Could you explain it a little further?—How is it done in the Dooars?—We want free recruiting and free labour, the same as the Dooars system.

F-2442a. With no control of any kind?—There is the Tea Districts Labour Association to control it.

F-2443a. You will have to compel all the estates to join the Tea Districts Labour Association?—93 per cent. of them are already in the Association; only 7 per cent. are outside. Many Indian gardens are already members and we are trying to get more.

F-2444a. Do you recognize that it would involve Government exercising compulsion over the remaining 7 per cent. to join the Association?—I do not think so.

F-2445a. *Colonel Garbett*: Would it not be possible for the 7 per cent. to have their own local agents?—Yes, it is. But Government do not want to have too many persons to deal with. I do not see why the Indian gardens should not form an Association of their own. If they wish to do so, they may be given the same privilege.

F-2446a. In that case Government will be left with no control?—Let them have registration in the recruiting districts.

F-2447a. For that legislation is necessary?—What do they do for the Dooars? There is no control—Why?

Because it is thought that no control is necessary.—The result is that in the Dooars a *sardar* brings 5 or 6 coolies on an average and the cost of recruitment is only Rs. 40 per head whereas it is over Rs. 200 here. The cost of importation is great and the enticement of labour will increase.

F-2448a. Some years ago a suggestion was made that the possibility of free recruiting should be examined. Then the tea industry opposed it?—The industry is a very large thing. The local Government did not agree to the suggestion made by the Association.

F-2449. *The Chairman*: I think you made that clear that you yourself would like immediately free recruiting and free labour?—Yes, free recruiting and free labour controlled by our Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-2450. The recruiting Provinces are not prepared for that?—They are not.

F-2451. We have to recognize their right to take that position and what we must address ourselves to is some satisfactory arrangement covering the few years still to come, which one might hope would be followed by complete freedom to Assam as to any other Province in India?—The peculiar thing is that Assam is the only Province and tea is the only industry which is restricted in this way.

F-2452. We recognize that it ought not to be. Still one has to deal with old prejudices and evils which were only recently eradicated. As practical men we must recognize facts while we aim at ideals?—The real thing is that Assam has large tracts of waste Government land, of which about 397,000 acres have been colonized. These restrictions really tend to stop the colonization of these lands. If I was the Deputy Commissioner of a place wherefrom I get labour now I would not allow the labour to go to Assam if I could help it, for my revenues will go down and my servants will cost me more.

F-2453. *Mr. Clow*: I do not think that is really their attitude?—I am only talking of my view.

The Chairman: I think we all understand there is a mixture of motives.

F-2454. *Mr. Clow*: I think you protested at the beginning against the suggestion that any restraint was placed on the freedom of the labourers desiring to leave. Are you prepared to say that in no garden any such restraint is exercised?—You might get black sheep in any flock. It is a physical impossibility to keep them on the gardens of a large estate. It might be possible in an isolated place where the lines are small, but where you have lines all over the place it is not possible to do that. They go to the bazaar every week.

F-2455. There might be some garden several marches away; even if there are no *chowkidars* to keep them back they might have some difficulty in finding money?—No, there is no difficulty in finding money.

F-2456. Unfortunately we are not able to visit other centres. Could you tell us in what resepects the conditions in other districts further up the valley differ from those we have seen?—There is less cultivation, more virgin land and the pay is slightly higher. They lose more labour. In a congested area like Doom Dooma the cost of living is more.

F-2457. As regards the question of allotting expenditure on such work as welfare and education to the revenue account may I take it that the general practice is to allot expenditure of less than Rs, 500 to revenue account?—That is our practice. It varies in other estates. I think the Jorhat Tea Company has a limit of Rs. 1,000. But whenever it affects my commission I take the Directors' sanction to put it into capital account.

F-2458. *Sir Alexander Murray*: After the Robertson Committee reported in 1906 was not a circular sent to every tea garden manager in Assam? Could you tell me what that was?—It was a long time ago and I do not remember what it was.

F-2459. With regard to the changed conditions in the system of coolie labour since the penal clauses have been done away with, would you say that every coolie has been expressly told that he was free to go and that the old methods of recruitment and labour were no longer in force?—I do not think we have done that.

F-2460. Was not the failure on the part of garden managers to make this public property to everybody concerned, one of the causes of the difficulties of recruitment? Is it not desirable that that should be done?—I have made a note of that and I will put it to the Association.

F-2461. *Mr. Cliff*: Rev. Saikia was telling us of a number of old aged coolies who were now unable to maintain themselves and driven to a state of beggary in the streets. It may be that they have done good work on the gardens for the best part of their lives, but now they have no friends and are unable to maintain themselves. If Rev. Saikia locates the people to whom he refers, will it be possible for you to put their case to your secretary in order that he might enquire and see what could be done?—Yes, we would welcome that.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. T. A. CHALMERS, M.L.A., Superintendent, Bazaloni Tea Co., Ltd., Rajgarhali Division.

F-2462. *The Chairman*: Mr. Chalmers, you come from Doom Dooma?—Yes.

F-2463. Will you help us by yourself putting forward any special points that you think will be of assistance to the Commission?—You asked several questions as regards legislation and my colleagues here expressed their opinion that there ought to be free recruiting. So far as I am concerned I think we ought to get free recruiting. I suggest that Act VI should be entirely repealed, and that there should be no restrictions on any labourer coming to Assam whether he is sent up by an *arkatti* or by anybody else. I want to protect the recruit in Assam itself and all that is necessary is to legislate for conditions as they are now. A Labour Commissioner should be appointed and the Deputy Commissioner should, as at present, be an Inspector of Labour. It should be made a condition that all labourers imported into Assam should be repatriated after 3 or 4 years, whatever fixed time is agreed upon. In any case every labourer must be repatriated and the only condition on which he can stay here is when the Deputy Commissioner specially permits him to stay. It should be compulsory for the employer to register the arrival of all new coolies and inform the Deputy Commissioner who should send a copy of the information in the prescribed form to the Labour Commissioner. The Labour Commissioner would prescribe the necessary form. It should be the duty of the Labour Commissioner to repatriate any coolie who has been recruited by fraud or misrepresentation or for any other sufficient reason within one year of his arrival in Assam. I think a system like that will meet all the objections of the people, the authorities and the representatives of Indian labour. A man's address will always be discovered and his friends can always be sure that he would

come back some time or other. Also it would not be necessary to bind him down to serve any particular employer during the three years he remains in Assam. I do not want anything binding on the labourer; he must be free to go wherever he likes. If he leaves one employer and goes to another, the latter should be bound to repatriate him after he has been in Assam for three years. He should also pay *pro rata* to the first employer the cost of bringing that labourer to Assam. So far as legislation itself goes that is how I visualize the position. I am speaking entirely for myself and as an individual. I do not claim that these views are supported by anybody else.

We have heard quite a lot about wages. I have here the wages paid on my own particular garden. On the Rajgarhali Estate the Government returns for September show that a man earns Rs. 20-3 a month, a woman Rs. 21-3 and a child Rs. 14-8-6. The March returns are Rs. 17-4-6, Rs. 12-4-11 and Rs. 6-12-9, respectively. I have a smaller garden within four miles of Rajgarhali called Bazaloni. The wages there are: September returns—Rs. 18-12-2, Rs. 16-13-11 and Rs. 10-15-5, respectively; March returns—Rs. 16-1-10, Rs. 10-12-4, and Rs. 6-15-4, respectively. There are two reasons for the difference in wages between the two gardens. One is due to short-term labour recruited for six months. Those labourers not being acquainted entirely with tea garden conditions and methods of work are not able to earn the same wages as labourers who have been here a longer time and who know the work thoroughly. That applies particularly to plucking leaf. The other reason is that in the Bazaloni garden there is a certain amount of cultivated area for rice. The Rajgarhali garden has a comparatively small proportion of cultivated land. I would like to say how these wages have been earned in my garden. Mine is a new garden built up in the last 10 years and it is possible to do things with new labour which you cannot do with labour accustomed to old methods in force for a considerable time. Instead of permitting the man to work for 3 hours and then allowing him to go away or work more as he likes, I insist on the men earning their 12 annas by inducing them to work six hours. If a man does not earn this I prefer to turn him out. I have turned out people and a certain percentage of them have left me and gone somewhere else where they need not work longer hours. For instance in the Cinnamara garden the wages were said to be Rs. 12 and Rs. 13. We saw some pruning there done by labourers earning what looked like lower wages. But I can confidently assert that the rate paid to the labourers in Cinnamara for that work is the same as I am paying in my Rajgarhali Estate. With regard to the question of agreements, when Act XIII was abolished I introduced a system which is still going on. I altered the basis of the agreement money or bonus money, whatever you may call it. The usual rate was Re. 1 per month and I increased it to Rs. 2 per month. If a man worked 24 days in the month he got Rs. 2 and proportionately less amounts for less number of working days. This gave him a lump sum sufficient to pay his fare back to any part of India.

F-2464. Full 6-hour days?—It did not matter.

F-2465. *Mr. Cliff*: He got it before or after?—He got it after a year's work. At the time he got it he had the option to go home or undertake to work for another year. In some cases they did accept the alternative and went home. I find that there are a number of people in every garden who will not accept that bonus. They are still under the impression that it is a binding document. It is not a document in our case; we do not take a document. They think it is binding on their honour to complete a year's service. Some of them think it *infra dig* to bind themselves down. They would rather be free than accept this Rs. 24 a year.

F-2466. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are your recruiting costs?—Exactly the same as others. I get my people through the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-2467. When you turn a man off if he does not do certain things what happens to him?—I cannot say. There are a lot of people willing to take him.

F-2468. If a man came up to you and was not prepared to work so many hours you simply asked him to go away?—Yes. It is a question of building up. I have telegraphed for my books and I propose to leave them with you so that you may look into them and see the wages paid daily and so on.

F-2469. How many men have left you?—Very few. Otherwise I could not do it. Naturally the whole point is that you can persuade the labour to do it. But with regard to these six-monthly people I cannot turn them out. I allowed them to earn lower wages than the majority of the people on my estate. As a result I returned those people within 4½ months. I wrote a letter to the Tea Association which the Secretary printed and circulated to all members giving the history of short-term labour as I had experienced it.

F-2470. *The Chairman*: Mr. Chalmers, your aim is not to have any appreciable quantity of *khet* land. You believe that it is part of economy and efficiency for your garden to build up a working force which will work at least 6 hours a day?—Yes. I have two gardens in which this system is worked. In one of them there is quite as much *khet* land as there is on an average garden in Assam.

F-2471. In that garden also do you insist on the workers putting in a minimum of 6 hours a day?—Yes, except when they are cultivating their land.

F-2472. Your aim of having a labour force which is accustomed to working a minimum of 6 hours a day, from one point of view, represents business and economy?—Quite so.

F-2473. Does it on the other hand result in equal contentment of the people?—They can always go if they like. I am in the centre of 80 to 100 thousand acres of waste land to which people are migrating and settling. They would not stay if they were not contented.

F-2474. I think I quite appreciate, as a man who had some little training in business, your point of view. On the other hand, there is possibly the other point of view, namely, whether or not many of the people who come or are likely to come to Assam may not be happy and contented to work half the day for the employer and the other half on their own lands?—We are tea planters, not paddy cultivators.

F-2475. I appreciate that, looking at it from the point of view of the planters—The only object of giving rice land is to have a contented population living on the estate.

F-2476. You would prefer therefore to employ your labour for a small number of years as tea garden workers pure and simple and then let them depart having earned enough money to settle on what is called waste Government land?—I am not particular so long as a man is willing and does work 6 hours a day and earn his wages. If you had enough labour here, if there was a surplus population, then competition would compel people to work more than 3 hours a day. We would not be having all these evils we are having now, and it would not have been necessary for this Commission to come. People would have to work longer hours to earn more money and be better off because their wages would increase in proportion to the extra hours worked.

F-2477. You have given us an interesting picture of your ideal. Every one of us here shares your ideal of complete freedom of labour. But have you not forgotten in sketching your ideals some of the difficulties of recruiting areas?—I have provided for every difficulty.

F-2478. In your repatriation within a year of everybody who was undesirable or wrongly enticed?—The Labour Commissioner should be an Indian Civilian from the Province in which the labour is recruited. He must have the sole authority to repatriate on the same condition as the Agent to the Governor-General in Ceylon. He has the power to repatriate a coolie recruited by fraud or misrepresentation or for any other sufficient reason. During the last few years since this system was started in Ceylon he has repatriated just decimal one per cent. of the coolies recruited annually.

F-2479. Even so, in the recruiting areas and the depôts we have heard of cases of women changing their names, leaving their legitimate husbands and being called the wives of somebody else and coming to Assam. *Vice versa* in the case of husbands. We have heard of these things in the recruiting areas and we are bound to take them into consideration. I do not see how your scheme meets difficulties of that kind in the recruiting areas?—We have heard of that in other places also. The point is that under the present system you can scarcely trace the people and there is no proper control. In the scheme I have suggested you can easily trace the man and he can be repatriated at once. You can do it without involving all this tremendous expenditure of money and discouraging people coming to Assam. That is what the present Act does. We have worked the Act for many years, but we have not improved recruiting conditions. It has only tended to increase the cost of recruiting to an absurdly large figure. What will happen under my scheme will be this. Someone reports that Buddhu's wife has run away with Sanoo to Assam. Immediately the Labour Commissioner in Assam is telegraphed to. He has before him in the prescribed form a list of all the arrivals giving the places they come from, the time they left their place of departure, the time of their arrival in Assam and so on. Within a week they can be sent back if necessary.

F-2480. Did I understand you to say that an *arkatti* or anybody else could bring labour to Assam?—It would be impossible for him to operate if this system was introduced. He would be wiped out of business.

F-2481. I do not think you quite appreciate the feelings that remain about the very word "*arkatti*" in some quarters?—I have myself recruited under the *arkatti* system and I do know something of the abuses. I do not want to introduce it again under any conditions. But what is the use of having the present complicated system of control. It is just like using a sledge hammer to break a watch.

The Chairman: We value very much your original and valuable suggestions for its solution.

F-2482. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it clear, Mr. Chalmers, that you will have a protector for the working population here in Assam?—I have no objection to any scheme of a welfare bureau or anything like that. But the Labour Commissioner I have suggested will be a man, whatever staff he might have, who would have the sole authority to repatriate for any sufficient reason that appeals to him.

F-2483. Have you got all the labour you require?—No, I want more labour for both my gardens. There is no such thing as a fixed labour force. It is always a diminishing quantity.

F-2484. Do you roughly pay 2 annas an hour?—Yes.

F-2485. How do you get discipline?—Exactly as I told you. If a man is not prepared to accept our conditions we ask him to leave the estate.

F-2486. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You referred to emigration to Ceylon. Is not that emigration controlled and regulated by registration in the labour recruiting districts?—Ceylon is an overseas place and the labourers are going away from the jurisdiction of the Government of India. That is not the case here.

F-2487. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If you have protection *qua* repatriation of the worker, would you be in favour of protection in regard to conditions of labour and wages as well?—I have no fear of anything so long as it is run by Government on modern conditions.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-third Meeting.

JORHAT.

Monday, 13th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E. — DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. — MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.

MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. — LT.-COLONEL A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

MR. JOHN CLIFF.

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA,
LT.-COLONEL H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budli Beta Tea Co., Ltd. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN .. .. .. *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN .. .. .. }

At Meleng Tea Estate.

RAM DAT KURMI, RAM AUTAR PASI, AUTAR KORI, tea garden coolies (Mr. Clow interpreted).

F-2488. *Mr. Clow*: Do you all come from Bahraich district?—(*Ram Dat Kurmi*) Yes.

F-2489. When did you come?—About 11 months ago.

F-2490. Did you all come together?—(*Autar Kori*) I came first and the other two came a week later.

F-2491. Did you live in one and the same village?—No.

F-2492. Did any others come from Bahraich?—Yes, there were two others, Jaiman, and his nephew Shanker, a boy; they came a week or two before.

F-2493. Who brought you?—Naipal *sardar* brought me and Babul *chowkidar* brought the other two.

F-2494. *The Chairman*: You have not got your families with you?—(*Ram Dat Kurmi*) I am married and so is Ram Autar Pasi, but Autar Kori is not married.

F-2495. Are your wives here with you?—No, we have no one with us here.

F-2496. Have those of you who are married been sending any money to your wives?—No. neither of us have sent any money to our families.

F-2497. Are you thinking of bringing your wives here?—Yes, we want to bring our families here.

F-2498. Have you asked to go as *sardars* to bring your families?—(*Ram Autar Pasi*) Yes, I told the sahib I wanted to go, and that I would bring my wife and family, my mother and father and others of my house. The sahib gave permission and said he was agreeable. When we get leave we shall go.

F-2499. Do you think your wives and families will be happier here than in your own country?—Yes, everything will be all right when they come here. We get more money on the garden.

F-2500. How much cultivation have you?—I have none. (*Ram Dat Kurmi*) I have 5 or 6 *bighas*.

F-2501. *The Chairman*: Why did you leave Bahraich?—(*Ram Dat Kurmi*) I left Bahraich because the fields did not yield enough for me. I have two brothers on the same fields with my father and mother. I have no fields here; nobody on the gardens has any land.

F-2502. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you live together?—No. We feed separately and we live in separate quarters.

F-2503. Does that mean that you have got a house to yourself?—Yes, I live alone.

F-2504. Have any of you three saved any money since you came?—No. (*Autar Kori*) I have not saved any; how could I have bought these clothes if I had saved money. The money I get just suffices for me, so how can I save. (*Ram Autar Pasi*) We have saved no money. Whatever we have saved we have spent on buying clothes.

F-2505. *The Chairman*: When you have your family with you will you be able to save then?—(*Autar Kori*) Yes, we should be able to save money then.

F-2506. How do your families live now?—(*Ram Autar Pasi*) They live by labouring and begging occasionally.

F-2507. What do you get for a *hazira*?—(*Ram Dat Kurmi*) I get no more than sufficient to feed myself.

F-2508. How much did you earn last week?—I got Rs. 1-8 for my hazira, and when I can manage it I get Re. 1 for my *ticca* work.

F-2509. Did you work 6 days last week?—Yes.

F-2510. Are you going to work *ticca* to-day?—If I can I will.

F-2511. Was your thumb impression taken when you came here?—No. (*Ram Autar Pasi*) When I was recruited my name was taken in a book and my thumb impression was taken, but it was not taken here.

F-2512. *Mr. Clow*: Were you given any advance by Babul *chowkidar*?—I got Rs. 10 in my country.

(The witness withdrew.)

Ten male tea garden coolies (Rev. Saikia interpreted).

F-2513. *The Chairman*: Where do you come from?—Kharagpur.

F-2514. Did all of you come together?—Yes.

F-2515. Did the *sardar* bring you?—Yes.

F-2516. How long have you been here?—Two years.

F-2517. Have you your families with you?—Yes.

F-2518. Did you bring your families with you or did you go and fetch them?—We came with our families.

F-2519. Are you better off here than you were in the country from which you came?—I am better off here than I was in my country.

F-2520. And you wish to stop here?—Yes. I am quite happy to stay here.

F-2521. Have you any land here?—We have no land to cultivate.

F-2522. Do you save money?—I have not sufficient money for my food and clothing.

F-2523. *The Chairman*: How much do you spend on drink in a month?—I do not drink wine.

F-2524. *Rev. Saikia*: You had better tell the truth in the sight of God. Do you drink?—No.

F-2525. *The Chairman*: You say you are better off here than you were in your own country before you came?—I wish to stay here. (*Another witness*) I want to go to my country to bring my father and mother.

F-2526. *Colonel Garbett*: Have you asked the manager if you can do so?—If the manager sends me I am quite willing to go to my country and bring my family to Assam.

(The witness withdrew.)

KUNDHAN. DOME, male tea garden coolie.

F-2527. *Mr. Clow*: What district do you come from?—Kalahandi.

F-2528. What work do you do?—I am a *sardar*.

F-2529. *Mr. Cliff*: How many men have you under you?—I have 106 in all, but there are fewer to-day than usual.

F-2530. How are you paid?—I get a commission of one pice for every 4 annas of work done and I also get Rs. 8 as pay.

F-2531. When do the men come to work?—About 8 or 9 a.m.

F-2532. What do you do if they do not come?—If a man is absent for a day or two we do nothing, but if he does not come for three or four days he is beaten. They come then. The sahib scolds me and I scold them and I only beat them if they are really bad. The sahib beats them.

F-2533. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do the sahibs beat them themselves?—The sahibs do not beat them now but in the old days they did. Before the present manager came there was a lot of beating.

F-2534. *Mr. Clow*: Who beat Kirodhar?—The leading sahib.

F-2535. When?—About a year ago.

F-2536. *Colonel Garbett*: Why?—Because he was not working and was lazy.

F-2537. Is he lazy now?—No, not since that happened.

F-2538. *Mr. Cliff*: Formerly you told us that he was beaten because there was a disturbance. What was the disturbance?—It was merely that his work was bad.

(The witness withdrew.)

KIRODHAR, a Goala caste male coolie.

F-2539. Where do you come from?—From the Ranchi district.

F-2540. *The Chairman*: How long have you been here?—Five or six years.

F-2541. Are your wife and family here?—Yes.

F-2542. Are they happier here than they were in their own country?—Yes, I am fairly satisfied.

F-2543. Are you beaten?—When the sahib tells the *sardar* to do so. He says: "Look at that man and go for him"; and then we are beaten.

F-2544. When you are lazy you are beaten?—No, when the work is bad.

F-2545. When the sahib says that your work is bad, does he beat you himself or tell the *sardar* to do so? —If the *sardar* is there he tells the *sardar* to do so, but if the *sardar* is not there he does it himself.

F-2546. *Mr. Cliff*: What were your earnings last week?—I get Rs. 6-11 a month for *hazira* and I got Rs. 2-8 last week for the *ticca*.

F-2547. I understand you have a wife; have you any family?—I have one son but he does not work. My wife works. I have three sisters and two brothers here.

F-2548. *The Chairman*: Do you want to go back to your country or to stay here?—It is a matter of finance. If I were rich enough I should like to go to my country.

F-2549. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any land here?—Nobody has any land here.

F-2550. Have you saved anything?—I have saved nothing.

F-2551. Did you ever go as a *sardar* to Ranchi?—Yes, I have been once.

F-2552. Did you bring anybody back?—I did not bring anybody; I could not get anybody to come back with me. Some of them will come now.

F-2553. Are you in debt?—Yes, I am in debt.

F-2554. To whom?—I owe Rs. 4 to Mohan who is here pruning.

F-2555. Do you owe anything to the Marwari?—Only a few annas for grain.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by CHEMBELI, woman labourer (KALONDI DOME), Meleng Tea Estate.

Chembeli states that she is a coolie on the Meleng Tea Estate and was born on the garden. She has three children who are not working and her husband is dead. She has finished her *hazira* for the day consisting of pruning forty trees for which her wage is 4 annas. She did not wish to do any *ticca* work to-day because she had work at her own home. When she does *hazira* she gets monthly wages of Rs. 6 a month. When she does *ticca* she is paid by the week, 4 annas for skiffing 120 trees. She received Rs. 1-8 last week for *ticca*. She came to work at 8 o'clock this morning and is returning from her work (the time is 11-20 a.m. and so her work must have been finished by 11). She owes about Rs. 8 at the shop. In answer to a question whether she has any other income on which to keep herself and her children she replies, "No." Her children are not fed by the garden. The ages of her children are 10, 5 and 1½ years. They are looked after by her mother-in-law while she is at work. As she cannot live on her *hazira* wage she does *ticca* and if that does not produce enough she borrows. She pays no rent and lives on *busti* land given by the garden. She takes an annual *girmit* of Rs. 6. She possesses land but does not know how much. It is worked by her brother-in-law on the *adha* system. She has no plough cattle but has one cow with a calf, has no goat but a number of hens.

(The witness withdrew.)

NANEE DASI GHASI, woman coolie (PRULIANI), Meleng Tea Estate.

Nanee Dasi, a woman coolie on the Meleng Tea Estate, states that she is married and lives with her husband and has no children. She has done to-day her full *hazira* and has earned Rs. 6 per month thereby. She is doing no *ticca* to-day. If she skiffs 120 trees, she gets four annas. She takes *girmit* money from the garden. She has *khet* land, two *halissa* (two-thirds of an acre). In answer to a question she states that when she takes *girmit* she cannot go away without paying the money to the Manager or giving up a cow or some property instead. Asked if she wished to run away she says, "If the Sahib allows me, then I can go." She prefers to stay on the garden. If she ran away, they will beat her and bring her back. Asked who would bring her back, she stated that there were *chowkidars* in the lines. Asked if she had ever seen any one beaten and brought back. She states that she has seen quite a lot of people brought back but it was a considerable time ago. When the question was repeated, she said that she had not seen it but it is what people say. Asked a third time if she had seen people brought back with her own eyes, she said, "No," but people say it is done. That is one of the reasons why she is afraid to go away.

She lives in the garden lines and owns two plough cattle and a cow. She was brought from her country by her brother and was married after she came to the garden. She was about 13 or 14 when she came to the garden. (The woman appears to be 19 or 20.)

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. R. H. S. OLIVER, Manager of Meleng Tea Estate.

F-2556. *Colonel Garbett:* How long have you been in tea?—I came out at Christmas, 1907.

F-2557. *Sir Alexander Murray:* How much are the men and women getting?—The men get Rs. 7 a month and the women get Rs. 6 a month.

F-2558. For doing what?—Whatever task they are given; that is apart from *ticca.*

F-2559. Tell us what the task is and how long it takes?—Double hoeing; a coolie who has been here over three years gets 15 *nals,* while up to three years he gets 12 *nals.* If it is an old coolie who has got 15 *nals hazira,* he does 12 *nals ticca.* A man gets approximately 5 annas a day for his *hazira* and 4 annas for his *ticca;* he is in a position to draw 9 annas a day. The women only do light hoeing. For pruning 40 bushes is the *hazira;* when they are skiffing they do 120 bushes and that is another 4 annas.

F-2560. How long does it take to earn 4 annas?—You saw them go away this morning. Monday is a morning on which they turn out late; on an ordinary week day they go away by 10-30, having finished their *hazira* and they easily finish their *ticca* by 2 o'clock. If you come back this afternoon you will be able to see whether I am telling the truth or not. I am now speaking of pruning. They do not go home for a meal, but they usually go straight on. Some people here are doing ticca pruning; they do 10 bushes for an anna. They will have finished by 2 o'clock; except during the plucking season very few people are out after 2 o'clock in the afternoon. These people would do 40 bushes *hazira* and 40 bushes *ticca* and get 8 annas. The women will finish their *hazira* in three or four hours; they are finished by 10-30 or a quarter to 11 most mornings.

F-2561. They start work about 8 o'clock —Yes.

F-2562. *Sir Alexander Murray:* If they do 6 days' work in a week it would work out at Rs. 1-8, and they would get *ticca* in addition?—Yes. If they have hoeing as their *hazira* task we give them some other work for *ticca;* we give them a lighter task usually, so as to enable them to earn an easy *ticca.* The double hoeing is the hardest work.

F-2563. *Colonel Garbett:* Light hoeing is more or less play?—Yes.

F-2564. *Mr. Cliff:* We have just been questioning a *sardar* named Kundhan Dome. Will you send us information as to the number of men working under him, his wages plus his rate of commission, and the total commission earned by him over a period?—The number of men under him varies. I am not at present directly in charge of the men. We try to have one *sardar* to 50 or 60 men.

F-2565. *Colonel Garbett:* I suppose the number of men under the *sardar* depends on how many people turn up to work?—Yes.

F-2566. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* When was the last revision in the monthly pay and the *ticca*?—The *ticca* is very elastic. That is specially so here because we are not a big company; it is just a private estate. The manager of the division sets a task; the coolie will probably say he cannot do it; then the task may be reduced. The task in pruning varies; it depends entirely on the style of pruning; the size and kind of bush.

F-2567. *Sir Alexander Murray:* When did you increase your rates?—I cannot tell you but I can find out.

F-2568. *The Chairman:* I suppose you send out *sardars* to recruit?—Yes.

F-2569. How many have you sent out in the last two years?—I should think an average of between 180 and 200. For 1928-29, 129 *sardars* were sent out; 113 *sardars* returned and brought back 192 new coolies.

F-2570. Do you lose many *sardars* who do not return?—No. Many *sardars* return after two years; they get an advance from the local agent, have a really good time in their own country and then come back. In 1928-29 we sent 113 *sardars,* of whom 39 have not returned up to date.

F-2571. Are those 39 *sardars* reporting to you?—Yes, they are reporting through the agency; I expect I shall lose about 20 of those who will not come back.

F-2572. They take it as a form of repatriation?—Yes, I suppose they do.

F-2573. And others take it as a form of long leave? They intend to come back but do not take much trouble in recruiting when they are there?—They do not take much trouble during the first year they are away. I know something about recruiting because I have been in the recruiting districts for two years running, remaining there three months each time and have motored round all the districts.

F-2574. We have been in the recruiting areas and we find there still lingers a prejudice against coming to Assam?—That is quite true.

F-2575. On the ground that it is so far distant?—Yes.

F-2576. Some of them tell one another that if they go to Assam they will never be heard of again?—Yes, they do. They will tell you that in Ranchi now.

F-2577. It has been suggested to us that one way of getting over that prejudice would be a universal system giving a right of repatriation at the expense of the garden at the end of three years. The object of that system is to give them time to learn the conditions and if they have come up as single men to bring their families up. It is suggested that if that were the universal custom the old prejudice would be removed and it would lead to much more free flow of recruits, possibly so much so that the gardens would be able to choose their recruits and not have undesirables sent up as sometimes happens to-day. Would you yourself be willing to establish a system if it were general for all the gardens by which they would have a right of repatriation after three years?—But you do not mean that they would have to stay here for three years?

The Chairman: No, not necessarily, but that they could claim repatriation at the end of three years?—Yes, I should imagine that would be a very sound thing.

F-2578. Then it would depend on the gardens generally making the coolies happy and contented both as to wages and other conditions and presumably the gardens would desire to have as small a precentage as possible claiming their right of repatriation when they have had three years' experience?—Yes.

F-2579. You yourself think that would be practicable?—Yes, I think it would be a very good idea provided everybody else did it.

F-2580. I am of course assuming that it would be general. Would not a system of that kind probably greatly reduce the expense of a *sardar* system if a smaller number of *sardars* were sent and each *sardar* brought back a larger number of coolies?—Yes, I think so. The tendency is for the coolies to be able to return to their country more freely than they did.

F-2581. Your garden appears to get a larger number of recruits per *sardar* than some gardens, but the result of the evidence we have had may be roughly stated in this way: one-third of the *sardars* do not come back but are lost to the gardens because they take it as a form of repatriation; the second third take it as a form of holiday with expenses paid and do not trouble much about recruiting; then you have the remaining third which are actual recruiters. Does your experience suggest that that is a proper estimate?—Yes, that is about right. When a *sardar* is sent recruiting in the first year he may bring up all his available relatives. As he has done well we send him again recruiting, but is then in the position of having brought up everybody he can bring. The *sardars* are now getting a little more calculating and they do not bring up all their relatives in the first year.

F-2582. *Sir Alexander Murray:* What do you do when you yourself go to the recruiting areas?—I generally make arrangements with the local agent, and when I get there I see my own *sardars* who are there. That is a very great help.

F-2583. From where do you recruit?—On both occasions when I went to the recruiting areas I visited Purulia, which is now no good, Ranchi, Jubbulpore, Allahabad, Bilaspur, Mandola, Seoni, Raipur, Cuttack and Purhanpur.

F-2584. *The Chairman:* Have you ever got into trouble for assisting recruiting?—No. I go there and see my *sardars*. I am able to go out and see the people from whom the recruits are to be drawn and let those people see what the sahib is like. The *sauras* have not been in Assam a long time, but I think they will be found to be a good type of labour for the gardens. My object was to see their condition and learn how they live. One is amazed to find what a great distance coolies have to go from their villages to the depôts.

F-2585. *The Chairman:* Have you anything in the form of a leaflet setting out the conditions of tea garden work?—A question sheet is sent down to each local agent. But I do not think they are worth the paper they are printed on, because the *sardar* has told the people what the conditions are in the gardens and the coolies prefer to listen to him rather than to the local agent.

F-2586. *The Chairman*: We have been shown a statement which is sent out by the coal mines in Assam which states precisely all the conditions to which the recruit will be subject. I understand you have nothing of that sort?—No.

F-2587. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Do you think the recruit knows what is stated in this question sheet?—When he comes before the local agent the local agent asks him what his *sardar* has told him.

F-2588. Why is it so difficult to recruit?—Because India is opening up so rapidly and the labour is not available. For instance, we used to get a lot of *Ooryas* from Cuttack, but when I was at Cuttack I found that contractors were going from Cuttack to the United Provinces to get labour for a railway that was being built at Cuttack, while we were trying to get recruits from Cuttack.

F-2589. *The Chairman:* What you call the question sheet only relates to information about the *sardar;* the *sardar* himself is not supplied with information with regard to the garden?—No.

F-2590. *Mr. Cliff:* You have spoken of the long distance the coolies have to travel from their villages to the depôts.—Yes. If a *sardar* recruits a man, his wife and two or three children 300 miles from the depôt, he has got to get these people to the depôt somehow. There are no railways and he has to feed the people. Therefore, he has to have an advance before he goes to the recruiting areas. Also I think the overhead charges in the local agency offices are rather heavy and that makes the system expensive.

F-2591. *The Chairman:* How much do your recruits cost you?—Last year our recruits cost us Rs. 129 per head.

F-2592. You are above the average in respect of the number that your *sardars* bring back?—Yes.

F-2593. *Sir Alexander Murray:* You know the country very well, if you were a coolie would you prefer to come to a tea garden or remain at home?—I would sooner be here. When the coolie is in his own country there is no one to look after him if he is in trouble or in debt. I am not sure we are not tending to pauperise the coolie because everything is done for him and he has no need to look to the future. He lives absolutely in the present.

F-2594. *The Chairman:* Have you any *khet* land here?—We have 5,000 acres, 1,600 acres of which is under tea; the balance is *khet* and jungle.

F-2595. In how many years can a recruit hope to get *khet* land?—He gets it the first year. If it is new land it has to be broken down. He is paid *hazira* for doing it.

F-2596. *Mr. Cliff:* How much of that land is jungle and how much *khet*?—I should think roughly it is two-thirds jungle and one-third *khet*.

F-2597. *The Chairman:* What proportion of your men have *khet* land?—Two-thirds of them. We have had a very good harvest this year and two-thirds of the people have been away for five weeks cutting down jungle.

F-2598. Some of the men we spoke to who had not been here for a year expressed their wish to go back to their own country and bring their relatives back with them. How soon will they have an opportunity of going?—They will go in the month of January. Of course we cannot let them all go at once. We hold a meeting of them, a *panchayat*, and they elect 10 people to go down. They know their own people who have got relatives.

F-2599. That is the first we have heard of these people choosing their own representatives to go to their own country. Is that your own idea?—Yes; we have been doing that for three or four years. I think that is probably why we are more successful with our *sardars* because the rest of the coolies are not going to let people go down who are just going down for a holiday.

F-2600. *Mr. Cliff:* How long have you been manager?—I came here at Christmas 1907 as an assistant and I became manager in 1928.

F-2601. We asked one of your *sardars* what he did if men refused to come to work; he said they were not severe for a day or two, but if the men were lazy, after a day or two they were severe to them and the men were hit. Do you know anything about that?—No, it is strictly against orders. Of course the *sardar* might be a little *zabardast* (forceful) because the *sardar* gets a commission on the earnings of the coolies.

F-2602. One of the men told us that if the sahib goes round and sees the work is bad, if the *sardar* is there the sahib tells the sardar, if I may use the phrase, to "tickle them up" and if the *sardar* is not there the sahib hits them with his hand?—That is quite untrue.

F-2603. Do you yourself or the sahibs under you do that?—That is quite untrue. To begin with it would not pay.

F-2604. The *sardar* says that in order to get work done or in respect of bad work he uses the cane which I now have in my hand. Is that done with your cognizance?—No.

F-2605. Is it done with the cognizance of any of the sahibs under you?—He is not allowed to do so, but I do not say it does not go on. If coolies came up and complained the *sardar* would not be a *sardar* any more.

F-2606. It seems that a number of the men working on this garden, including the *sardar* himself, see nothing strange in this but take it as a matter of common occurrence?—No, that is wrong.

F-2607. *Mr. Clow:* We got hold of a *sardar* and a coolie on this garden and before the rest of the members of the Commission came we asked him if he beat the men with his cane; he said: "Oh, yes, he had to do it occasionally; otherwise how could he get the work done." We then picked out the nearest coolie and asked him if he beat that man. He said: "Yes, at times, and he called the coolie over and started examining his back to see if he could find any marks, but he could not find any." Later on, when several other members of the Commission came up, we recorded evidence formally; he was then apparently a little nervous and said: "Oh, no, he did not beat them, but it was the sahibs who did it." Are we to take it that if a coolie gets lazy, or otherwise, it is not an uncommon thing for the *sardar* to use a little physical encouragement?—I could not say; all I can say is this: if a coolie complains that he has been beaten and it is proved up to the hilt that he has been beaten, the *sardar* is no longer a *sardar*.

F-2608. *Mr. Cliff:* You used a word which I am told means "forceful," and the *sardar* himself is quite frank about it; he says: "Yes, I have got to beat them when the work is bad.". Can there be such a system in operation without it coming within your ken?—He might do so, but I do not think so: we rather flatter ourselves that we are in touch with the coolies here; I do not think it does obtain.

F-2609. On a garden of this size can this system be in operation without it coming within your ken?—No, it could not; I mean they would certainly complain if it happened.

F-2610. I see a good many people who are afraid to complain, as well as some who are not afraid to complain. It seems to me to be impossible for such a system to be in operation without it being within your knowledge?—Yes.

F-2611. Then do you know of it or do you not?—I do not know of any cases. The *sardars* are not authorized to do it; they have plenty of ways of twisting their tails without that.

F-2612. That is another phrase which might be interpreted as meaning forceful measures?—No one likes hoeing on a hill; it is hard work pulling land up a hill, and if a man has been doing bad work the *sardar* can say: "That is where you will hoe to-morrow." There are lots of ways of doing it.

The Chairman: Is there any definition of the word "beating"; it is a thing that may mean much or may mean very little.

Mr. Cliff: I am using the word "hitting"; I have not used the word "beating."

Diwan Chaman Lall: They explained that it was either by the hand or with the cane.

The Chairman: It might be the slightest touch, a mere reminder, or of course it might be something very serious.

Miss Power: One of the women made a statement. Perhaps the Secretary will read out that statement so that the manager may have an opportunity of dealing with it.

Mr. Dibdin (Joint Secretary): One of the women was asked: "Do you want to run away" She said: "If the sahib allows, then I can go." She said she likes to stay here; if she runs away they will beat her and bring her back; in the lines there are *chowkidars*. She was then asked if she had ever seen anyone beaten and brought back. First she said she had seen a lot of people brought back a considerable time ago: then she changed that and said she had not seen it, but that is what people said. She was asked: "Have you seen people brought back with your own eyes?" She answered: "No, but people say it is done; that is one of the reasons why I am afraid to go away."

Mr. Cliff: There was also a reference to some little trouble which it was thought the manager should have an opportunity of clearing up.

F-2613. *The Chairman:* What was it?—Some people were taken away to an Indian garden. Their brothers, one of whom happened to be a *chowkidar*, went there and fetched them back from this Indian garden. One of the two brothers did give his sister a licking for going away. She had gone away with a man of another *jat*; that was what really made her brother angry. The man who had taken the girl away went into court and complained that he had been beaten by the manager; that was me. The Deputy Commissioner came out and held an enquiry and found out the facts of the case.

F-2614. This was a case of somebody taking a girl away without her relatives' consent?—Yes, and the man was of a lower *jat*.

F-2615. Then it was really a social matter?—Yes, it was really a case of enticement, but of course we could not prove it.

F-2616. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How many people were involved in this?—I think there were two men who went away with two girls and one of the girls had a small sister. The man whose sister lost her caste happened to be a line *chowkidar* and he went to fetch her back; he did give her a whipping.

F-2617. *The Chairman:* What was the decision of the Deputy Commissioner in that case?—The Deputy Commissioner decided that their application was untrue and suggested running a case against the man who had laid the statement against me. I did not do that because it takes a long time running a case in Jorhat.

F-2618. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But, apart from that, have you any other instances of coolies leaving you and going away?—No. We have a lot of enticement going on the same as in all gardens, because we are surrounded by Indian gardens.

F-2619. *The Chairman*: Are they gardens which are not members of the Association?—Yes.

F-2620. *Mr. Cliff:* What do you say is the form of enticement?—As I said, it costs us Rs. 129 to land *sardar* coolies on the garden now. An Indian can easily afford to give Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 to any of his clever people who can collect people from round about, and that is what happens. They come back eventually in 9 cases out of 10.

F-2621. What would you say was the approximate number that would be enticed away in a period of 12 months?—From this estate probably 12 or 15 and in about a year's time I should say we should get about 6 back. My experience is that they come back in about that time. It does not cost this Indian anything to recruit and he gives them a bonus, advance or present of about Rs. 20. Rupees 20 is a lot to a coolie. I do know this happens, but only from what coolies tell me. At first the Indian planter does not deduct the advance from their wages and they go on until the *baboo* thinks he will collect the advance; that is when we get our coolies back. Then the *baboo* will send a chit to me saying he hears a coolie has come to Meleng and can he have him back.

F-2622. Have you or your Association made any representation with regard to this practice to the other gardens?—We have protested time after time.

F-2623. When you protest, what do they say?—If I find the coolies are at his place, I will probably write and ask him if they are working for him, and he will immediately write and say they are not there; he never sends them back.

F-2624. You mean they never acknowledge they have taken them?—They never acknowledge that.

F-2625. *Miss Power*: Are those gardens doing any legitimate recruiting in the recruiting areas through *sardars* or not?—I think Boloma garden did; there is an Indian agency.

F-2626. *The Chairman:* Do you pay the Rs. 12 bonus, or whatever you call it, at the end of a year?—Yes.

F-2627. Is any thumb print taken?—Yes, we do take a thumb print.

F-2628. Is any agreement attached to that?—No.

F-2629. *Mr. Clow:* Is that the form? (Handing document to the witness)—Yes, that is it.

F-2630. *The Chairman:* That is merely a receipt?—Yes.

F-2631. Do you think the men regard that as involving an obligation to work for another year?—No, they do not.

F-2632. We have had in some cases evidence to the contrary effect, that they do regard it as binding them for another year's work?—No. The agreement used to be for the year's work they were going to do; but now we are not too keen to give this. It has obtained for a long time and we hope it will stop; we do not give as many as we used to; sometimes they ask for it and we do not give it.

F-2633. *Mr. Clow:* Why do you take a receipt?—I do not know.

F-2634. I imagine you do not take a receipt for pay?—No.

F-2635. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Some coolies working in this garden told Rev. Saikia and me that they think they cannot leave until their agreement period of one year is over?—I should not think any of the people you were talking to this morning had received any money.

F-2636. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Two girls said they had received Rs. 6; we asked one of them about it and she said after she had got that Rs. 6 she felt she could not leave the garden for a year. Is not the case that you give it to some and do not give it to others; you leave it to them to come up and ask for it?—Yes.

F-2637. If it is based on last year's work, why not give it to everybody?—It is not for last year's work; it is for the coming year. I give it to a person who I think is a decent sort of person, who wants the money and should be encouraged.

F-2638. *The Chairman:* You do refuse it to some?—Yes; we could not afford to give it to everybody.

F-2639. On what grounds do you refuse: on the ground that they have not worked well during the past year?—Yes; it is just left to the discretion of the divisional managers whether it shall be given or not. It is a way of giving a bonus. For instance, when they are getting married we give it to them.

F-2640. *Sir Alexander Murray:* They do not get married every year?—No, but they may want to buy bullocks.

F-2641. What is the percentage of your garden that gets it?—No new coolies get it; no coolie gets it until his three years are over.

F-2642. *Colonel Garbett:* The idea, I take it, is to encourage good behaviour and good work?—Yes; if a man had been getting drunk and knocking people about and that sort of thing, he certainly would not get it, because the first thing he would do would be to buy Rs. 12 worth of *lanpani* and he would be a thorn in the manager's side for some time.

F-2643. *Mr. Cliff:* In most places in the world when you give a reward to labour you give it for work done, but this seems to be a reward for work anticipated; if a man has been here three years, why does he not get a bonus for what he has done in the past?—He is not worth a lot to us until he has been here three years; to begin with, he does not do the same amount of work as an old coolie.

F-2644. Why do you not give the bonus at the end of the fourth year for the fourth year's work that is done?

Colonel Garbett: I think the reply to that is this: in the old days we had to give agreements for work to be done and a coolie would get an agreement to work for one year. When agreements were stopped, if we had given the bonus after the year's work was done, it would have meant that the coolie would have had to go for one year without any bonus and that would have been a hardship on the coolie.

Mr. Cliff: Mr. Oliver is saying it is not a survival: that they come for three years under entirely different conditions and still get a bonus for work to be done in the future and not for past work.

F-2645. *The Chairman:* I gather that in your case it is partly one thing and partly the other; it is partly a recognition of good work done and it is also partly an encouragement to work for another year?—I do not think they look on it as an encouragement to work for another year. They are certainly very pleased to receive this money and I think it encourages them to behave.

F-2646. In your view is it as a rule well spent?—Yes, it is; it is a lump sum and you generally find a husband and wife will come up at the same time and ask if they can have it. They generally use it to buy a bullock or something like that. When they receive money daily they are apt to spend it. We used to pay for our plucking daily; we now pay for it weekly and we find they save more money. When they got their 6 or 8 annas for a day's plucking that was spent because it was a small sum, but when they get Rs. 3 or 5 in a lump sum they think twice before they spend it.

F-2647. One thing with which we have been rather struck is the limited amount of inter-communication between the garden workers and the people they have left behind in their villages. Have you yourself any system of encouraging the passing of letters and, if need be, remittances?—No; we have a post office practically on the garden and the peons deliver letters to the coolies.

F-2648. You do not offer any assistance to them either in writing letters or in remitting to their relations?—No, there is no organization here for that.

F-2649. Do you not think it would add to the amenities of garden work if they were helped in this matter, whether by paying for the postage of the letter or the services of a letter writer?—It might do, but as regards money I do not think it would; if you ask a coolie whether he has any money he will swear he has not.

F-2650. We have had cases of a man and his wife where the wife has been left behind and no letter has passed in 11 months?—I think a good bit of correspondence goes on; they will come and tell me that a cousin wants to come to Assam, and can they go and fetch him.

F-2651. I am only looking at every possible means of increasing the contact and preventing them from feeling so far away from their relatives, as is sometimes the case at present?—Yes.

F-2652. *Rev. Saikia*: If the *sardars* who are over the coolies do not understand the language of the coolies, how are they to know their grievances?—We arrange for that. You were speaking to a group of coolies this morning; the second *sardar* is a *saura* and knows their language.

F-2653. *The Chairman*: You always try to have a *sardar* who does understand the language of the gang?—Yes; as a matter of fact, that is what that second *sardar* is there for; he is no good as a *sardar;* he is simply there to interpret and explain things to the new coolies.

F-2654. *Mr. Clow*: The gang we saw apparently contained men from Oudh and Madras?—Yes, and Ranchi.

F-2655. I suppose it is difficult for a *sardar* to make himself understood by all these types?—The Ranchi man understands Hindustani, and the *sardar* you saw has worked here for a long time; they all pick up a little *Mundari.*

F-2656. *Mr. Ahmed*: I understand there is no school here?—There is no school on the estate but we have two schools to which the children go.

F-2657. Those are outside?—Yes.

F-2658. I understand you are in favour of starting a school?—We keep the other schools going; we supply them with materials to keep going and that sort of thing.

F-2659. That is very far away for the children to go?—No, it is not.

F-2660. *The Chairman*: How many of your children go to school?—I could not say offhand, but in the division that is nearest the school I should say about 20 or 30 children go to school and they are not regular in attendance.

F-2661. *Mrs. Rahman*: When the women are working in the factories is any provision made for the care of their young children?—We only have between 25 and 30 women working in the factory; that is in the sorting room; none of them have small children. We could not have small children lying about the factory, so we do not have women with young children in the factory.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. JAMES FRASER, Manager, Hunwal Tea Company, Mariani Division, Jorhat.

F-2662. *The Chairman*: You have a number of recruits who have just arrived? Yes.

F-2663. I understand they are short term recruits recruited for one year?—Yes.

F-2664. Is this the question sheet on which they have been recruited? (Handing the document to the witness)—Yes.

F-2665. The contents of this question sheet should have been explained to the recruits in the depôts?—Yes.

F-2666. I see it guarantees 8 annas a day for stated maximum tasks. Then you say the garden is free from jungle and the soil is light. It says that 8 annas can be earned in 6 hours and double *hazira* guaranteed?—Yes, the double *hazira* is 8 annas.

F-2667. That is for men; for women 6 annas per day is guaranteed for the maximum tasks stated. It also deals with boys, and it says that boiled rice is sold to all coolies at stated rates?—At the present moment these rates are higher than the current price of local rice; we always keep some rice in stock but there is no object in the coolie taking it from us when he can buy it cheaper in the local bazaar.

F-2668. It says that sick allowances are paid at the discretion of the manager?—In consultation with the medical officer; it is exceptional when any sick coolie is not paid.

F-2669. It says that after one year a coolie will be repatriated at the company's expense; that is, presumably, if they desire to go back?—Yes.

F-2670. I see that some of these coolies have their women with them?—Yes, but that is rather the exception than the rule; we should like to see more women with them.

F-2671. When they come for this one year term do you find that many of them stay or do they go back at the end of their term?—Very few stay; they go back.

F-2672. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Who went down with that question sheet in this particular case of these coolies we see here?—There are 4 *sardars* here and there should be 45 coolies altogether. There are 20 in one lot. This woman, Christine, has recruited a man and a woman, her niece. They have all come together. A recruiter called Bolo, who has not returned, has sent up 20 coolies, the assumption being that he is going to stay down and send up or bring up more if he can.

F-2673. Of these 20 coolies in one lot, how many are men and how many are women?—There are 16 men, 3 women and 1 girl.

F-2674. Is Christine the wife of Bolo?—Yes; she also holds a garden *sardar's* certificate. She has come back with the batch on behalf of her husband and herself. A man named Johan has recruited a father and daughter with this lot. I am not yet acquainted with them as they were not here half an hour ago. Another man, Marcus, has recruited a total of 23 souls: 14 men, 7 women, a girl and a boy.

F-2675. Are all these for one year?—Yes.

F-2676. *The Chairman*: What has led you to accept these one-year recruits?—Want of labour.

F-2677. I suppose you would prefer to have them for a longer time?—Yes, I should much prefer it.

F-2678. How is it that they all go back at the end of the year; do none of them take to the life at the end of the year, or is it that they will come up again?—I am hoping that it may develop into a system by which they will come up for two or three years.

F-2679. Do you adopt this system in order to popularize your garden?—No, it is a makeshift to tide over bad recruiting years.

F-2680. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I understand that each of these recruits on arrival will get Rs. 5?—Yes, they have been paid Rs. 5 in the depôt, and they get another Rs. 5 when they arrive here.

F-2681. Have any of the *sardars* come back with them?—Christine is the only *sardar* who has come back.

F-2682. *The Chairman*: What is your experience in recruiting, say, over the last two years. Do you keep a *sardar* book?—Yes, it is all on record.

F-2683. How many *sardars* have you sent in the last two years?—I could not say without reference; it is a large number.

F-2684. I take it from what you said just now that you are under-staffed?—I could do with more coolies.

F-2685. And for that reason you are trying this short term enlistment system?—Yes.

F-2686. Is this the first batch you have had?—No, the first batch came in 1927.

F-2687. Then you have had more than two years experience of the short term recruiting?—Three years experience off and on.

F-2688. What has been your feeling as to the result of that short term recruiting; has it been satisfactory?—So far.

F-2689. But I suppose very expensive?—I forbid recruiting for 6 months; I do not want coolies for 6 months. Unless tea conditions are very favourable I consider 6 months coolies are a direct loss to the garden. I think the 12 months coolie is probably profitable: it pays us to employ them on those terms.

F-2690. But for so short a term as 12 months you take them because it is the best you can get?—It is the best I can get. I would like to be in a position not to have 12 months coolies; I would like to extend the period. I find they only want the work on which they earn most money; that is, light hoeing. A gang of old tea garden coolies who are familiar with the work more or less resent being asked to do any work other than light hoeing.

F-2691. Then you do think some of these short term recruits have been in Assam before?—Yes; I could not say how many, but I know particular cases. I had an interesting case this year of a coolie who was recruited for 6 months and during that 6 months I had sent him down on a license to recruit more coolies. He recruited some and came back; then he was repatriated at the expiry of 6 months. The *sardar* is entitled to a commission for recruiting; I do not pay the *sardar* the commission until the expiry of his coolies' period. If the *sardar* goes leaving coolies behind him, I give him a chit and make an arrangement that the money shall be paid through the Tea Districts Labour Association's agent at the office from which he is recruited. The men are quite willing to accept that arrangement and at the due date the money is sent by money-order to the Tea Districts Labour Association's agent. It is a commission of Rs. 5 per head. One man was repatriated on the 5th July, 1929; we owed him some money; he stayed in his country 15 days and then returned to the Budla Beta Tea Company for 6 months. This is the man's own story. In order that I should not have to send the money to Nagpur for him, he came down from the Budla Beta Tea Company with a chit from the manager and I paid him the money; he had only been 15 days in his country.

F-2692. Have you had experience of men who make a profession of going to and fro like that?—I think that is what is developing, more especially with the 6 months men. I do not think the 12 months men are so inclined to do it, but I think it is a ramp with the 6 months recruits.

F-2693. They have been clever enough to discover a way of making more money than they can make by hoeing?—Yes.

F-2694. Have you yourself been in the recruiting areas at all?—No.

F-2695. Then you cannot tell us to what you attribute this reluctance to come to Assam which obliges you to resort to this short term recruitment in order to supply your labour requirements?—I do not think the coolie ever came to Assam at any time unless he was forced to do so by economic pressure in his own country, a failure of crops or inability to pay his rent or some similar reason.

F-2696. We have reason to think they still regard Assam as a very distant place and feel that once they go to Assam they are not very likely to return. Would you be in favour of a general provision that all tea garden workers should be entitled to be repatriated at the end of a reasonable term, say, three years, in order to get rid of that prejudice against coming to Assam and to increase the flow of recruits?—I think generally speaking I would be inclined to be in favour of it. I do not know whether it pays with every type of coolie or not. These *Oraons* and *Mundas* seem to be more attached to their country than other types of coolies. I think they have always proved rather unsatisfactory settlers in Assam. They eventually go back to their own country.

F-2697. If you could, would you like to get all your requirements from workers who would settle?—Yes, certainly.

F-2698. Have you adequate *khet* land here?—We have about 300 acres under *khet* cultivation and about 1,000 acres which could be utilized for *khet* land.

F-2699. Therefore you have really ample land for those who will settle to have *khet* land in addition to their work on the garden?—We have a certain amount; I could not say ample land; each coolie might not get enough to grow his total rice requirements.

F-2700. At present how long is a coolie working here before he gets *khet* land?—We are quite willing to give practically any decent working coolie *khet* land.

F-2701. Soon after he comes?—Yes, if he is going to settle.

F-2702. Do you pay what is called the bonus, the Rs. 12 at the end of a year?—Yes.

F-2703. Do you pay it to all your workers?—No.

F-2704. Do they have to claim it?—Some have to claim it; some are paid. It is usually claimed; they usually know when it is the end of a year.

F-2705. Do they come and ask for it?—Some come and ask for it.

F-2706. Do you take any receipt from them?—No, there is no document at all.

F-2707. They come and ask for it, and if you verify the fact that they have worked for a year, you give it to them?—Yes.

F-2708. Is it Rs. 12 for a man and Rs. 8 for a woman?—Yes.

F-2709. What proportion of your workers have been on your estate for any length of time, such as 5 or 10 years or more? Have you a settled population of men who have been born here?—Yes, but any figure I could give would be very approximate without referring to the books.

F-2710. What is your annual loss which has to be made up by recruiting?—Probably round about 200, out of a total working population of about 2,000, say 8 to 9 per cent.

F-2711. You have, as I gather, a substantial semi-permanent labour force?—Yes.

F-2712. And it is only about an annual 10 per cent. that you require to make up by recruiting?—Yes.

F-2713. Do you lose workers here to other gardens to any extent?—Not to a great extent; our biggest loss is to a Government settlement called Borpathar where they are giving *khet* land to tea garden coolies, 60 or 100 miles from here. There is a small local loss to *bustis* on the fringe of the garden as well, but I think probably our largest loss is to Borpathar.

F-2714. Do you have many workers not on your tea estate who come in to work at plucking time and so on?—Very few; a few stragglers from the bazaar come in; there might be 20 or 30 a day.

F-2715. *Colonel Russell*: Have you a full-time medical officer?—We have a European medical officer for a group of gardens. In the district of the European medical officer there are 7 companies. We have three gardens and three hospitals here.

F-2716. There are separate hospitals on each garden?—We have three separate hospitals.

F-2717. Under charge of a garden doctor?—Yes. We have 4 garden doctors, two are qualified and two are not. One of those not qualified has been here a long time.

F-2718. Do you suffer from much malaria?—Yes, it is a malarious district; we get a great deal of malaria.

F-2719. Are you doing any anti-malarial work?—No; I would like to make a start but I have done nothing so far.

F-2720. What is the difficulty about that?—The difficulty is that I feel that the present state of medical knowledge and experience is not sufficient to justify any large expenditure. If we tea planters had done what the doctors have wanted us to do in anti-malarial work during the past 5 or 6 years, we should probably have squandered thousands of pounds to no purpose. Five years ago there was a wave of enthusiasm for anti-malarial work.

F-2721. But you are quite prepared to take it up?—I would like to make a start in a small way; I think something should be done.

F-2722. In other areas we have found that quite a lot is being done successfully?—We try to keep the lines clean and keep jungle down.

F-2723. Even then you may be doing the wrong thing?—Yes, we feel that.

F-2724. What are your birth and death rates?—For 1928 the birth rate was 38·8 per 1,000 and the death rate 31·4 per 1,000. For 1929 the birth rate was 29·6 per 1,000 and the death rate 23·6 per 1,000.

F-2725. What were the infantile deaths—For 1928 the infantile death rate was 123·8 per 1,000 births. For 1929 it was 159 per 1,000 births.

F-2726. Have you got very much hookworm here?—It used to be much worse than it is. We have been doing continuous treatment every cold weather; the European doctor has a muster yearly in the cold weather and all the coolies are examined; it takes us practically all the cold weather to get through our labour force. We deal with any particular cases at any time in the year.

F-2727. What conservancy arrangements have you?—Nothing. We are building a new hospital here and are putting in a septic tank, and latrines.

F-2728. You have nothing in the way of latrines?—No.

F-2729. Do you think the coolies would use them if they were built?—I suppose in time they would be taught to use them; it would take a long time I should think. Some coolies will prove more adaptable than others.

F-2730. Is there any kala-azar here?—No; we used to have it.

F-2731. How long ago was that?—Five or 7 years ago.

F-2732. How is it that you do not have it now?—It has responded to treatment.

F-2733. You did have treatment here?—Yes.

F-2734. And your doctors are always on the look-out for it?—Yes. We have a modern water-supply with filtered water.

F-2735. *Mr. Clow*: Does correspondence come to the coolies from their villages?—Yes.

F-2736. Does it come to the office or is it delivered to the lines?—Sometimes it comes to the office; sometimes the *chowkidars* bring it and take it to them direct.

F-2737. We have been told that in some places the post office peons will not deliver letters to the lines unless there is a postage to be recovered?—Yes, I think that is the general experience, but I think that is getting a little less so. The last letter came through this office two or three days ago for delivery to the man in question. We put up a letter box outside so that the coolies can post their own letters. Any letter which comes here is delivered to the man and we arrange that he gets it. We have no separate organization for that.

F-2738. You do not find on the part of the post office authorities reluctance to deliver letters in the lines?—We are only a mile from the post office.

F-2739. Do they leave the letters here in the office, or deliver them to the coolies?—They do both.

F-2740. *The Chairman*: Do you not think it would improve the amenities of the garden workers' life here if you took an interest in correspondence between them and the people they have left behind in their villages, and facilitated it?—We do that to a certain extent. We used to have an arrangement, when we started these short term coolies for their money to be sent down to their country. It was sent down in the name of some member of the European staff and the receipt came back to him; but we have discontinued that now; the coolies seem to be quite satisfied with the ordinary channels of the post office.

F-2741. We came across a case where a man had left his wife in the country and for 11 months no letter had passed between them. Do you think that is a customary thing?—I should think it is quite likely. I think probably these 12 months coolies whom you have just seen keep in closer touch; they are only birds of passage.

F-2742. Do you not think it would be an aid to your recruiting if you yourself took an interest in increasing the communications between them by providing for letter-writing, or would they be suspicious of anything that was done to help them in that way?—I think they might be suspicious or unresponsive; I do not know that we could encourage them to write letters.

F-2743. It has not been tried?—I have never tried it. Generally I would encourage a man to write a letter if a man approached me in the matter; I should say that he ought to write to his wife, but I have never taken any active steps to see that he did write to his wife.

F-2744. *Colonel Garbett*: If he did write a letter it might not be delivered at the other end; that is the difficulty?—Yes. There is probably more trouble about that than there is at this end.

F-2745. *The Chairman*: It is one of the factors which lead other people who might become recruits to think Assam is so far away?—I think this system of short term recruiting will help to dispel any false notions the coolies have in that part of the country as to Assam because there is a continual flow of coolies up and down. It is only a certain type of coolie I want for 12 months.

F-2746. *Sir Alexander Murray*: They spend 16 days coming up and the same time going back; that is a month out of your year spent in travelling?—That is an objection I have with the Tea Districts Labour Association arrangements; I

mean to write to the Chairman of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association about the amount of travelling time which is deducted from the one year which the coolie agrees to work.

F-2747. At whose expense should it be?—I think we should split the difference and that travelling one way only should be deducted from the one year term. Coolies recruited on the 2nd January, 1929, have to be back at the depôt on the 2nd January, 1930.

F-2748. *Mr. Cliff*: Do they get 12 months or 11 months pay?—They only get 11 months pay; they are fed on the journey and their railway fare is paid.

F-2749. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you not think 16 days is a long time?—It is a long way.

F-2750. Do you not think that is one of the things that prevent people coming?—I do not see there is any way of obviating that if they come from Jashpur; they are kept two or three days in the depôt under examination.

F-2751. Do you always insist on medical examination at the other end?—That is done.

F-2752. *Mr. Clow*: Why does it take 16 days; the ordinary third class train would get here in 5 or 6 days?—It is not 16 days travelling.

F-2753. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the labour strength per acre on your estate?—It is 1¼ coolies on the books.

F-2754. What in your judgment do you require?—It depends what you are wanting to do.

F-2755. We found some gardens had over 2 coolies per acre; could you do with 2 per acre?—I would probably find work for them.

F-2756. Would you like to have them?—Yes, I think on the whole I should like to have 2 coolies per acre; I would replant my old tea and open up new tea.

F-2757. What labour strength would you like for your present acreage?—I think about 2 coolies per acre on the books would probably guarantee 1¼ coolies or 1¼ coolies per day per acre; I think that would be ample.

F-2758. How do you pay your men?—Weekly.

F-2759. Is it a fixed rate?—No, it is according to a man's earnings; it is more or less a unit system.

F-2760. How long does an average man take to earn 6 annas?—It depends on the time of year: 4 to 5 hours; we reckon 1¼ annas per hour.

F-2761. Is there much *ticca* work?—For 9 months of the year.

F-2762. Taking that 9 months, what would you estimate the *ticca* work average is per month?—I could not say.

F-2763. I would like to see the amount paid for *ticca* work over the 9 months in which you say they are asked to work *ticca*?—In the unit system there is no clear division of *hazira* and *ticca* work; on leaf, for instance, we pay a flat rate throughout the year of 2 pice per seer. Do you call that *ticca* work?

F-2764. *Colonel Garbett*: One might say the unit system is all *ticca* work?—Yes, it is all *ticca*. So that that would mean practically all their earnings except *chowkidars*.

F-2765. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is there any school for the children within the garden?—Yes, there are two schools.

F-2766. Within the garden?—Yes.

F-2767. How many children go to school?—We have had trouble in Mariani in getting children or anybody to go and we have started having the school at night.

F-2768. That is for men only?—No, for children; we have only just started that to try and encourage it.

F-2769. Is there any possibility of continuing it in the day time as well?—I am quite willing to continue it.

F-2770. How far away is the post office?—About a mile.

F-2771. I suppose this is a third class post office where the peons as a rule do not come to deliver letters in the interior of the district?—The postman delivers here in the garden every second day.

F-2772. Do you think a letter written in the recruiting districts will reach the coolie here?—I think it is likely, making allowances for the Indian post offices; you know what they are.

F-2773. Do you think there are other gardens where the peons will not deliver letters in the interior of the district?—I think it is quite likely.

F-2774. I suppose it would be a great help if the system were altered so that every letter were delivered to the man to whom it is addressed?—I think it would be an improvement.

F-2775. *Rev. Saikia*: Are there any Assamese on the garden doing coolie work?—Only on special jobs during the cold weather.

F-2776. Do you know of any reason why the Assamese working classes do not come and work on the garden?—I think the general opinion is that they are too lazy.

F-2777. In the Goalpara district the villagers work in the gardens; can you not get labour from the neighbouring villages?—No; we can get them during the cold weather for special jobs to do a certain amount for us, but they are not part of the regular labour of the garden; they only come here for a little while and then go.

F-2778. Do you think the reason why they do not like to come and work on the garden is because they think the wages are low?—I am afraid I cannot tell you the reason why they do not come to work on the garden.

F-2779. *Mr. Cliff*: Would you be prepared to take them if you could?—I should be willing to take them if they would come and work on the garden on the same terms as other coolies; I am quite prepared to employ them.

F-2780. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have you any spare huts now available for housing coolies?—Yes.

F-2781. Where will these men who have just come up be housed?—They will be housed in the lines in the huts; we have several spare huts and we have some big sheds which we use for newly arrived coolies.

F-2782. You allot huts for them next day I suppose?—Yes.

F-2783. *The Chairman*: Do you as far as possible put them with people who come from the same district?—We try to arrange it, but it is not always possible.

F-2784. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If a road is to be built along the lines or anywhere else, how do you arrange that; who builds it?—We build it.

F-2785. What sort of labour do you employ?—It depends what time of year it is; if it is only dressing a road we will probably do that ourselves.

F-2786. Is that part of the work that the coolies on the tea estate do?—It depends on the nature of it; we have just made a new road through the lines which has been thrown up by *Nunias*.

F-2787. Is there any sort of work of this kind which you get from the tea garden coolies for which you are not compelled to pay them and do not pay them?—No.

(The witness withdrew.)

CHRISTINE, woman *sardar* on the Mariani Tea Estate (Mrs. Rahman interpreted).

F-2788. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are you a Christian?— Yes, and my parents are Christians.

F-2789. Where were you born?—In Jashpur in Ranchi.

Mr. Fraser (Manager): Christine is herself a short term coolie.

F-2790. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When did you come to the garden first?—I have worked 10 months.

F-2791. Do you and your husband intend to settle here?—No, I and my husband will return to our country and not settle here.

Mr. Fraser (Manager): She came up on the 18th March, 1929, and she went back with her *sardar's* certificate on the 22nd October, 1929.

F-2792. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why did you select her to go down as a *sardar*?

Mr. Fraser: Because we thought she would be a likely woman to recruit coolies and she wanted to go.

F-2793. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How much money did you and your husband get when you left your home to come here?—I did not get any money here but at Jashpur in Ranchi I got Rs. 10 at the depôt.

F-2794. And what did your husband get?—My husband got Rs. 10 also. I got Rs. 10 as *khoraki*.

F-2795. Have you a mother and father in your village?—Yes.

F-2796. Is that at Jashpur?—Yes.

F-2797. Have they land?—Yes.

F-2798. Have your father and mother ever been in the tea gardens?—No.

F-2799. Why did you come; who brought you up the first time?—Etwa *sardar* came from here and brought me.

(The witness withdrew.)

KUNDA (newly recruited Oraon coolie) on the Mariani Tea Estate (Mrs. Rahman interpreted).

F-2800. *The Chairman*: Have you a wife left behind in the village?—Yes, my wife is at my home, not here with me. I have come alone.

F-2801. Who recruited you?—Marcus *sardar* recruited me.

F-2802. What were you doing in your own country?—I was doing cultivation in my own home.

(The witness withdrew.)

NANHU (newly recruited Oraon coolie) on the Mariani Tea Estate (Mrs. Rahman interpreted).

F-2803. *The Chairman*: Who recruited you?—Marcus *sardar*.

F-2804. What did he say to you?—The *sardar* said there was good work here and the *baboo* in the depôt told me that I should get 12 annas.

F-2805. Are you sure he said 12 annas?—Yes, he told everybody 12 annas.

Mr. Fraser: They mostly earn 12 annas.

F-2806. *The Chairman*: Do you know you have come to work for a year?—Yes, I know I have come for a year.

F-2807. Have you brought your wife here?—No, I have left my wife at home; I have only brought a son who is here.

F-2808. What is the boy's age?—I do not remember his age; I have got at home a boy bigger than this boy.

F-2809. Do you intend to go back at the end of your year?—Yes.

F-2810. If you like the life here, will you bring your wife here?—No; if it is all right I may think of it, but otherwise I will not bring her up.

F-2811. Were you medically examined?—Yes, the doctor examined me and I was vaccinated.

F-2812. *Mr. Ahmed*: Were you told that your boy would get anything?—They told the *chokra* who is entered in the challan as 10 years of age that he would get boy's work; the *baboo* did not tell me what the boy would get.

F-2813. Did you get Rs. 5 at the depôt?—Yes.

F-2814. What else did you get?—We got Rs. 1-12 for *khoraki* (food).

F-2815. Did you get clothes?—We each got a blanket.

F-2816. How long have you been on the journey?

Mr. Fraser: The challan is dated the 3rd January.

F-2817. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When did you leave your own village in Jashpur?—It is 16 days since we left home. I left my village on a Monday. We stayed 3 days in the depôt and left on Friday (3rd January). We were in the depôt Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

F-2818. Which way did you go?—From the depôt I came on foot; I walked three days and then I got to Lohardaga. I was Saturday, Sunday and Monday on the road to Lohardaga. (6th January).

F-2819. When did you reach Gauhati?—I do not know.

F-2820. Do you expect to get any more money now you have arrived here?—Yes, Rs. 5.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned till 14th January, 1930.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-fourth Meeting.

JORHAT.

Tuesday, the 14th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
LT.-COLONEL A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
MR. JOHN CLIFF.

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA. .. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
LT.-COLONEL H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budli Beta Tea Co., Ltd. }

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN .. .. .. *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
M. A. DIBDIN .. .. .. }

Mr. K. CANTLIE, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar.

F-2821. *The Chairman*: What is your experience in administration in Assam?—I came out in 1910, but my experience in tea districts has been very limited. For two years before the War I was in charge of a subdivision in Sylhet, where there were gardens, and on my return from the War I had a year's experience in North Lakhimpur, where there were a few gardens. Except for that, for practical purposes, my only experience has been for about three years in this district, during a time of great anxiety owing to shortage of crops and flood damage, when all my spare time was spent in assisting people. My tea garden work has had consequently to be compressed into a minimum of time, although as a matter of fact I have inspected all the gardens I had to inspect, and I have done what I could.

F-2822. What are your duties with regard to tea gardens?—I have to inspect each garden once every two years. I have to report on the hospital accommodation, water-supply, housing, the amount of tasks and the wages. That report has come to be a formal standard report. Most of my time is taken up by going through the wage returns, because I think it is important that those returns should be accurate. Very often it is difficult to check the wages return because it is drawn up by a clerk with many house servants and various tea house *mistries* included. I always sit there until I am convinced that the return is aproximately correct for all practical purposes. It may take me a very long time, but I think it is my duty and I always do it.

F-2823. What staff have you to assist you in your work of inspection of tea gardens?—None. I do it myself for the headquarters subdivision. I inspect about 30 gardens a year. For my subdivisions I have subdivisional officers who each do their own subdivision.

F-2824. Are there any other *ex-officio* inspectors?—The Superintendent of Police is available, and I believe he does inspect some gardens in some places.

F-2825. Have you experienced any difficulties, in adequately inspecting all the tea gardens, that you would like to put before the Commission?—In this district I have been constantly overworked for all the time I have been here. There has been a continuous shortage of staff. The inspection of tea gardens, so far as the main points to which I have just referred, are concerned, is almost a routine matter in respect of good gardens, because in good gardens the hospitals, the lines and so on are all more or less one like another.

F-2826. You would not suggest that all gardens come up to the standard of the best?—Certainly not.

F-2827. Can you suggest any way in which inspection can be improved with a view to bringing all gardens up to, or towards, the level of the best?—At present there is no power at all except that of stopping recruiting. In cases of new labourers who have lately come and who make complaints, or who are unsuitable, I can repatriate them, but it is very difficult to know what are the rights and wrongs in the matter.

F-2828. What power have you in connection with those gardens which you are convinced are not up to the standard which they should be?—No power at all except to stop recruiting. For instance, in connection with the garden which the Commission visited the other day, at which I presume the Commission did not find the conditions satisfactory, the recruiting in 1926 was one *sardar*, in 1927 nil, in 1928 12 *sardars* and 1929 one *sardar*. The stoppage of recruiting in that case, therefore, would mean nothing to that garden.

F-2829. Does it mean that where a garden relies on transfers from other estates you have no remedy?—I have no remedy at all. Such a garden need put up no hospital, or need have no water-supply or lines, or anything else so far as I know.

F-2830. Would you be in favour of some improved system which would give to you greater powers of bringing the less good gardens up to the better standard of the good gardens?—Yes, I would. There is a feeling of helplessness amongst inspecting officers, which has made inspection a routine work.

F-2831. Would it assist you if there was some kind of Board of Health and Welfare?—I think it would be of the very greatest assistance, because its opinions would carry weight and publicity.

F-2832. You think such a board would be a helpful agent in levelling up the standard both of the health and general welfare of the gardens?—I do.

F-2833. Have you thought of the possible constitution of such a board?—A welfare worker must be a man with planting experience. I think such a man chosen by the Tea Association possibly, specially for the purpose, with the *ex-officio* powers of an inspector, would be the most suitable appointment that first comes into my mind.

F-2834. Such a board would be closely allied in its work with your own duties with regard to gardens?—Yes.

F-2835. On the one hand it would be an agency in contact with you as the administrator of the district, and on the other hand in contact with the persons responsible in the different tea garden estates?—Yes.

F-2836. Were you here in 1921-22?—No.

F-2837. You know nothing about the troubles that led to the Labour Enquiry Committee's report?—No.

F-2838. Is it your opinion that since the report of that Committee in 1922 there has been a considerable improvement in the condition of the garden workers?—Yes. The hospitals have very much improved; water-supply has improved, and there is much more attention paid to children. The gardens are now paying much more attention to what they call their future labour supply, which will depend more and more upon the children which are being brought up in the gardens.

F-2839. In the Government of Assam's memorandum stress is laid on the need for improving the standard of living so that the garden worker will want more, and will be prepared to work for it, and make good use of his earnings. Have you any suggestion to make in what direction that higher standard of living should be looked for?—It is a difficult matter. I am always being told by managers that there are a great many labourers who will earn just sufficient

for the day and nothing more, so that raising the task rate has no effect upon their general condition. I am told that that is the great obstacle to the raising of wages. The standard of living according to the older planters has gradually risen, but what more to do is very difficult to say. The general idea is that it all depends upon education. A great deal of money is spent in drink. That is the curse of many of the tea garden population.

F-2840. In your view is more money spent on drink than is desirable?—In some gardens, yes.

F-2841. Is that among the older men or among the younger men?—I do not know that there is much difference between them.

F-2842. In the course of your inspections do you look at the schools on the estates?—Yes. None of them are doing very well. I do my best to encourage schools, but I always receive the same reply, namely, "Yes, we will open schools, but if the parents have a boy at school his earnings are likely to be diminished, and therefore the parents are not very keen on it". There is a miserable handful of schools everywhere, and education has made no progress at all.

F-2843. Do you think a special type of education in these tea garden schools could be devised, which would be directed to the practical aspects of life in the gardens, such as agriculture and natural history, so that the schools would not be turning out non-manual workers?—I cannot say. I have met many people who are educational reformers, but when I ask them exactly what they want to do they generally find it very difficult to give a definite answer. It is extremely difficult to know what to do.

F-2844. Do you think that the suggested Board of Health and Welfare, on which experienced planters would be represented, might help to plan a system of education peculiarly suited to tea garden children?—That is the only body who would be able to do so; but so far as I know the matter has defeated every manager who has tried it.

F-2845. Would Government be prepared to assist in a scheme of that kind?—I have no doubt that they would. Resolutions are always being passed and disappointment expressed by the Director of Public Instruction.

F-2846. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it not a question of the Government not having sufficient money?—In the Jorhat subdivision only of this district the demand for aided schools is met. In the Sibsagar subdivision the demand for two more schools will be met next year. In the Golaghat subdivision I find that there is a demand for ten aided schools on gardens, and probably only two of these can be opened next year for lack of money. The total number of full Government and aided tea garden schools is eleven. The number of schools maintained entirely by gardens is twenty-five.

F-2847. *The Chairman*: With regard to recruitment of garden labourers, under the present system of *sardari* recruiting to what extent have you exercised your powers of repatriating, at the garden's expense, garden workers who were unhappy or unsuitable or discontented?—To a very small extent. About 20 Nepalese were sent back to Calcutta from Boloma Tea Estate. They were repatriated at Government expense. Two or three were repatriated from an estate of the Jorhat Tea Company. They complained that their time had expired and were not allowed to go back. It was found that there was a genuine mistake on the part of the manager as to the date of the expiry of these men's contracts, and they were sent back. Then there were four or five repatriated in another subdivision.

F-2848. Why were they not repatriated at the garden's expense?—Because it was found that the Nepalee was not a native of India and we could not force the manager to pay the expenses of repatriation.

F-2849. You have certain powers to repatriate at a garden's expense?—Yes; but I have never had to exercise that power. The manager has always sent the men back after I have enquired into the case. He has said to me: "I am willing to leave it to you. If you think I ought to send them back I will do so". That is the general attitude.

F-2850. Generally speaking you have found the managers very ready to repatriate where their attention is drawn to any cases where you think it ought to be done?—Yes.

F-2851. The Commission has been considering a suggestion of a right of repatriation at the end of a reasonable period—that is to say three years—during which sufficient opportunity would have been given to the garden worker

to see how far the life here was suitable and congenial; and the suggestion has been that if there were an universal right amongst garden workers it would have two effects: on the one hand, it would remove the lingering prejudice in the recruiting areas and possibly greatly increase the flow of would-be recruits, and on the other hand it would lay an automatic obligation on all tea planters to make the conditions such that at the end of the three years the choice of the garden worker in the very large majority of cases would be to stay on and not exercise his right of being sent home at the garden's expense. What would your opinion be of such a scheme?—I think it would be very desirable. I think that the repatriation should be carried out by the garden on which the labourer was working at the end of his three years. Repatriation at present is not at all satisfactory. A man says "I came up because I thought I would get a rupee a day. I got a rupee a day in Ahmedabad and I would not have come here if I had not thought that I should get Re. 1 a day". I do not know whether the man is speaking truly or not, and I write down to the labour depôt, and I get a reply saying "Everything was carefully explained to the man". What is one to do? I had a case in which two obviously unsuitable men were repatriated from the garden by the manager. They were part of the orchestra at a circus. They were Muhammadans, but they told the recruiting officer at the depôt that they were Hindus, because, they said, they thought they would more easily get to Assam if they said that. They admitted that the officer at the recruiting depôt had told them all about the matter and that they understood, but that they did not pay much attention to him. However, now that they were here they wanted to go back because they said they had been badly treated. That was a case in which the men were repatriated; the garden was glad to get rid of them at any price. In other cases you get men coming up quite genuinely and saying "We have made a mistake". Under the present circumstances I can do nothing for them. If I were to disbelieve the officer at the depôt I might as well repatriate a thousand and one. I frankly confess that I do not know what to do. These men are brought before the recruiting officer, and I believe they are told quite properly everything about the matter and they consent to come. If after they come here they do not like the conditions, naturally they are going to tell me all sorts of stories about what they thought they were going to get. So far, in the few cases I have had, I have felt bound to rely on what the depôt officer told me, and I have refused to repatriate.

F-2852. Under the suggested three years' scheme there would be nothing to prevent earlier repatriation of undesirables?—Your suggestion would do away with the present difficulty. I think it would be a very good thing. As a matter of fact I do not see why it should be a very expensive matter for the gardens. I think if the Railways were approached by Government a system of free return passes for coolies from Assam could easily be arranged.

F-2853. The great advantage of a system such as we have had suggested to us, giving a definite right to return at the end of a reasonable limited period, is that there would be hundred per cent. contented labourers on the gardens of Assam?—Yes.

F-2854. You think a three years' system would speedily work towards the ideal of free recruiting, free movement, and free labour in every respect?—I think it would be the first step in that direction.

F-2855. *Mr. Clow:* When you visit a garden has the manager a right to accompany you?—I do not think so, but generally he does accompany me.

F-2856. I take it that, with the manager present, the coolies would be reluctant to put forward any serious charges against the manager?—It might be so, but I am always in court at other times and a coolie can come and see me if he wishes to do so.

F-2857. But apparently in some gardens it is not very easy for the coolie to get as far as your court?—There may be interference in some gardens, but a coolie who wants to get away can generally do so. Take the case of the man you saw at Boloma the other day. He is the last of a batch of 12. The other 11 ran away; so they do go from a garden if they wish to. If a man wants to go away, he can do so more easily than the evidence would lead you to suppose. In that particular garden there has been a considerable ebb and flow of labour.

F-2858. We have not been able to see the more distant gardens, some of them separated by several days' march from proper means of communication?—I do not think there are any such gardens now. They are all on the roads, and the labourers can get into headquarters within a day.

F-2859. Our inspections, particularly the one at Boloma, left me with the uncomfortable feeling that there might be gardens in which the King's writ hardly carries?—It might be so in the case of one or two gardens, but you must remember that that particular state of affairs seen by you only exists on some out of a total of 10 per cent. of gardens outside the Indian Tea Association and engaged in enticing.

F-2860. My point is that even if it exists on 2 per cent. it is a serious matter?—Yes, it is, but Mr. Withers and I held an enquiry last year on that particular garden at which the manager was kept at a distance. We asked the coolies if they had anything to say and nobody said anything.

F-2861. *The Chairman*: If in visiting these gardens you had representatives of a Health and Welfare Board would not there be greater freedom on the part of the workers to make representations?—I think so, because knowing that I am a magistrate the workers may possibly be in fear of me too.

F-2862. *Mr. Clow*: Would not an ordinary magistrate, whose administration depends to a large extent on the tact he exercises, be a little reluctant to adopt inquisitorial methods on gardens in regard to which he had no particular ground for supposing there was anything wrong?—Yes. The ordinary magistrate in charge of a district does not go round looking for complaints. Therefore, it is possible that in certain places he may not know all things which it would be advisable for him to know.

F-2863. To some extent a special officer who had not to consider the effect on the other sides of his administrative work would be in a stronger position?—He would be able to devote much more time to enquiry—probably private enquiry—as to whether there was anything wrong. The only private enquiry I make is when I walk along the road and talk to the coolies I meet. I have never discovered any cruelty.

F-2864. So far as enticement is concerned, I understand that it is easier to entice coolies at places like railway stations or *hats* than inside the gardens?—That is so, but the *chowkidars* do come into the lines at night and get them back. The relatives often come and get them back. I have heard of motor lorries being driven into the lines at night and large numbers taken off to very distant places. The coolies have had the right to go. They have said afterwards that they were promised all sorts of things which they did not get, and they have all come back again. No matter what regulation you have, it will not prevent their being taken away by large promises, which are not fulfilled very often and the people come back again.

F-2865. On the other hand, if Government were to prevent what is called enticement, would not the hands of the bad gardens be strengthened by further limiting the extent to which competition prevails?—That is so. The agreement between the gardens not to employ each other's labour is, *prima facie*, bad. The only cure is to get plenty of labour. The labour districts must be brought quite close to Assam. If we could get as much and as cheap repatriation as possible it would be one way of getting a free ebb and flow of labour, and it would overcome the present state of things in which the coolies' wages are depressed by the present methods.

F-2866. You are not in favour of prohibiting attempts by one garden to get another garden's coolies?—No.

F-2867. *The Chairman*: You think that if the obligation of repatriation at the end of the third year was put on the last garden in which the man is working and not on the garden which brought him out, it would to some extent remove the temptation to entice?—It might do a little in that direction. That is why I suggested it.

F-2868. *Mr. Clow*: Assuming there is this right of free repatriation after a fixed period, how could it be guaranteed that when a coolie's term had expired he would not be kept in the garden against his will?—It would be necessary to have a check by the Deputy Commissioner or by somebody to represent the Deputy Commissioner. That is why an *ex-officio* Inspector or a welfare worker is required. It might be done by a system of returns, but then on his visit the Deputy Commissioner would have to parade everybody, at which parade the labourers might say they did not want to go back, but at night they might come to him and say that they did want to go back.

F-2869. Would it not be possible to overcome the difficulty by having a system whereby those coolies with the right of repatriation were registered,

and whereby they were compelled to go and make an agreement at headquarters if they were to be kept on after the period?—Yes, it would be much better than doing it on the garden.

F-2870. And to make it a serious offence to employ a man beyond the three years if there was no registration of agreement to that effect at headquarters?—Yes, that is quite a good idea. It could be done at headquarters. It would be a nuisance for the industry, but it would be much better than having abuses. I think it should be done at headquarters.

F-2871. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it a practicable proposition?—I have not thought it out. I would prefer to have repatriation at more frequent intervals than only once in a man's life.

F-2872. *Mr. Clow*: The effect of repatriation only once in a man's life would be that all would go if they knew it was their last chance of getting home?—It would be so, but I do not think it is a bad thing that once in their life they should go home.

F-2873. My point is that practically nobody would stay on unless he was given leave to go home for a period?—I do not think it ought to cost much to send him home, and I think it would be a good thing.

The Chairman: It would not necessarily interfere with the home leave. It would be an additional and absolute right.

F-2874. *Mr. Clow*: My point is this: if the right were at the end of three years, and not ultimately, every one would exercise the right—at any rate temporarily—at that time?—Yes, but the man could be sent down as *sardar* at the same time.

F-2875. Have you any reason to suppose that the coolies who are at present brought here on short term contracts are in any case kept after their term has expired?—No, it would not pay the manager to do that. If a manager started that it would get known, and he would not get any more short term labourers.

F-2876. I mean where his activities were unknown?—It would be a very foolish policy on his part, and the Assam Labour Board would soon jump on him. I have known cases where managers have sent all their short term labour back although many of them wanted to stay on. The managers sent that labour back because they were afraid of the idea getting about that they were keeping them on.

F-2877. Would it be safe to introduce a system of free recruiting for coolies recruited for only one year. By "free" I mean entirely uncontrolled and unregistered?—You are taking me out of my depth, because I do not know anything about recruiting.

F-2878. Is it a fact that there is considerably less risk of abuses in the cases of coolies who have been in Assam recently?—Yes.

F-2879. Does a large proportion of this short term labour consist of coolies with previous experience of Assam?—I should not think so.

F-2880. As regards the repatriation scheme, can you suggest how to overcome the difficulty that might arise of cases of dismissals? You see there is a possibility of an unscrupulous manager dismissing a considerable number of coolies a short time before the period of repatriation on the ground that he found something unsatisfactory about their work?—The repatriation must be automatic. If a coolie was unsuitable it was the fault of the manager for having recruited him.

F-2881. The manager might say that the coolie proved insubordinate or gave trouble in the garden?—I do not think we can go into such details. We have no staff to look to whether the man was right or not. The repatriation should be automatic.

F-2882. Have you much experience of inspection of factories?—I inspect them as far as I can. I am an amateur.

F-2883. Do they employ young children in the factories?—In 1928 I found three people employing some young children, and I prosecuted and fined them. The tea house factory is a difficult thing; it is split up into two, part factory and part non-factory, and children often run from one to the other. But there is no serious employment of children contrary to the Act. There is a mistake in the last factory inspection report of Assam. I think that is what you are referring to?

F-2884. The Assam Government refer to some inconsistency between the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and the figures he has given of the number of children employed in factories?—With regard to that point I addressed all the managers of tea gardens and I have got replies from most of them. They say they made a mistake in including in the annual returns which they sent to the Inspector of Factories children over 15 years who are not paid a full man's wage, and those children who are employed in the leaf house which is away from the manufacturing house.

F-2885. If the leaf house is actually a part of the same establishment, I think that unless it is clearly shown that one part is separated from the other by a wall and there is no access from one to the other, it is, for the purpose of the Act, a part of the factory?—The leaf house is entirely separated from the manufacturing house; it is outside the building.

F-2886. Are you in favour of bringing it under the Factories Act?—I think it would lead to depriving young boys of work which they are suited to and from which they can earn a moderate wage and driving them out on to much the same work on the tea garden fields outside. I do not think that the danger of coming into contact with machinery is sufficient to have a distinction made.

F-2887. There is, of course, no machinery in the leaf house at all?—No, but it is quite close to the factory.

F-2888. Are the hours longer than the stipulated hours of work?—I do not think so. It is always done in shifts, and that is a great difficulty in inspecting. There are three or four boys where you require two, and they come and go as they like. I have never discovered that any boy was worked unduly. There may be such cases.

F-2889. *Miss Power*: Could you give us any idea as to the number of times each garden would be inspected in the course of a year?—Only once in two years unless you have got a high death rate; if the death rate is 7 per cent. and above you have got to inspect it once a year.

F-2890. Has it been possible for you to carry out that amount of inspection?—Yes.

F-2891. How often do you think a garden should be inspected? Do you feel it should be inspected more often than is the case at the present time?—I do not think so. It is not the number of times you inspect; it is to know what to look for or what to find out. If there was any fault on the garden you are not likely to find that out by inspecting twice in the year any more than once.

F-2892. What sort of "follow up" is there after inspection of a garden in which malpractices have been discovered?—If there is anything that we think that should be done, say in regard to hospitals or water-supply, we send a copy of our report to the manager. If it is remedied we get a reply from him, but he cannot be forced to remedy it.

F-2893. Is he not compelled to take any action on your recommendations?—No.

F-2894. In the case of the Boloma garden did the manager there carry out any of the recommendations that you made in the previous year?—No. I pointed out to him that he had no good hospital and his water-supply was bad. I have not been back again. If he does not carry them out I cannot do anything.

F-2895. Is it not possible to make any recommendations to Government if a particular garden is considered to be below the mark?—My report is always sent to the Commissioner. This system has been going on for many years.

F-2896. Are the Commissioner's powers not greater than yours?—No. He sends it back to me saying that the defects should be pointed out to the manager.

F-2897. Does the same thing apply if something unsatisfactory is again found on the second as on the first occasion, as I understand was the case on this garden?—If it comes under the criminal law I prosecute the man. In this case I prosecuted the tea garden clerk who assaulted the coolie. Otherwise there is nothing that I know of that can be done.

F-2898. Reverting to the question of schools, supposing the tea garden managers agree not to employ children under a certain age, say 11 or 12, do you think it would have an appreciable effect upon the number of children who would voluntarily attend tea garden schools?—You may get a boy to attend when he is seven years old and give him primary course training, but at the

age of 15 he would have forgotten what he had already learnt. There is one difficulty you will have as you will not be keeping them till they are 14. But if it did really permanent good to the children you might get the managers, I suppose, to encourage children to go to school when they were six years old and keep them until 10, because that is the time when they begin to labour.

F-2899. Have you any suggestions as to how the children on the tea gardens could be brought into any educational scheme other than by means of Government compulsion?—If the type of education could attract the little children themselves, I think it would succeed; but I speak as an amateur.

F-2900. Do you think it would be possible also to have some scheme for the education of the adult tea garden coolie?—If it attracted him, yes, but I would not like to give an answer on that point; it is quite a new thing to me.

F-2901. You see the attitude of the tea garden employer towards trade unionism is that the coolie is not yet fitted for propaganda of that kind because he is not educated. At the same time there does not appear to be any serious attempt being made to educate either the child or the adult. I am asking you whether you have any views as to how this particular step in the coolie's evolution as a citizen can be achieved by other than Government compulsion?—I think that to deal with the children is the best method, but if there is any scheme of adult education that is suitable, somebody who is more in touch with the labour might be able to suggest one. I know it is apparently the chief thing that should be done, but I cannot see what progress can be made; at present it has been very disappointing.

F-2902. Is there any prospect of compulsory education being actually enforced in the tea gardens in Assam in the near future?—It depends on what has been done in the villages. We are now trying compulsory education as an experiment in one revenue division in the Golaghat subdivision. I believe there have been protests to the Government against it from oppositionists, and its success is still doubtful. If it has taken several years to start it in one *mouza* it is going to be a very long time before it can be done in the whole of Assam. Until we see what its result is we can hardly criticise the tea gardens.

F-2903. Do you feel that any welfare board that might be set up should also deal with the question of wages, on the basis of a minimum wage for instance?—I do not know on what basis they could deal with it, but I certainly think that they should.

F-2904. Do you feel that some sort of regulation is required as regards wages, to compel for instance every garden to pay not less than so much per hour?—Speaking roughly, I think that the standard of wages over all the gardens is about the same; it is paid on the basis of a similar amount of work done. Until the industry moves as a whole, if there was any necessity to move, I do not know whether anything can be done in that direction; but, of course, there are certain gardens—particularly some Indian gardens—that pay lower wages.

F-2905. Such a regulation would compel them to come up to the level of the others, would it not?—You cannot always say so. Some of the gardens pay less total wages and yet the coolies are very contented because they have rice lands.

F-2906. Every one has not got rice land. In the case of those who do not have rice lands or other concessions, do you feel that the rate of wages is too low?—The average coolie family is one man, one woman, two-tenths of a working child, one non-working child, and one adult dependent. Between them they make Rs. 23-8 a month.

F-2907. Is that based on their working full time?—That is the general average earning at present, if they do their full work.

F-2908. Have you any idea as to how many hours they have to work in a day to earn that?—Perhaps it may be six hours, but in any case it is not more than eight hours.

F-2909. Apart from the question of the number of hours a coolie is prepared to work, do you think that the remuneration at the rate of 1½ annas for a man and one anna for a woman per hour is adequate for the work done?—The man *plus* the woman and child have more surplus than the third of the four classes into which for statistical purposes the villagers of Assam have been divided, that is, affluent, comfortable, humble and distressed. They get rather more than the humble; I think they are nearer to the comfortable than to the humble.

F-2910. They are not actually up to the level of the comfortable?—Where they have rice lands they are.

F-2911. But in those gardens where there is not sufficient *khet* land for them?—They would be down below the comfortable and towards the humble.

F-2912. Where do you feel they should be?—As a Government official I cannot say. If I were to say that the tea garden labourer should at least be in the second class we would be told that all our villagers should also be in the second class.

F-2913. *The Chairman*: I understand that there is a re-settlement report of this district. Could we have a copy of that report?—Yes.

(A copy of the report of the Settlement Officer, Sibsagar, on the economic condition of four villages in Sibsagar district was handed in.)

F-2914. *Miss Power*: Some of the managers imply that you cannot have any wage regulation unless you can compel a fixed task. Do you agree with that?—I would not like to answer an expert question like that. I suppose not; I cannot think of any other reply to give.

F-2915. On page 7 of the Chief Inspector of Factories' report for Bengal and Assam for the year 1928, he raises the question of tea dust. Could you give us your experience in regard to that in the factories here?—I visit many of the factories in the cold weather when the machinery is not working; but of those seen working I have been struck occasionally with the amount of dust. Usually the factory is in a very high open place, but in some which have been built more elaborately with partitions you do get a good deal of dust. Some of the partitions are due to the new factory laws.

F-2916. *Mr. Clow*: Do you not visit the factories when they are working?—Yes, I do. I also visit them when they are not working.

F-2917. *Miss Power*: The report states that the enclosed air trunk system is the ideal system for clearing off the dust and that one or two factories have already adopted it. Do you suggest that there should be an alteration in the Act which would compel these factories to have some form of dust extraction?—It is a matter that could be considered by the expert Factory Inspector for Assam.

F-2918. *The Chairman*: I take it that the Inspector would have power to call for fans if necessary?—I cannot tell you.

The Chairman: The Indian Factories Act does give power for an Inspector to call for fans.

Miss Power: The report says: ".....it has not been possible to obtain figures to show the effect on health caused by the inhalation of tea dust and fluff. The consensus of medical opinion, however, is that the dust, acting as an irritant, is liable to cause throat and lung diseases."

The Chairman: Yes, but it does not suggest that it is outside the powers of an Inspector to call for fans. My reading of the Indian Factories Act is that he has such power. The only thing it suggests is that apparently experts have not agreed on the method to be adopted in this behalf.

F-2919. *Mrs. Rahman*: It seems that in most of the gardens the coolies do not yet know that the Breach of Contract Act is no longer in force. Is there no way of letting them know that they are free at the present moment?—I have limited myself to speaking to coolies and have asked them whether they knew that they could not be put into jail, and they told me that they knew about it. I had thought of going round to the labour force and telling them that, but I could not have said anything except that there was no agreement. If I had to'd them that there was no agreement and the very next day the manager had put them all under a civil agreement which is a perfectly legal agreement, my face would have been blackened; that is why I did not do that.

F-2920 As far as I can make out, many of the labourers do not know that they are free and can go wherever they wanted to go?—That is quite probable because the Act unfortunately ended at the end of the year instead of at the beginning, and they went on with the old contract system. You have noticed in evidence that nobody knows what to call it; some of them call it by one name and some by another, but there is no case brought in my court of a manager trying to get back by bringing a civil case on it. We know of these bonuses, and I have written of them as such in my inspections. If any trick was ever tried I would not only dismiss the case but would run the manager for thousands of rupees for failing to stamp the document.

F-2921. *Colonel Garbett*: The Commission was told on Saturday by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Assam branch of the Tea Association that the labour rules were framed by the industry in order to assist the free movement of the labourers. Why are you under the impression that these rules act in a contrary direction?—It seems to me that they do. It does not seem to me that there is much flow of labour between gardens that I know of; I may be mistaken. I see that on one garden the same labour force continues from year to year; I do not see gardens exchanging labour very much.

F-2922. The idea of the rules, I think, was that if a labourer wanted to leave one garden and go to another the new garden could employ that labourer, but all that it was asked to do was to refund the importation expenses of the original garden. The rules were framed to assist the free movement of the labour?—That might have been the intention.

F-2923. *Rev. Saikia*: Are the in-patients in the hospitals that are under the control of the tea gardens fed by the company?—Yes.

F-2924. Are they fed properly?—I think so. The managers look at the rice account, and there is, I think, one European medical officer who sees by a special accounting system that no abuses occur and that all people in the hospitals are properly fed.

F-2925. *Colonel Russell*: I would like to ask you if you could explain to the Commission a little more fully what exactly you meant by the Board of Health that was suggested; I am not quite sure as to what constitution you have been thinking about?—I had no previous intimation that I was to give evidence.

The Chairman: That was our suggestion.

F-2926. *Colonel Russell*: Some of the gardens are perhaps not officially unhealthy but still have comparatively high death rates. A Board of Health, whatever its constitution, would have to deal with gardens where, for instance, there are a large number of deaths from malaria. Would you favour the appointment of public health officers on such a board?—Yes, certainly; it will be most valuable.

F-2927. As far as I can see, in the province of Assam, there is no properly developed official public health service?—There is public health inspection service.

F-2928. There is a Director of Public Health no doubt, but obviously he cannot go round the whole province of Assam to inspect. Would it not be advisable for the Government to develop a public service of its own to start with; for instance, you might have medical officers of health for every district?—There is what is known as a sanitary officer for small towns; there was one here employed by the municipality.

F-2929. That is not quite what I was thinking of. Of course there would be a medical officer of health in towns, but for each district where tea gardens lie would it not be advisable to have a district health officer, and would he not be a suitable person to be put on the Board of Welfare and Health?—Yes, but I do not think that the inspection of the medical side of the gardens would be enough for a whole time medical health officer; if he were a district medical officer of health it would be a different matter. But I do not know whether he could not also attend to the villages.

F-2930. Apart from the question of attending to health questions in villages, a well trained health officer with some experience would be of use in controlling the health of unhealthy gardens?—Some of the gardens, of course, have got very highly qualified European medical officers and some have very good Indian medical officers, and I do not know whether they would welcome any supervision.

F-2931. But supposing he was attached as an official member of such a board as has been envisaged?—He might take the whole valley.

F-2932. We got evidence yesterday from Mr. Fraser of Mariani garden in which he said that if he had followed the advice of some medical officers during the last five years in connection with the anti-malarial work he would have lost large sums of money with little effect. I quite agree with him in that respect. Supposing you had a medical officer of health who was well trained in anti-malarial work, anti-dysentery work and anti-kala-azar work, would he not be a value to the industry as a whole? Do you think the tea industry as a whole would welcome the addition of such officers?—I think they would only

oppose on the ground that they have got sufficient expert medical men at present, but otherwise I should think that they would welcome a man of that type.

F-2933. The ordinary medical officer on the gardens, as far as I can make out, with certain exceptions perhaps, is more a general practitioner than a public health officer and is more acquainted with the treatment of sick individuals than with preventive medicine as such. Would it not be better, therefore, to have a separate organization for dealing with purely preventive work?—I think so, because his voice will carry more weight with the agents in Calcutta who alone have to pay the money. I think it would be a very good idea.

F-2934. Supposing you had boards of health for groups of gardens, say, 10 or 12 or 14, would it not be advisable also to have in each of these groups a large central hospital which was well equipped, well staffed, provided with nurses and so on, so that the patients instead of being treated in some of the very shabby little hospitals that we have seen on various estates might have more up-to-date treatment?—I have heard that there does exist in the province a central hospital in which the treatment and the equipment is much in advance of anything that can be got by dealing with the gardens entirely individually.

F-2935. While speaking with certain managers I have been told that there would be great difficulty in getting coolies to come from an outlying garden into a central hospital. Do you anticipate that there would be very much trouble in that respect?—I could not say, but there might be. There is often trouble to get them into a hospital at all.

F-2936. That could perhaps be got over to a certain extent by allowing a proportion of their relatives to accompany them to a central hospital?—That is so.

F-2937. Do you think that that would interfere with the labour force to any large extent?—I do not think so, but it is a question of detail which the managers would be in a better position to answer.

F-2938. *Colonel Garbett*: Do you not think that if there was such a central hospital situated some distance away from the garden and a sick coolie transferred to that hospital it might tend to set his family household on difficulties?—There would be difficulty for them to visit the patient as often as they desired, but I think the suggestion was to send only serious cases to such a central hospital.

F-2939. *Colonel Russell*: That is so. My suggestion is that for all serious cases, like operations and perhaps midwifery cases, there should be a well equipped hospital with properly equipped wards and first class medical attendance, where these cases could be dealt with. Do you see any other difficulty in such a proposal?—Just the reluctance of the labourer to go to a distance from his garden. That could be only answered by a manager with experience. I would not like to give an answer to that.

F-2940. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Could you tell me what the actual increase in the payment for *hazira* has been since 1922? What was the rate in 1922 and what is the rate to-day?—I have got figures for 1924. For this subdivision, it was Rs. 9-12-11 for men and Rs. 8-15-1 for women.

F-2941. That is the actual wage?—Yes.

F-2942. But have you got figures for *hazira*? For instance, we are told that for *hazira* a man is paid 6 annas and a woman 4 annas. What I want to know is for a particular unit of work how much was paid in 1922, 1923 or 1924 and how much is paid now for the same unit of work. The unit, I understand, since 1922 onwards is practically the same, that is, between 25 to 30 *nals* in the case of hoeing?

The Chairman: Is it uniform or does it vary from garden to garden?—It varies, because you have got the unit system and the *hazira* system. I do not think I can reply to that.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It is not possible really to find out what increase there has been unless we take a particular form of payment which prevailed in 1922 and compare that particular form of payment with 1929, or let us say with 1928.

Colonel Garbett: You have Government returns.

Diwan Chaman Lall: But the Government returns do not give that information, and that is why I am asking this question.

The Witness: I think you could reach an adequate idea of it by just taking the difference in actual wage because you may take it that the amount of work done is about the same then as now.

F-2943. The 1922 Enquiry Committee in various places suggest that 6 annas which was the prevailing rate, for the unit system was a good wage. Could you give me an idea as to what was the prevailing rate for the *hazira*, taking 30 *nals* to be the amount of hoeing to be done for 6 annas, in 1922, 1923 or 1924?—Speaking without verification, and although I was not in the district, I am inclined to think that you would find it to be 4 annas in 1921; but I cannot tell you when the 4 annas rate was stopped and the rate increased.

The Chairman: That was shortly after the report of 1922 when the increase roughly from 4 annas to 6 annas was made?

F-2944. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I think it was before 1922. In 1921, according to page 43 of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee's report, the men got a further rise to 5 annas a day. That, I take it, would be for the *hazira*?—Yes.

F-2945. If I take that to be the standard, then the increase, wherever there is an increase, because in some places it is still 4 annas, from 5 annas to 6 annas is also for *hazira*?—I cannot give you a reply without looking at figures.

F-2946. Do you think that the Government at Shillong might be able to help us with more detailed figures?—I doubt it. I think the Government has only got the total wage returns; I think it has got no other information than that.

F-2947. *Mr. Cliff*: Government receive a return dealing with the months of March and September. Is the purport and usefulness of this return simply for public information; does it go any further than that; has any action ever been taken on it?—Not that I know of.

Mr. Clow: The return is sent in order that the Government may watch the progress in wages.

F-2948. *Mr. Cliff*: My difficulty is this: The employers say that if they give more wages the people will do less work. If you ask for information, they tell you that the systems are so varied that you cannot prove it. I have had it from one settlement officer that with regard to the agricultural people they receive very nearly double the price for their produce that they received a few years ago. The only way of measuring this is to call for the total wages bill spread over a number of labourers in two periods in order to test it, and I wondered whether the Government through their Commissioners were measuring it in that way at all. Do they seek to do that for that purpose? Do you think you do that?—The information as to the wages is a most valuable thing in connection with the industry, and Government pays great attention to that. I think it is the best indication of the state of the workmen.

F-2949. My point is this: We have the employers saying that if you give more wages the people work less. If you have a labour force that is unable to express itself, does the Government seek in any way to measure whether the people are actually doing more work; do they take the total cost of the labour and average it over the number of labourers year by year?—Except for public information I do not know whether any actual use is made of the statistics. The garden itself tries to arrange its work in such a way that the labour force may be tempted to do more than it does. I think you may take it that except in times when there is no *ticca* work, every effort is made to induce them to do more work.

F-2950. The point I wanted to make was this: Every manager, or at least a majority of the managers, on tea plantations deal with the agents at Calcutta, and their records with regard to the estimate of the labour cost and in regard to other things are subject to scrutiny by the agents. But with regard to those estimates dealing with the wages cost, did the inspector ever go into them to see whether the statement that the labourers will not work harder if they get more wages is true or is not true?—I do not think it has ever been verified.

Colonel Garbett: To answer that question would it not assist you if you were to go into the figures of an estate and find out whether more labourers were absent recently than they were before?

Mr. Cliff: I think it would, but I noticed that the Tea Association in giving evidence kept away from that entirely; they merely made a general statement.

Colonel Garbett: I think we can prove it by our returns.

The Chairman: I think you can pursue it with the heads of the Indian Tea Association.

Mr. Cliff: Very well, Sir.

F-2951. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What I was driving at was this: Taking Jorhat Sadar, the 1922 Committee in paragraph 109 of their report say: "In the Jorhat Company gardens situated in this subdivision, the wages in 1913 were Rs. 5 for men and Rs. 4 for women. These were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 in 1916. In 1920 and again in the end of 1921 or in January 1922, further increases were granted until the wages stand now at Rs. 7 and Rs. 6." Reference there is to the monthly wages; that is for *hazira* or for a fixed task that they had to do. Would I be correct in saying that this sum of Rs. 7 for a man and Rs. 6 for a woman is paid now for doing that particular fixed task?—The Jorhat Company's gardens may have adopted the unit rate some time after the period you refer to. I do not know, at that time, whether they were on *hazira* or on unit system.

F-2952. The Committee say: "In the remaining 2 gardens, the unit system with reduced tasks has been introduced."—I think the payment at Rs. 7 would be under the *hazira* system.

F-2953. That is to say they have to do a certain amount of work and they are paid on the monthly basis according to that amount of work. Yesterday when we visited the Meleng garden we were told by a coolie whom we questioned that he got Rs. 6-11 for the last month for doing the *hazira* work. If that is correct then has there been a drop from Rs. 7 to Rs. 6-11?

Colonel Garbett: That was the evidence of one man, and naturally it cannot be relied upon.

Mr. Clow: The difference is only 5 annas and it is quite possible that he might have been fined 5 annas.

F-2954. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If, as Mr. Clow suggests, that man had been fined 5 annas, then am I correct in saying that the rate of Rs. 7 which prevailed in 1922 prevails even now?—There are so many factors entering into it that I cannot speak for any particular garden. I do not know whether the same amount of work is done for *hazira* now as was done in 1921; they might have reduced the amount of *hazira* for the same money. It is not a point on which I can give an answer without looking through the Jorhat Company's books and having their own information upon it.

F-2955. Would it be possible to get that information? I think it would be a very valuable information if we could get, for instance, the amount of work, that is the number of *nals*, that had to be done for *hazira* work in 1921 or 1922, the amount of work that has to be done now, the rate paid then and the rate paid now.

The Chairman: On a particular estate?

Diwan Chaman Lall: Yes.

The Chairman: I think we can ask for it as an illustration.

Diwan Chaman Lall: If it could be got from the same garden, that is from the Jorhat Company's garden, it might be more useful.

Mr. Clow: They have got 16 gardens; you have to specify the one you want.

Diwan Chaman Lall: The Committee do not mention the names of those two gardens to which they have made a reference in their report.

The Chairman: You better make a note of it and we will see whether we can get it.

F-2956. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In the report of the Indian Tea Association for 1926 this is what they say: "That no superintendent, manager, assistant manager or other employer or agent of any garden represented in the Association shall engage or attempt to recruit or induce, directly or indirectly, any labourer or labourers from any other garden represented in the Association by offering higher wages than those current for the locality wherein his garden is situated or fixed by the Association." Would this restriction prevail for getting higher wages; suppose the employees on these gardens want to put forward a representation that they must get higher wages?—Your question speaks for itself. I cannot say anything in that respect.

F-2957. I take it that the policy of the local legislature has been to further the education of the coolies on the tea plantations?—From one or two letters

written by the Director of Public Instruction, and speaking from memory, I can say, yes; I can say that it is the policy of the Education Department to encourage schools.

F-2958. In July 1924 a resolution to this effect was passed by the Assam Legislative Council: "This Council recommend to the Government to require employers of labour engaging 30 children or more under the age of 14 in their estates, factories, mines, collieries, refineries, workshops, etc., to maintain one or more primary schools at their cost at such time and place and for such hours with such curricula as may be prescribed from time to time by the Department of Education, and to request His Excellency to undertake the necessary legislation immediately." Has any effect been given to that resolution?

The Chairman: That is rather a question for Shillong.

F-2959. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Mr. Cantlie, I would like to draw your attention to a case which is mentioned in the Labour Immigration Report for 1928:

"Just after the close of the year 50 coolies of Naharhabi Tea Estate in the Sibsagar subdivision struck work demanding a rupee a day as wages. Armed with lathis they invaded the office compound and threatened the staff with assault. After an enquiry into the matter, five coolies, the leaders of the batch, were found to be responsible and they were arrested by the Police and sent up under section 143, Indian Penal Code. They were convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 10 each or in default one month's rigorous imprisonment."

I want to know what the assault consisted in. It seems to me that apparently they went there to ask for an increase in wages.

Sir Alexander Murray: It is stated there, "armed with lathis."

F-2960. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Could we have the record in this case; could we have a copy of the judgment?—I will obtain that for you to-day.

F-2961. *Mr. Cliff*: In reply to the Chairman I understood you to say that the function of an Inspector was to examine wage rates, tasks, housing, hospitals, and water. Is that all the function of an Inspector?—That is his chief function.

F-2962. Does he examine the tasks to be done by the coolies?—Yes.

F-2963. I see from the Commissioner's report for 1929 that there is no observation on the condition of housing at all. Am I to take it that the conditions are generally satisfactory?—We report whether the lines are of the new type—iron frames and corrugated roof, or whether they are of the old *kucha* type. Once in a while perhaps they are being rebuilt and we make a statement about that in our report. The Commissioner who has been a district officer knows exactly what we mean. But we are not medical experts and we cannot say whether their situation is best. We can only see what the Commission saw: whether it is supposed to be good or the best possible standard of housing, is a matter of opinion. It has improved in my time.

F-2964. We went to a garden the other day. I think it was the first garden we visited. It was reported to be not in a good financial condition. A great many of the houses there were in a bad state of repair although this is the cold weather. Has not an Inspector got any powers and does he not report that the housing is in a bad condition?—Yes, he would put it down as being in a bad state of repair. But this is the time when they do their repairs. He would probably talk to the manager who would state his intention of repairing. He would make no reference to it in his report. The houses would be rain proof before the rains came.

F-2965. I am advised that this is the coldest part of the year. Dealing with housing, hospital accommodation and water, after inspection has taken place is there any provision for compulsion in regard to their improvement?—Legally there is no compulsion. But in practice the management, if it is a good garden, would carry out certain minor improvements. Inspections by me are always made after this time, that is towards the end of the cold weather or in the rains. I would not go down until the housing has been done properly. That is probably the reason why I do not make any remarks about housing.

F-2966. With regard to actual wage rates or actual tasks, are you in a position to know whether there is any change in the actual task or whether the basis is altered?—I write in my report that the rate was so and so last year and that it is so and so this year, e.g., deep hoeing rate was 12 *nals* last time, it is 10 *nals* this time. One garden may have a better soil than

another and the rates will vary accordingly. But the tendency is to reduce the task to be done and increase the pay. Beyond that I cannot say whether the task done in one garden is more or less than the task done in another.

F-2967. Take the question of bonus. I think you remember we went to a garden the other day where the old agreement was extant. It was not stamped, but thumb-printed right up to the end of last year. It seems to be a pretty common impression among the labourers that the old agreement is still in force. As an Inspector have you had any observations to make on that point to Government during the last three years?—Where civil agreements are taken I report to Government. In the case of the Boloma Tea Estate I reported that civil agreements were being taken and that they were thumb-printed. I also sent a specimen of the Boloma agreement to Government.

F-2968. In the case of the Rowriah gardens they were using simply the old agreement without the stamp. Would an Inspector report on that?—I report cases where civil stamped agreements are taken.

F-2969. Does Government take any action in respect of your reports?—When I put that in my report I did not consider that it was illegal or an abuse. At that time Act XIII had just ended and we were all new to what was going to happen. The gardens wanted to put their labour force under civil agreements and were taking legal advice. At first I thought that it was an illegal continuance of the old Act. But after reading that I thought rightly or wrongly that it was a civil agreement.

F-2970. *Mr. Clow*: Do they not require to be stamped?—Yes. The first ones I saw were stamped. They may be taking unstamped agreements now. In that case I will take action. I inspected books and saw if there was a reference to 313 days. If there was any I asked them to discontinue the practice. If I see unstamped agreements I will make them pay a penalty.

F-2971. *Mr. Cliff*: In the case of Boloma the agreements were stamped. In the case of Rowriah they were not stamped. They were all filed together and the wording was also almost on the same lines as the old agreement. I am only speaking from memory.

F-2972. *The Chairman*: We collected two agreements at the Rowriah gardens. It is a curious fact that the one on white paper is executed on 4th May 1929. It refers to this Rs. 12 and 313 days and requires the labourer in the absence of any reasonable cause to the contrary to perform such daily task and so on. The monthly wages are to be Rs. 8. Then there is a subsequent agreement on blue paper headed "Articles of Agreement." That is entered into on 21st December 1929 on the same estate. That says: "..... render him liable to the provisions of Act XIII of 1859....." and binds the coolie to perform 313 days work in consideration of the advance of Rs. 12.—I can only say that the garden must be using old stock.

F-2973. It looks like an earlier print?—I cannot interfere if it is a case of civil agreement. But if I see a reference to Act XIII I will take action.

F-2974. Would not the one on white paper require to be stamped?—Yes.

F-2975. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How can you say that it requires to be stamped. It is not a legal document; there is no witness; the other party has not signed it. How can you force anybody to stamp a document of that kind?—I could not answer that point.

F-2976. The thing is it has been intentionally left incomplete to serve a purpose?—It is rather a close point. I would not like to say more, because I will be the man who will demand a penalty for such unstamped documents. It is 10 times the stamp fee.

F-2977. *The Chairman*: We only draw your attention to that?—I am surprised to see that such a thing could exist. I did not do the inspection in 1929.

F-2978. The point is that some of the old forms are being used because they do not object to the worker carrying the old impression?—I think that the reply given on the garden was that they were using old stock.

F-2979. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the application of the Factories Act, as the industry has a great many exemptions from the Act, do you consider it suitable for tea plantations?—It is very difficult to apply.

F-2980. Why should there not be a special Act dealing with whatever amount of regulation the State considers necessary?—The present Act is extremely difficult to apply. For instance the children bring the leaf from the leaf houses across the road to the door of the factory. By law they ought

not to enter into the factory. They put down the basket at the door and somebody else takes it in. It is very difficult to prevent the boys from going into the factory and putting the leaves before the machine. There are breaches of the Factories Act by these boys. The plantations are working under conditions which are not provided for in the Factories Act.

F-2981. How long does the busy plucking season last?—I am told that people have to work on the 7th day in the busy plucking season and I want to get a measure of the time during which this lasts?

Colonel Garbett: It extends roughly over four months in the year—July, August, September and part of October. It depends on the weather to a very large extent. Sometimes the weather is very fierce and makes the leaves fall off the plant. If you leave the leaf very long on the ground it will make bad tea. That will, therefore, necessitate working a 7th day. But we try and avoid that as much as possible.

F-2982. I have seen the difficulty in making the tea garden worker know that the old agreement has been cancelled. Can you suggest any way in which the rights and privileges of the garden labourer may be made known to him?—So long as you have a civil agreement under which the labourer can be sued for the return of the money advanced to him, it is difficult to explain the position to him. Even if there is no civil agreement how could a coolie leave the garden when he has taken an advance from the employer? You will not be benefiting him by doing away with the civil agreement. The employer may lend him money for the purchase of cloth and utensils and so on and if the coolie leaves the garden without repaying that amount he can run a case against him in court and get the money. Unless you put an end to the practice of the coolie getting into debt I am afraid he cannot easily leave the garden. I do not suggest that advances are necessarily given with the object of keeping them here; they are also given to help them away from the money-lenders.

F-2983. *The Chairman*: In the last two or three years you have had no case of an employer running a case against a coolie for such advances?—None of this kind in Jorhat.

F-2984. *Mr. Cliff*: But how can Government make known to the garden workers what rights and privileges they have?—If you were to make all labour contracts illegal, including the present civil contracts, you would have a clear cut decision to put before the coolie and explain to him that he was not bound.

F-2985. How could that be done, taking that as an illustration?—To be quite frank, if I did that in a tea garden to-day there might not be any labourers there at all to-morrow; they might think that they have got an order to leave the garden and run away.

F-2986. That is one of the difficulties I felt the other day. I said to a tea garden manager, "May I go round and tell your people who do not want to stay here and want to go home that they can be repatriated"? The manager said, "You must not do it; it would create a disturbance." Suppose we adopted the alternative method of repatriation on good and sufficient grounds, as suggested by the Chairman; how are we to make the workers aware of their rights?—On this narrow point I may say that the workers who come here on 1 year or 2 years agreement know when they are to go home and keep that continuously in their minds. They know within a few days when they should go home. If a coolie is recruited on condition of repatriation at the end of three years I do not think there will be any difficulty in getting that into his mind.

F-2987. *The Chairman*: You say that if a specific period of three years were introduced and if this condition were made known in the recruiting areas those recruits would come up with full knowledge of their rights and be in a position to maintain them?—Yes.

F-2988. When that comes into practice, would not the remaining people on the garden—the earlier migrants, also become aware of their rights?—I do not think it will make any difference to them.

F-2989. *Mr. Cliff*: I am speaking on this point because on the one side you have got well educated and capable body of employers with all the advantage of western education and practice. On the other side you have uneducated, illiterate garden workers. I do not see at the moment any level platform between the two in which the two can equally exercise their rights. Assuming that certain rights are conferred on the garden labourer how are they to be made known to them?—I cannot think of any way at present.

F-2990. In the report on Immigrant Labour for 1929, there are two statements, one for each valley dealing with complaints from tea garden labourers and tea garden managers. With regard to complaints by coolies against managers in one valley there is a considerable number of complaints, whereas in the other valley there are very few complaints. Can you give reasons for the variation between the two valleys?

Colonel Garbett: I think the labour on one of the valleys is more settled than that on the other.

F-2991. *Mr. Cliff*: Could that be due to greater efficiency of inspection?—I can only guess that the reason is that more labour in the Assam Valley goes out to settle on waste land. But labour in the other valley remains in the garden as there is not much of waste land there. There will be, therefore, more people wanting to leave the garden in the Assam Valley and applying under the old system for what they call "name cutting chits." Probably most of these complaints are from people wanting to leave the garden. They say that the manager owes them so much, that they have taken so much advances and so on. They are generally returned to the manager and the matter is settled with him. If the complainant does not get satisfaction he walks away. That may perhaps explain the difference. I doubt if there is any variation in criminal matters such as assaults.

F-2992. What does this "name cutting agreement" mean?—When the old Act XIII was in operation the coolies used to take a certificate when they left the garden. The idea is still lingering that if they took a magistrate's certificate they could be employed by another garden or settle outside and that there was no chance of the manager bringing a case against them for recovering any money they owed to him. The old idea is still lingering as in the case of the bonus. I am only making a guess; I am not sure.

F-2993. Of the two gardens take Boloma first. Did any rumours come to your ears as to the conditions existing on the garden?—I was not satisfied with it when I inspected it in 1928. I heard that the coolies on the estate were not free to go and come as they ought to be. I went with Mr. Withers when there was the case of the Nepalese illegally recruited. We examined the people there and also the books for a long time. We generally enquired from the Nepalese and some other coolies, not in the presence of the manager; we got no complaints. I asked the people the day after you went as to what happened. They said that at that time there was a European manager—a fact which I had no knowledge of—and during his time there was no beating; but some of the clerks during the last three or four months have been rather harsher to them. When the European manager was there they were not restricted in their movements at all, but in the last few months there has been more driving of the labour and unwillingness to let them leave the garden. You saw the state of the garden—not properly cultivated. That was not the case when the European manager was there. We found that continual enticing of their labour has made their position difficult. They have been trying to keep their labour by trying to restrict their movements. That is my own impression.

F-2994. When we went to the garden the other day we were shocked to see the conditions there. Could a thing of that character go on without some rumour spreading among the people round about?—It was only by chance I heard of it. The *chowkidars* of that garden are to do any kind of recruiting they can and anywhere, including the one case we had from Calcutta. The *chowkidar* goes round the neighbouring gardens, meets there possibly one member of a family of workers and gives him an advance or perhaps an agreement and then hopes to get more members of the family or at least keep this man. Conditions are not what they are represented by enticing *sardars* to be, although they are better than you thought of them. The coolies get a little rice land; that is why the proprietor gets anybody at all. The other members of the family remain on the other garden and this garden manager fears that they will run away, or that the other garden will want to get their labour back again. Therefore, he puts the *chowkidars* on to prevent people coming in. This bad practice of enticing and re-enticing goes on only in rare cases, among the 10 per cent. of the gardens not in the Indian Tea Association, because the others are under the labour rules.

F-2995. Can criminal proceedings be taken against a person who beats a coolie?—Yes.

F-2996. By whom?—If a complaint is made to me I will take action.

F-2997. We went to Meleng garden the other day. There was a *sardar* with a number of people around him whom he had caned and it seemed to be

a matter of every day occurrence. Is it possible for beating of that character to go on and be recognized as a matter of every day occurrence?—I go through tea gardens—their private roads—continually driving through. I have never seen any such cases; I have not heard complaints by anybody against a *sardar*. I think that will go on, human nature being what it is. It is likely to go on to a limited extent, that is to say to the extent to which the coolie gang under the *sardar* will agree—I used the word advisedly—to its being treated that way. If the *sardar* did what the gang thought to be cruel it would upset the gang and they would refuse to work. A complaint will be made to the manager. The *sardar* may survive a single complaint, but at the second complaint he is very likely to be dismissed, because he will be upsetting his labour by treatment of that kind. Same is the case with garden managers also. Keeping the labour contented is the great thing by which managers and *sardars* are judged now.

Mr. Cliff: It is a strange thing that some of these people were taking it as a natural thing, as a child beaten by his father.

F-2998. I understand there are two methods of payment to the *sardar*. The most common system is: you pay the *sardar* a salary and a commission on the earnings of the people under him. The second system is: you pay the *sardar* a rather higher rate and no commission. In your opinion would it be better to adopt the second system to prevent the possibility of any ill-treatment?—Theoretically speaking it certainly would be a better system. But whether it would be practically possible I doubt very much.

F-2999. Here is a difficulty which has been exercising my mind. If labour conditions in Assam are good and sufficiently attractive why is there a shortage of labour?—It is probably due to the cupidity of the human race. If a man has an employment offered to him with a slightly more cash remuneration, he is more likely to take it than an employment in which part of his remuneration will be adequate housing, pure water, a piece of land, firewood and other amenities. For instance taking an extreme case, the people from Bombay say: I get Re. 1 a day in the mills. I would like to go to any other employment which gives approximately that amount. The industries that pay a high cash wage have a tremendous attraction for any form of labour; and as the tea industry's wages are to some extent indirect they suffer to that extent from a handicap in the recruiting districts. I find that people are attracted by high pay more than anything else.

F-3000. Does that mean that the tea industry are more concerned with the moral welfare of their garden labour than their dividend, so that they give a good life to their workers?—The life of an agricultural labourer is somewhat different to that of an operative in a factory.

F-3001. *Colonel Garbett*: New industries, new railways and so on give labour in the recruiting districts some occupation at their own doors.—I do not know enough about the recruiting districts; but I find that there is a tremendous competition for labour as it is insufficient for all. Whether the tea industry by increasing the cash pay advertisements could proceed to tempt labour from other industries is a question which I cannot answer.

F-3002. But the tea industry has to face this stubborn fact that a very large proportion of their labour has been recruited in times of famine and that when famine conditions exist they get a larger supply of labour?

Colonel Garbett: That is true.

F-3003. Here is a life that is suited to the Indian agriculturists and in spite of all the money and effort the tea industry cannot get the labour it requires. It appears to me to show that the standard of life is not sufficiently good to attract an adequate supply of labour?

Colonel Garbett: Besides economic conditions we must not forget that we have a very bad climate. It has a lot to do with making Assam unpopular.

F-3004. *Mr. Cliff*: I agree with you. Is it not likely that measures taken in Assam itself to improve the standard of life of the garden workers will lead to a greater supply of labour than you have at the present moment?—I suppose you would get more labour if you pay for it. I remember before the War the wages of garden labourers in Sylhet were so low that I could not get any servant to work for me for those wages.

F-3005. *The Chairman*: Are they so low now?—No.

Colonel Garbett: We have not got a fair chance of recruiting labour. Act VI prevents even those who like to come from coming here. It is not

the condition of the garden so much as Act VI. All our troubles can be boiled down to Act VI. Before the Act we had the *sardari* and the *arkatti* systems. The *arkatti* system has been done away with; the *sardari* system is not capable of supplying our wants. It is not correct to think that the wages are low and conditions are unpopular. It is a matter of recruiting.

The Chairman: We have a proposal for widening the methods of recruitment through what we call accredited agents.

F-3006 *Mr. Cliff*: Government seem to be concerned with improving the standard of life. They believe that by improving the standard of life increased wages would follow. With regard to women labour, would it not be well that the amount of work to be done by a woman—if there is to be any serious improvement in the standard of life—should be gradually reduced?—I believe that this is the opinion held in western countries. You are probably thinking of higher mortality among the mill girls and children of Lancashire. But that would not apply to agricultural work in a country in which women, of the kind employed in a tea garden, always take a considerable share in labour. In Assam they plant paddy and cut paddy. Among the people from whom tea garden labour is recruited, the women do considerable amount of heavy work. Your point is provided for by the grant of maternity leave on full pay by the better class of gardens. It is difficult to say, but I fear it will be importing western ideas into the minds of people which are not suitable here.

F-3007. It seems to me that in advanced countries the number of women employed on agricultural labour is always diminishing. Here we find that people live in the most primitive conditions. They have no depôts and they have to fetch wood. Generally speaking they have to do all the things which are done for us in our countries. If the standard of life is to be raised must not the actual manual labour of the woman be reduced?—The work that women do on the garden is not an all day task. I would not like to say how far the amount of work that they already do interferes with their duties at home. Speaking personally I would like to see an increase in the earnings of the men, if at any time there is an increase in the earnings of workers in the tea industry. It is already satisfactory to note that in Dibrugarh for instance, the men are getting Rs. 17-3.

F-3008. All our reports and documents tell us that there are a large number of people who would not work. I am told in quite an incidental way that a woman will tell the *sardar*: "I would not do the full *hazira* to-day. I am going home to do the washing." That is perfectly human and natural. But she is regarded as one of the women who would not work. If she has got household work to do and to bring up a family would it not be one of the ways of diminishing the work done by women to increase the wages of men?—I could not say more than that if increased earnings came to the workers in the tea industry I would prefer to see it come in the earnings of men.

F-3009. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you not want additional inspecting officers if the gardens are to be inspected thoroughly and often?—If the point of welfare of the labourers is considered by the Commission, I am afraid the Deputy Commissioner can do nothing more than he does at present. He has no time to do more than routine inspections.

F-3010. You want a full time Inspector of Factories as they have in other provinces?—I understand there is a proposal to appoint one for Assam. He would inspect the factories from an expert's point of view. The Deputy Commissioner is quite incapable of inspecting the factories and gardens from the health point of view. An expert could do more than what a man with no technical knowledge.

F-3011. Do the Superintendents of Police possess the necessary expert knowledge to be able to do those inspections?—It is only in cases where the Deputy Commissioner cannot go that the Superintendent of Police is sent.

F-3012. In other provinces they have the District Health Officer, the District Medical Officer and a number of doctors attached to local boards. They go round the villages and inspect the sanitation and health of those villages. Would it not be great help if that system was introduced here?—I think the tea garden labour has at present many more facilities than the ordinary Assamese. It is much better looked after. Even the smallest garden has a compounder whereas an Assamese village does not get the same benefits. We would be insisting on a standard for the industry which is considerably in advance of that which exists in our own villages. The industry is an agricultural one; it is not a factory industry situated in a town.

F-3013. If the workers are given education, will they raise their standard of living and desire to do more work and earn more wages?—I cannot say. Education is the only solution we can think of.

F-3014. You think that they should be given a special kind of education with an agricultural bias?—I could not say. From the little I know of the subject I think that authorities on education are opposed to specialized education for children. They consider that the mind should be trained in general education.

F-3015. The children should be given elementary education between the ages of 8 and 12?—Since giving up the chairmanship of local boards many years ago I have not been in touch with education. My opinion is of no value.

F-3016. How do you say then that education will improve the workers?—I do not know except that education is supposed to make a man better, create more interests in life and more desires and in order to satisfy them it induces him to work harder.

F-3017. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What is the average wage of an unskilled worker in the District Board?—I can find that out for you. I am not chairman now.

(The witness withdrew.)

Dr. PERCY FOSTER, Medical Officer, Badlipar Medical Association, Badlipar, P. O.

F-3018. *The Chairman*: What is the length and nature of your experience with regard to health conditions on the tea gardens?—I have been Medical Officer to the Badlipar Medical Association for a period of 25 years, and I have charge of the tea estates which are members of that Association. All garden hospitals are visited by me once weekly, and if necessary more often. Medical reports are submitted monthly by me on the forms herewith shown. Medicines and surgical instruments are indented for from Home every six months by me. I have a central medicine godown, where all medicines are stored and which are challaned out weekly to the gardens on regular indents, which are signed and checked personally by me.

F-3019. Can you give us, in terms of population, the estates whose medical arrangements you supervise?—The average population of these estates is about 2,000. There are 7 gardens. The total population of the 7 gardens is 13,603.

F-3020. *Colonel Russell*: How many hospitals are there in these 7 gardens?—There is one hospital for each garden.

F-3021. How many beds are there in each hospital?—The number of beds is according to the average number of in-patients. Each case is provided with a bed.

F-3022. You can expand your bed accommodation as necessity arises?—There is a certain number of iron bedsteads provided, but a number of the beds are of the *charpoy* type, namely, ordinary coolie beds. The coolies seem to prefer those to the iron bedsteads which are provided by the gardens.

F-3023. Would it, in your opinion, be a better arrangement to have a large central hospital for the 7 gardens instead of having 7 individual small hospitals?—Undoubtedly the more the work is centralized the better, both for the concern and for the individual.

F-3024. It has been, suggested that there would be a considerable amount of difficulty to get patients, particularly in an out-garden, to come to a central hospital. Do you anticipate any such difficulty?—There is bound to be a certain amount of trouble, which I think could be overcome to a very great degree if the managers realized it was necessary for them to urge the coolie to go into the central hospital in order to get better treatment. I have had experience of that in dealing with kala-azar epidemic in one district. I had no difficulty in getting cases from the surrounding gardens to come into the central hospital, and also from neighbouring tea estates where I had no control at all.

F-3025. That might be due to the fact that kala-azar is a disease of which they are afraid. Would the same argument hold good in the case of other diseases?—In regard to serious or special cases I think it would. If there is a main central hospital where the medical officer has to attend daily, it stands to reason that the work must improve. At present the medical officer only visits a garden once a week or once a fortnight.

F-3026. If you had a large central hospital, you would have better control over your subordinate medical staff, would you not?—Yes, and not only that, but financially you would be able to put better men in better positions. If there was a central hospital the present dispensaries would still have to be kept up on all the gardens, but they might be controlled by a subordinate staff instead of fully qualified sub-assistant surgeons.

F-3027. Are you satisfied with the present level of qualifications of the doctors?—Most of my gardens have the type of the sub-assistant surgeon.

F-3028. Have they registrable qualification in Assam?—Yes.

F-3029. We have seen in various places doctors who have practically no qualification or training. Is that at all general in your experience?—At one of my main hospitals I have a man of the compounder type who has now worked under me for a period of over 20 years, and he is doing, I consider, every bit as good work as a qualified sub-assistant surgeon. He has proved himself most efficient.

F-3030. Would you prefer, generally speaking, the trained sub-assistant surgeon?—Yes.

F-3031. What do you do in the way of child welfare work?—A special point is made, on all the gardens I visit, to muster daily between 11 and 12 o'clock at the hospital all mothers on child-birth leave. Hot water, soap, oil, etc., are provided and made use of daily under the supervision of the garden *dais*, who have received special training at St. Luke's Hospital, Chabwar. A list is kept to show whether they attend daily or not. All pregnant and child-birth pay is given at the hospital the day following the ordinary pay day. Extra leave and pay, or child-welfare challan work, is given to any pregnant women on the medical officer's recommendation in writing to the manager.

F-3032. How much in the form of maternity benefit is given to those pregnant women?—They are allowed on the garden to which I am referring, 4 annas a day.

F-3033. For what period?—There are two periods. They are allowed pregnant rest leave and pay, which is 4 annas a day, but that is only allowed on special recommendation. In the ordinary way the child-birth leave pay, which is 4 annas, dates from the day of birth for a period of three months.

F-3034. What is the special recommendation to which you have just referred?—If a pregnant woman is unable to do her full ordinary work on the garden, she is then recommended for some special easy work. If, for medical reasons, it is considered that she ought not to go out to work at all, she is then put on to the child-birth leave pay list.

F-3035. Would it not be better to give all pregnant women a definite period of leave before the child was born?—I do not think that is necessary. A number of these women are allowed pregnant pay and even special challan work, but they do not take advantage of it, and they come up to be examined, or to report, so that their names should go forward to the manager.

F-3036. *The Chairman*: Is it not a fact that some of the healthiest peasant women in Europe work up to the day before the child is born?—I know from my own experience that a woman has been at work up to within an hour of the child being born, and the day after it was born she was at work again.

F-3037. As a doctor do you not regard the light work before child-birth as an actual advantage, and extended rest afterwards as a real necessity?—Personally I do not think the work is so hard in the majority of cases to recommend that. It may be so during certain months of the year when the hours worked are a little long, for instance, in the plucking season, but apart from that the work is quite capable of being done by the majority of the women right up to within a month of giving birth to their children. I try to aim at giving a month's pregnant leave and pay before birth.

F-3038. Who recommends the month's pay?—The medical officer visiting the garden.

F-3039. You mention the employment of garden *dais*. What number of *dais* do you employ and what duties do they perform?—There are two *dais* on each garden. They are picked out from the *dais* who are working in the lines, and they do the majority of the attendances. The name of the *dai* is shown opposite each woman. At the date of birth a woman is recommended from these number of *dais* by the manager and the doctor and the medical officer. They decide between them which is the most suitable woman to be sent for special training. These women then go up to St. Luke's Hospital, Chabwar, where they receive special training. Their work on the garden is to attend daily the ordinary child-birth

leave muster. They do the washing and cleaning of the infants, under the supervision of the doctor. Directly a birth occurs in the lines the doctor gets the *hakim* to visit the woman. The next morning he gets a *dai* to visit the woman in the lines and to report daily on her condition and on the child's condition at the hospital. At the end of the 7th or 8th day the woman attends with her infant.

F-3040. How long has this scheme been in force?—For at least two years.

F-3041. Have you had any reduction in infant mortality as a result of this scheme?—I have not got out the figures for this last year, but they are available.

F-3042. You have some system of giving a bonus at the period when the birth is registered, have you not?—That would come under the heading of "Registration of births". To ensure this a bonus of Rs. 3 is given to the mother, and that bonus is paid within 7 days of birth provided the chit is produced from the doctor which states the date of the birth of the infant; otherwise a child might be born and die without any record of it in the garden books.

F-3043. How do you deal with the registration of still-births?—A list of all births is kept. Directly a woman gives birth to a child, if it is a still-born child the fact is written down opposite her name in red ink.

F-3044. Is it dealt with both as a birth and as a death, or is it recorded in a separate register?—It is recorded in the same register, and at the end of the year so many births and so many still-borns are returned.

F-3045. Do these still-borns appear in the death register?—They appear separately under the heading of "still-borns".

F-3046. In the return which you make to Government, do you count still-births in the percentage of births?—It is included on some of the gardens as a birth.

F-3047. You say "on some of the gardens". Is there no fixed practice?—One garden does it in one way and another garden does it in another way.

F-3048. Let me take your own garden first. When a child is still-born do you count that a birth?—Yes.

F-3049. In your return to Government does it go in as a birth?—Yes.

F-3050. Is it counted as a death under one year?—No, it is not returned as a death.

F-3051. It makes the return wrong if you register it in one column and not in the other?—These returns are made for the benefit of the garden, and the other returns are kept by the doctor for the benefit of Government.

F-3052. Does not Government lay down any rule on that most important question?—All I know is that I sign the number of births and I see the still-born list.

F-3053. Would you agree that the number of still-births is one of the vital signs of general ill health in any population?—They are returned by me under a separate column under my birth returns. I show the total number of births during the year, the total number of still-borns, the total number alive on the garden, the total number absconded, and the percentage alive on the garden at the end of the year.

F-3054. That is for the information of your gardens?—Yes.

F-3055. You are not required to send them up to Government?—No.

F-3056. I take it you would favour Government action to the effect that all statistics should be kept on one basis, taking still-borns out of both categories and treating them separately—taking them out of the births and out of the deaths?—Yes, I think that is much the better way.

F-3057. *Colonel Russell*: With regard to the welfare of infants born on the estates, you have a system of taking weights, have you not?—I make use now of the Government birth return book. On the one page I have the necessary information which is required by Government. On the other side I have the extra information required by the garden, namely, the weight of the child on admission, and at the end of one, two and three months and the date of vaccination. The death of an infant is also shown in column 4 in that register. The cause of death is also shown now in the Government birth return book.

F-3058. What other steps do you take to control the welfare of children born on the estates? For instance, how is the health of non-working children supervised?—We have very little control over non-working children because they are not seen at work, and they do not necessarily appear unless they come under observation during the annual inspection, which comes under the heading of the general

coolie welfare. Every year an annual house-to-house medical inspection is regularly carried out. The person's name is noted, as is also the general condition of that person, together with any remarks which are necessary. This is all entered in the hospital line coolie register, which is kept at the hospital. Various lists are compiled at this annual inspection and given under various headings so as to ensure the necessary treatments. For instance, a list is made of all coolies suffering from spleen, from itch, and from skin troubles.

F-3059. *The Chairman*: Are you speaking of children only now?—No, of the number of people who are inspected in the houses. All houses are numbered. The house number is noted, and then a list is made of where they live and the heading under which they have to be entered is also written up. The following headings appear: spleen cases, itch cases; pneumonia cases; general debility cases; leprosy cases, and there is also a list of orphans which shows the guardian's name. One's experience is that an orphan may be under the control of one person for six months and next year one finds it has gone to live with somebody else and nobody is responsible for its condition. Hookworm treatments are done as a routine matter at the general inspection which is done during the cold weather once a year.

F-3060. *Colonel Russell*: What about santonin?—Personally I think regular santonin distributions are most essential to reduce sickness amongst children and infants during the rainy season. I make a special point of having a register showing the date on which every child receives its santonin treatment, the result being that if a child comes under observation or some other complaint, the register can be referred to and it can be seen whether he has had the regular santonin distributions or not. The santonin distribution plays a very important part in the reduction of general sickness amongst non-working children and infants during the rainy season.

F-3061. Do you give sick pay to out-patients?—Out-patients are allowed 4 annas a day, male, 3 annas a day, female, and 2 annas a day, working child. In-patients get food and no pay. This is on the particular garden to which I am referring. But the in-patient is allowed a sick attendant—a relation who is paid the same rate of pay which he or she would get if he or she was working. The idea of giving that sick attendant pay is this: We might say to a coolie who brings up a child whose condition we consider is unsatisfactory: "You will not get your sick attendant pay because you have not brought the child in a satisfactory condition". It is to encourage them to bring the child or the patient under observation as soon as possible. The sick attendant *hazira* is signed by me on the in-patient ticket.

F-3062. *Mr. Cliff*: When you say "on the particular garden" do you mean the whole of the 7 gardens?

F-3063. *Colonel Russell*: No, he refers to one garden. Can you give the Commission a statement dealing with the daily food allowances for adult hospital patients?—The list I have here was sent to me by the sub-assistant surgeon. It shows what a hospital in-patient gets per day, and it includes rice, dal, salt, extra oil, spices, vegetables, and the quantities.

F-3064. You also have a list showing the feeding allowances given to non-working children. Do you feed the non-working children on your estates?—Any child can be fed at the hospital daily if it comes up, but certain children are recommended for feeding because their general condition is unsatisfactory. In order to ensure that such children get regular attention they are entered on the daily feeding list of the non-working children. That is checked by the compounder or the clerk daily in order to see whether they are attending and are being fed. At the same time they get the necessary treatment from the *baboo*. I have here the amount allowed for the non-working children (handing in statement).

F-3065. What is the average attendance of the children each day for that purpose?—It varies according to the number listed, but the average attendance is at least 30, out of a population of 818 non-working children and infants.

F-3066. Have you figures showing the annual deaths on an ordinary typical garden under different heads?—I have here the certificates of deaths from a main garden dating from 1919 to 1929. The following heads are shown: fever, convulsions, malaria, diarrhœa and dysentery, respiratory diseases, influenza, hookworm, round worms, infantile atrophy and other causes of death.

F-3067. *The Chairman*: In that period from 1919 to 1929 is there any appreciable increase or decrease in the death rate?—The total deaths in 1919 due to fever and convulsions were 12; in 1920, 12; in 1921, 10; in 1922, 12. In 1928 the figure was also 12, but in that year malaria was exceptionally prevalent. This year there were only 4, and the previous year there were only 5. Therefore, there has been a marked decrease.

F-3068. I am asking if there is any deduction which you are justified in drawing from the figures taken over a period such as that given as to whether there has been a general improvement in health or not?—This year the figures show up remarkably well. They are the lowest on record.

F-3069. *Colonel Russell*: You have also available a statement of your hospital expenditure?—Yes. A book is kept by each garden of the hospital expenditure on in-patients. The items are shown under the following heads: the year, the daily average fed, and the total amount expended throughout the year on food only: The amount expended on milk is shown separately, as is the amount expended on extras. The total cost per head per month is also noted.

F-3070. Can you give us a statement showing the total percentage of sick over a series of years?—After giving a return under the heading of "diseases" I also show the percentage of total sick each year. Here is an instance of one garden where the sickness has been very heavy owing to an epidemic of kala-azar. Sickness on that garden, therefore, is higher than it is on a number of other gardens where they do not have that epidemic.

F-3071. Do the figures over recent years show a marked reduction in sickness?—One particular garden shows a reduction from 4·1 to 1·5. Another garden shows a reduction of 2·3 in 1922 to ·6 this year.

F-3072. In some of your figures you show a very marked reduction in malarial rates. Can you indicate how that reduction was effected? Have you done anything in connection with anti-malarial work?—No regular anti-malarial work has been done on the gardens. The only work I have done is regular line sanitation squad work. A certain number of coolies are allowed for that. They are regularly employed in cleaning out and opening out the drains which run through the lines. At the same time there is a regular removal of general refuse and manure. Having carried that work out consistently for many years, we are now getting the benefit of it. It might be put down under the heading of "Anti-malarial work". Over and above that the condition of the houses has improved during the last few years.

F-3073. You have also changed the sites of houses in different places, have you not?—On one garden, which is an out-garden of the main factory, the total number of admissions in 1923 and 1924 amounted to 1,538 and 1,178, and this year it amounted only to 751. I consider that the health of this particular garden has improved considerably, because the lines originally occupied were all low-lying and close to the Government road. The water-supply was certainly quite good because it was supplied by means of a Norton tube. At the same time the regular hookworm distributions were made and no families were transferred to the new site until they had been properly treated for hookworm infection. The new site is much higher and the surroundings much healthier. But in spite of having that healthier area it is very difficult to get a certain number of the older coolies to vacate their present houses and go to live in the new lines. I think that is due to the fact that they have a certain amount of rice land or some other attraction very near to their present houses and which appeal to them more than their health does.

F-3074. Would you say that part of this reduction in the sickness rates was caused by an improvement in pay?—Pay has increased during the last few years, and must have made a difference.

F-3075. Your gardens are not very badly infected with malaria, are they?—Our returns show up remarkably well as regards actual malaria, and also as regards the splenic index. On one garden the splenic rate record in 1922 was only 5·9. In 1928 it was reduced to 2·2, and that has continued during the last four years. That compares very favourably with gardens which are situated towards the hills.

F-3076. What are the spleen rates in those other gardens?—I know of one spleen rate of as much as 60 to 70 per cent. It varies from that figure down to 10 and 15. The general sickness return was increased at least 25 per cent. on one side of the river as compared with the side of the river on which I am now working.

F-3077. *The Chairman*: That 25 per cent. increase being due to malaria?—Yes, I blame malaria.

F-3078. *Colonel Russell*: How do you consider that the water-supply should be controlled on the ordinary estate?—On one garden on which I am working there are tanks. On another garden there are ordinary wells which are dug to the depth of 40 or 50 feet. Personally I think that every single well should be

properly controlled, protected and provided with a reliable pump. I do not say that a cistern is absolutely necessary, but the well itself should be protected against the bucketing out of the water.

F-3079. The dysentery rates on tea gardens would indicate the quantity of water-supply available?—I had an experience this last year of an outbreak of dysentery on a garden, and the first thing I thought about was the water-supply, but I came to the conclusion that the water-supply was not to blame.

F-3080. What do you think is to blame?—The only evil which came to my mind was the fly question, and one of the difficulties that I had to contend with was keeping the hospital latrine in the order that it should be kept because I could not get reliable sweepers to do the work, and the fly question was certainly a noticeable nuisance on the garden where the diarrhœa and dysentery complaints were prevalent last year.

F-3081. Do you have any preference for tube wells?—Tube wells without doubt, if one can get them put in, are very much reliable and efficient, and there is no danger of contamination. As a matter of fact we are having tube wells put in. One was put in last year and another is going to be put in now.

F-3082. You have not had long experience of tube wells then?—No.

F-3083. With regard to latrines, are there any latrines on the estates under your control?—They are only in the hospitals; all the hospitals are supplied with latrines and they have been in use on the gardens for quite a number of years. But I have not pushed the question as regards getting them put into the lines simply because I realize the difficulty there is in keeping the hospital latrines in good order inspite of one's own personal supervision, because I do not think the garden doctor would take any interest in the supervision and cleanliness of the hospital latrines unless the medical officer makes it a point of supervising them personally. If left to them it would not be properly supervised.

F-3084. Supposing your latrines are of the septic tank type, do you not think you would get better results from them?—My hospital latrines are of the septic type plan entirely; they are not ordinary latrines. I call them *aqua* septic latrines.

F-3085. *Colonel Russell*: Do you think that if latrines were generally provided, the coolies on the estates would use them?—Personally I do not think they would.

F-3086. Is it not a matter for education?—It will take a very long time. They have been tried on the gardens but they did not prove a success.

F-3087. *The Chairman*: Do I take it that your opinion is that a badly kept latrine is more dangerous than the use of the jungle?—That sums it up entirely. It is very difficult to keep the type of latrines that we can put in in the ordinary way in the condition that it ought to be kept.

F-3088. *Colonel Russell*: But does the general use of the jungle not tend to keep the rate of hookworm infection up?—Personally I control all my hookworm infections. By the system that we have adopted all persons get treatment by rotation. This system has been carried on so regularly in former years that last year and this year I am only treating very few people for hookworm who I consider are infected.

F-3089. What proportion of the total will that be?—It is not more than 20 per cent. who are getting treatments this cold weather. But, on the other hand, the regular treatment will go on all through the year. If a coolie comes to the hospital for any complaint he gets the hookworm treatment first no matter what his disease or complaint is.

F-3090. *The Chairman*: You treat your whole population with what you consider a prophylactic treatment?—That is done during the annual muster when all the houses are inspected; they come up from different houses and every day so many are treated.

F-3091. *Colonel Russell*: Under the present rules, you cannot label a garden as unhealthy until the death rate is 70 per thousand. Do you not consider that figure is much too high?—Personally I think it is too high compared with the health of some of the gardens under my supervision.

F-3092. What figure would you give as a reasonable basis for judging whether a garden was unhealthy or healthy?—You might bring it down to 5 per cent. But on the other hand should an outbreak of cholera occur it is very hard lines to put that garden on the black list for no fault of the management.

F-3093. But that would be an exceptional circumstance. In our present inspections of this area we seldom found the death rate to be more than 35 per thousand. Why have they maintained, by regulation, a figure of 7 per cent?—I suppose there was some special reason for giving that number originally.

F-3094. Does that reason exist now?—Personally I think the health returns of all gardens throughout the province show a tremendous improvement.

F-3095. You think this figure is too high?—It should be reduced according to the present day ideas.

F-3096. You have mentioned the use of *dais* on estates. Do you think it possible to engage or utilize women trained as health visitors for doing general welfare work among women and children?—Personally I think a woman is the only person to take charge of that work. The doctor's time is spent in the ordinary routine hospital work. Where the in-patients are very high, the garden doctor has not got time to attend to the child welfare work which is becoming very heavy on the gardens. Another point is this: The best hospital work is done during the mornings. In the old days the garden doctors went out to work very much earlier than they do now, and so they had time for it. But now the majority of the work has to be put in within a limited number of hours and as such the garden doctors have not got time to check the children's feeding and to see that the child welfare work is properly done; it is handed over to the compounder to see that these children are treated and looked after properly.

F-3097. So that it would be better to have women health visitors?—There is plenty of work for a person of that type on each main factory, because she can take over all the child welfare work.

F-3098. *The Chairman*: Is there a supply of such women in the province?—It has been tried on a garden in this district, but I have forgotten what the trouble was. I do not know whether she is still employed. She lived in the main factory and went out and attended at the different gardens; but then there was the difficulty of transport.

F-3099. *Colonel Russell*: From the same point of view, do you consider that it would be advisable to employ a certain number of women medical officers on groups of gardens for looking after children?—Provided you get the right class of person that will be listened to by the coolie. It is very difficult even to get the garden women to support the *dais*; they have to do that over and above the ordinary *dais* that are employed on themselves.

F-3100. But there would be no real difficulty in having women medical officers?—No.

F-3101. I take it that you and the other medical officers on groups of estates spend most of your time doing what might be called "general practitioner's work," that is to say looking after sick persons and that you do not have very much time to spend on what might be called under the term preventive work?—Owing to the number of visits we have to do we only have time simply to go round and see the special cases in the hospital.

F-3102. So that the general question of preventive medicine is more or less pushed to the side because of the urgent demands of sick individuals?—The only preventive medicine is brought under one's notice at the end of the year when the inspection is done and recommendations are sent in with the annual returns.

F-3103. My point is that it would be far better to appoint a special public health medical officer for doing this general preventive work. Would you agree to that?—Certainly; the more time one is able to give to that special branch the more efficient the work must be.

F-3104. So that if you had one or more medical officers trained particularly in branches of public health work, you would eventually have less practitioner's work to do?—Provided their recommendations may be carried out.

F-3105. You would also agree, I think, that there is a considerable difference in the standard of health on different gardens even in the same group?—On the gardens which I am referring to in these returns, I think the same standard holds good on each garden.

F-3106. Let me put it this way: We have seen in our inspections great variations in the standard of health on different gardens. Have you got any suggestions to make to us as to the way in which the less healthy garden might be raised to the standard of the healthy garden?—It will come under the heading of public health work.

F-3107. Would you be in favour of a Board of Health?—Provided they had control over all the gardens in a certain area. They should not be able to control the health on one garden while they have no control over its neighbouring garden, because that would interfere with the labour; the labour would feel that they are getting a lot of worry on this garden which they do not get on the other.

F-3108. But that would be the very point on which a public health board would be useful in raising the standard of the backward gardens to that of the others?—The same work which is done on one garden should be enforced on all the gardens in that area.

F-3109. I quite agree with you. It will be necessary in order to do that to have a public health Act for the province?—Yes.

F-3110. *The Chairman*: All that will be necessary is to have an agreement between the proprietors of the companies themselves to establish and maintain a general board whose duty it would be to raise the level over the whole industry?—Would all the concerns in that district be represented on that board?

F-3111. At present presumably it could only cover the 93 per cent. which are covered by the Indian Tea Association. The force of law would be required to bring in the 7 per cent. who are not at present included?—My only point is that it is not workable to have rules and regulations on one garden which are not enforced on its neighbouring garden; otherwise there is bound to be jealousy and feeling amongst the labour force themselves.

F-3112. *Colonel Russell*: I want to go back to the question of the central hospital. You are responsible at least to two different managing agents. Do you think there would be any difficulty in such circumstances in having a central hospital to be used by the coolie population on estates owned by different companies?—If it could be started by any one company, I am sure the neighbouring companies would also join in and support it provided the central hospital is not situated at very great distance from their gardens. For instance, take the group of gardens to which I am responsible. Instead of running 2 or 3 main hospitals and 4 or 5 small hospitals I would have one central hospital which would be visited daily and the other main factories would only be visited once a week or once a fortnight as necessary; they would come under the heading of dispensary type.

F-3113. *Miss Power*: In the case of coolies that come from a tea district to a tea estate, supposing an epidemic occurs and the parents die, is there any responsibility on the part of the management for repatriating the orphans?—Personally I think the coolies live there so long they have their own relations; they would much prefer to live with their own relations rather than to be repatriated to their own country.

F-3114. *Colonel Russell*: But supposing they had no relations?—They will go to their own caste men.

F-3115. You would leave the responsibility to members of their own caste?—Personally I would, because if you interfere, unless you are asked to, there will surely be trouble. Even if there is a condition that they should be repatriated, I do not think they would go.

F-3116. Will that apply in the case of young children too?—Yes; they would be better looked after here than they would be in their own country.

F-3117. *Miss Power*: Do the managers accept any responsibility for pressing the relatives of any orphan children left on the estate to take in, or do they prefer to bring them as potential workers on their own estate?—I do not think they have any responsibility.

F-3118. *Colonel Russell*: They do not recognize any obligation to press the relatives of orphan children?—I do not think so.

F-3119. *Mr. Cliff*: There have been certain returns handed in. They deal, as I understand, sometimes with one garden and sometimes with more than one. Do we get the population of the particular garden with which they deal in those returns?

Colonel Russell: Yes; the number of men, women and children is given.

F-3120. *Mr. Cliff*: Will you tell us the cost per head that is involved in this medical treatment?

Colonel Russell: The figures for six years are given there.

Mr. Cliff: For the whole of the population?

Colonel Russell: For one garden.

F-3121. *Mr. Cliff*: Do the children on the gardens over which you have control obtain much milk?—Most of the coolies themselves keep cows, but the milk question is always very difficult unless it is taken over by the managers themselves to provide good milk from a well bred cow.

F-3122: *Colonel Russell*: You mean the coolies prefer to sell the milk than to use it?—Personally I think they use it; there is not enough to sell. It is very difficult to buy milk very often on the garden for the hospital. In fact, a big supply of tinned milk has to be kept by me in the godown to supply for hospital work, and I do not rely on the milk that I get from the lines.

F-3123. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you got any control over the housing on the estate—the type and the state of repair?—We make our recommendations when houses should be repaired, but they are done in the ordinary routine annual repairs.

F-3123a. *Colonel Russell*: What about the type?—One's opinion is asked as regards whether one thinks the tin houses are healthier than the old thatched houses. Personally I like the old thatch but then on the other hand when thatch is not available one has to give way and have the tin houses erected. But the coolies themselves, I think, are getting to like the tin houses because they do not require so much repair work and at the same time they do not get damaged in a storm or a gale when there is heavy rain. They are getting to like the present type of houses very much more than they did a few years ago.

F-3124. *Mr. Cliff*: Would it be possible to let the Commission know what type of houses you have recommended on your own estate?—Personally I have not recommended any special type. I have been only asked whether I approve of this or that. The type I have asked for is to have a verandah accommodation on the fronts of their houses, but then comes the expense of the extra tins; in some of the houses the fittings do not permit any extra space for such a verandah, while in some they do.

F-3125. Would you welcome co-operation between the garden doctors and the public board of health?—Certainly, because if a good deal of our work is to be carried out under the heading preventive work, our recommendations would be listened to more readily if they were supported.

F-3126. With regard to the sick allowance to which you referred, does the return show the cost per head of the population of the sick allowance granted?

Colonel Russell: No, it does not.

F-3127. Would it be possible to show the cost of the sickness allowance that you spend each year on your estates for the years which you have given the returns?—Could you get those figures?—No. I have given in the returns only the actual cost of the in-patient feeding.

F-3128. *Mr. Cliff*: When you discharge a patient from the hospital is he ready to go back for work at once?—If he is unable to go to regular work he is recommended by the medical officer to be given some type of work that he can easily do to allow him to draw full pay directly after he leaves the hospital.

F-3129. Does that mean, in point of fact, there is no sickness allowance?—Sickness allowance is given to an in-patient's relations for the period they attend on him in the hospital.

F-3130. *Colonel Russell*: Take the case of a man who had an attack of pneumonia. You keep him in hospital for three or four weeks and then you discharge him. He probably requires a certain period for convalescence. Is there any sickness allowance given to him during that period of convalescence?—No. If he is unable to go to regular work he is allowed to rest in his own house for a certain period, and if he is able to work he is given suitable work as soon as possible.

F-3131. During the period that he takes rest in his house does he get any sickness allowance?—Not that I know of.

F-3132. *Mr. Cliff*: Generally speaking, has the physique and general health conditions of the population on the gardens improved during the last ten years?—Certainly; there is a remarkable improvement. The class of cases that we see on admission now compared with the general condition on admission a few years ago has improved without a doubt.

F-3133. Does that mean that the worker's diet is a satisfactory diet?—I should say it is ample. Any amount of pay can be earned if they only take

the trouble to do it, but they do not; they spend most of their time attending to their own work which may be from their point of view more profitable than doing the garden work.

F-3134. *Colonel Russell*: Do they get all the vitamins necessary?—I think so.

F-3134a. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there any provision made for coolies who become old and are incapacitated from doing any work?—There is a special fund on the garden where I have been working, and such persons go on that special pension fund list.

F-3135. What is the amount of the pension that they draw?—I really do not know.

F-3136. Could you send those figures?—Certainly.

F-3137. Do I understand that you are in favour of a Board of Health being instituted which would have legal powers to enforce on the estates measures in regard to health and sanitation?—Personally I am.

F-3138. If there is a case of serious rheumatism of the type that I saw on an estate here where the man was unfit for work, is there any method by which such an individual can be repatriated?—I personally think that that comes under the heading "unfit for garden work"; he can be recommended and he would be sent back to his own country without any trouble at all. I remember a case of a labourer who was asked to be repatriated because he had no relations on the garden and he was unfit even for ordinary garden work.

F-3139. Is that done by the gardens for which you are responsible?—Yes.

F-3140. With regard to hookworm, do you think that if the coolies wore boots and shoes it would decrease the incidence?—I tried shoes on my garden a number of years ago, but half the time they would not wear them. They were provided free to start with, but they would not regularly use them.

F-3141. If they were to use them, would it not decrease the incidence?—It certainly would, but that is only one way; there are plenty of other ways of controlling that without the introduction of shoes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Rev. D. J. TIRTHI of Deogharia.

F-3142. *The Chairman*: We understand that you have had many years experience of life in Assam. For how many years have you been working here?—I came here in 1894.

F-3143. Does your work take you amongst the tea garden workers to any great extent?—Yes, I am working among the tea garden coolies.

F-3144. From your long experience can you say whether you have noticed an improvement in the condition of the tea garden workers over recent years?—Yes. When I came here I found that the incidence of infantile mortality was very high chiefly due to the absence of trained women doctors to attend to maternity cases. I reported this matter to the proper authorities and since the last seven years we are having a European nurse; we are also having a lady doctor from last year.

F-3145. So that in your view there has been a great improvement in recent times?—Yes. Many native *dais* are sent to Chabwar for training in midwifery.

F-3146. *Colonel Garbett*: Are you referring to the people living in the villages or to those living in the gardens?—To both.

F-3147. *The Chairman*: From your knowledge of the people now on the tea gardens, do you find them reasonably happy in their circumstances, or do you meet any who would wish themselves back in their own country?—The people do not want to go back to their country because it is very difficult to get land there; they prefer to remain here in Assam because they can get some land for cultivation.

F-3148. Can you tell the Commission anything about the schools for the tea garden workers, if there is a desire for education, and if you can suggest anything that, in your view, ought to be done for education?—When I went to Chabwar I opened a school in the lines there; I was also living in the lines

and I was teaching the students both in the mornings and in the evenings. Of those whom I taught, one has become a qualified compounder, and 4 or 5 are holding the position of *zamadars* and *moharars* and *chowkidars* and *sardars*.

F-3149. You said that you started this school. Did you obtain help from the garden manager?—No; I got help from the mission and I was paid by the mission; I was a catechist.

F-3150. Was there no contribution from the garden?—No.

F-3151. How many children came to your school?—There were 20 to 25.

F-3152. Is that school working now?—No, it had to be stopped, because the mission was unable to pay the schoolmaster.

F-3153. We can quite understand that. But if the schools were provided in larger numbers on the tea gardens, in your view, would the children be ready to go there?—They ought to go anyhow; whether they will go or not I cannot say.

F-3154. You said that in some cases where rice was provided or sold by garden managers, it was not of good quality. Do you wish to say anything about that?—Yes, that is true. The managers keep the rice in the godowns for a long time and it is also very unclean. When the rice is cleaned 4 seers come to 3 seers only. There is no nutrition whatever in the rice so sold.

F-3155. Of course in the old days it was one of the conditions of service that rice should be sold at a fixed price to the coolies, but that has been abolished now. Do the coolies prefer to buy their rice in the bazaar?—In many places they are doing it. Some people cultivate their own rice. Those who do like that get good rice. But the rest who buy from the garden itself do not get good rice. When that rice is cooked it gives a bad smell.

F-3156. Is it the case that the managers have to keep the rice for a long time in their godowns?—No, they buy bad rice from the *banias*. The *banias* take high prices and give only bad rice.

F-3157. The manager is deceived in the bazaar just like some of us in shopping?—Yes.

F-3158. With regard to the amount of Rs. 12 that the garden worker receives at the end of 12 months' service, do the recruits think that there is something binding on them to work for another year on that garden?—Are they not aware that Act XIII has been abolished?—No, they do not know.

F-3159. As a preacher coming into close contact with these garden workers do you tell them that these restrictions have been removed?—No, I have not told them that.

F-3160. Still you are convinced that they are under that impression, a wrong impression?—That is not a wrong impression. Those who are living within the garden consider themselves bound to work for another 12 months for the advance they have received. They think that it is not proper for them to take the money and stay away from work.

F-3161. Would you be in favour yourself of giving every garden worker the right to go back to his own country at the expense of the garden when he has been here three years if he finds himself unhappy?—If they get the money to cover their travelling expenses they can go home. But many people want to settle in the *busti* near the jungle, because they have no lands in their own country.

F-3162. Do the children begin to work on the gardens when they are too young?—Children between the ages of 7 and 9 gather insects. They only do light work.

F-3163. May I take it that unless they were at school they are as well occupied as they could be?—Yes, that is so, but I would prefer to see them at school.

F-3164. In your experience during the last 5 or 6 years have you come across any case of ill-treatment of garden workers either by the *sardars* or by other garden staff. I mean by ill-treatment serious beating or anything of that kind?—Recently I have not heard anything about that.

F-3165. Although you have been moving about amongst the people and would naturally hear if there was any serious complaint in that direction, you have not heard of any cases of that kind?—No, I have not heard.

F-3166. Do you think that taking the wages they earn along with other conditions of their life such as rice land, medical attention and so on, the tea garden workers are better off or as well off as the people round about in the villages?—The people in the *busti* who have got lands to cultivate are better off. The garden workers who earn 8 annas a day or who have got some rice lands are also better off. But those who have no rice lands or who are not able to earn 8 annas a day, how can they be happy?

F-3167. In your experience is there any grievance among the tea garden workers that you wish to bring to the notice of the Commission?—I should like to see a school in each garden.

F-3168. *Mr. Clow*: Do the coolies come to you to write letters for them?—No, they do not come to me, but there are many Christians who can read and write Hindustani and they go to them.

F-3169. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you often visit the gardens?—I am not able to visit the gardens often. I have to visit the gardens and the *bustis*; I have to work as a schoolmaster, as a preacher, catechist, and sometimes as a pastor.

F-3170. Do the people in the lines often tell you about their troubles and their joys?—Yes, they tell me sometimes. If they quarrel among themselves or if they fall sick they will tell me.

F-3171. Do the children like the school when they go to school?—The real difficulty is that of finding money and opening schools.

F-3172. Are the people working on the gardens lazy?—Some are lazy and are bad workers; some are good workers. Some are weak and some strong.

F-3173. *Rev. Saikia*: Are not the houses of the garden workers too hot in summer and too cold in winter?—Are they fit for sick people to live in?—Yes, they are too hot in summer and too cold in winter unless they are thatched.

F-3174. Do the coolies like to live in separate houses with a small plot round each house for growing vegetables or do they like to live in the lines?—They prefer separate houses with vegetable plots.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned to Shillong.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-fifth Meeting.

SHILLONG.

Thursday, 16th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*
MR. JOHN CLIFF.	
REV. THENURAM SAIKIA. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*	
LT.-COL. H. C. GARBETT, SUPERINTENDENT, KANJIKOAH BUDLI BETA TEA CO., LTD. }	
MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN	*Lady Assesor.*
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. ... .. } *Joint Secretaries.*	
MR. A. DIBDIN .. .. }	

Mr. A. J. LAINE, C.I.E., I.C.S., Officer on special duty with the Government of Assam, and Lt.-Col. T. D. MURISON, I.M.S., Director of Public Health, Assam.

F-3175. *The Chairman*: Mr. Lainé, I understand you appear in support of the memorandum submitted to us by the Government of Assam?—(*Mr. Laine*) Yes.

F-3176. What is the length and nature of your experience in matters relating to the tea gardens of Assam?—I first came to Assam in 1904; I was stationed for a short time at Sylhet as an Assistant Magistrate. Then I was posted to Karimganj as Subdivisional Officer. I did not return to the Surma Valley till last year, when I officiated as Commissioner for eight months. In the other Valley I have held charge of the Golaghat subdivision in the Sibsagar district, and I have held charge of the Darrang or Tezpur district, and also of the Gauhati and Goalpara districts, though in the last two districts there are very few gardens. In the year before last I officiated as Commissioner of the Assam Valley for a period of four and a half months. That is the extent of my connection with the tea districts.

F-3177. You have a fairly wide experience both in the districts and in the centre?—Yes, I have had some experience of both.

F-3178. In our investigations so far we have been a little puzzled to understand how much control and how much power of action resides in the Government of Assam over the conditions in the tea gardens, and we gather that that control does not extend very far: the gardens are inspected occasionally at certain periods, certain reports are made to Government on those inspections, but the power to bring the less progressive gardens up to the higher standard reached by many of them would appear to us to be limited to the single power of stopping recruiting on behalf of a garden. Does that coincide with your view?—I think that is correct.

F-3179. You have no powers at present to call for improvement in respect of matters of health, sanitation, education or the general welfare of the garden workers?—Yes, that is the present position; we have no legal power. Of course, Government are in a position to exercise a certain amount of indirect influence and pressure, but have no legal power to implement their recommendations.

F-3180. The legal power is confined to stopping recruiting?—Practically so, yes.

F-3181. If a garden is defaulting in the ordinary amenities that should be provided for the garden workers, that is the sole remedy that you have?—Yes, practically; I mean if the garden declines to carry out a recommendation, then Government is practically powerless except to the extent mentioned.

F-3182. And supposing that garden did not depend on recruiting through *sardars*, then there is no power at all?—So far as I am aware, there is no legal power.

F-3183. The Assam Labour Board is only concerned with the recruiting side of the question?—Yes.

F-3184. It has nothing to do with conditions on the garden?—No.

F-3185. Would your Government be favourable to the establishment of some machinery that would give you greater powers in that direction?—It is rather a difficult question to answer; Government has hitherto been strongly in favour of the removal of such restrictions on recruiting as do exist. As to the conditions on the tea gardens, the present system has in the past worked on the whole fairly satisfactorily; District Officers and Subdivisional Officers do inspect tea gardens periodically; and where necessary a medical officer is called in and sent to hold a special enquiry. In actual practice, though the legal power is not there, we have found we are in a position to influence tea gardens to introduce improvements when they have been urgently required. In the absence of any proof that the present arrangements have really hopelessly broken down, I think Government would probably give the matter further consideration before definitely committing themselves to legislation empowering them to interfere on the lines you have suggested.

F-3186. You tell us that tea cultivation is your largest and most important industry?—That is so.

F-3187. And yet you have no legal powers to level up to the standard of the best in the tea gardens?—No; the position with regard to the tea gardens is precisely the same as it is outside, so far as the power of legal interference for the introduction of improved conditions is concerned.

F-3188. We have had a suggestion that if there were in Assam a Board of Health and Welfare empowered to visit the tea gardens and to make recommendations to Government, Government being given power to take action on such recommendations as they approved, it might be a considerable help in raising the standard of life in the gardens. In your own memorandum you stress the point that what is needed is the education of the labour force to an appreciation of a higher standard of living when they would want more and be prepared to work for it, making good use of their earnings. We ourselves have observed considerable variation in the gardens in their attempts towards that goal and that there is no coordinated effort over the gardens as a whole. You would prefer not to express an opinion on the suggestion?—I think Government would prefer to have the scheme developed a little more and worked out in detail before expressing a definite opinion, in view of the fact that under the present system and under existing conditions, things run fairly smoothly and considerable progress has been made during the last decade or so.

F-3189. No doubt you are aware that, speaking generally, the gardens could do with a much stronger labour force than they have at present?—I believe that is so.

F-3190. They could both improve the cultivation of their gardens and in many cases extend the cultivation, and by that means add to the prosperity of your province?—Yes.

F-3191. In our investigations in the recruiting areas we have found that there still lingers some prejudice against work on the gardens in Assam, no doubt some of it due to memories of days which we hope have long passed away. We have had a suggestion that if every recruited garden worker were given a guarantee of repatriation at the expense of the garden not later than the end of three years, that might remove once for all this old prejudice due to the distance to travel, climate and so on, and very substantially improve the flow of recruits. Would your Government be in favour of a general condition of that kind giving the right of repatriation to any who desired to go back to their country at the end of a reasonable period like three years?—Yes, I feel sure that the Government of Assam would be in favour of a condition of that kind.

F-3192. And do you think that the establishment of that right would automatically help in increasing the efforts of the tea planters to make conditions so good that the great majority of their workers would elect to stay and not to go back to their country at the end of such a period?—It might certainly have that effect on them.

F-3193. And also do you think that it might save a good deal of expense in the repatriation, even after a few weeks or months, of quite unsuitable workers who are under the present system occasionally sent up to the gardens?—On that point it is a little difficult to express an opinion, because the cost of repatriation at the end of three years on a possibly substantial scale would have to be calculated, and compared with the expenditure now incurred on occasional repatriations, etc.

F-3194. I mean that if the flow of would-be recruits to the depots in the recruiting areas was very substantially increased, then more care would be taken at the depots in selection and rejection of unsuitable cases, so that it might be hoped that there would be a much more suitable quality of recruits sent up to the gardens?—Yes, I am sure the Government of Assam would share that view.

F-3195. The cancellation of Act XIII was intended to give to the garden worker complete freedom; we have found that although the contract has been abolished, in some cases there are what are called civil agreements which have taken its place; in other cases the payment of what is called the bonus of Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 at the end of a year, and a receipt in the form of a thumb print taken for it, still leaves in the mind of the worker an idea that he is under some obligation for the following 12 months. Has that come to your notice?—I do not think it has particularly. It may be that in the early days after the withdrawal of Act XIII it took some time for that knowledge to filter through, but I think on the whole now the garden labour are well aware of the fact that they are free to walk out of the garden if they want to. If they do put their thumb impressions on receiving an advance, I think it is simply as a receipt and as a recognition that they feel themselves more or less honour bound to continue for some time longer, in the same way as if I gave an advance to my own private servant, I would do it on the assumption and expectation, and he would receive the money also on the assumption and expectation, that he would continue in my service for a short time longer, but he would know perfectly well that he is not bound to remain if he really wants to go.

F-3196. Then you think there is really no reason for this lingering idea amongst them that there is something that binds them if they accept this bonus. We found the curious fact that a certain number of the garden workers do not ask for or take this Rs. 12 bonus?—I presume the garden manager exercises some discretion as to the coolies to whom he is prepared to give advances, and that in some cases, it may be, coolies do not come forward because the management may not be disposed to give them the advance. In other cases they may actually intend to leave the estate in the near future and therefore think it wiser to receive no advance from the garden.

F-3197. With regard to education of the children on the tea gardens in your memorandum you express considerable disappointment with the present state of affairs. How far do your Government use any pressure or give any encouragement to the establishment and maintenance of schools on the tea gardens?—The schools that would be established and have been established on tea gardens so far are mainly lower primary schools. Under the Assam Local Self-Government Act the lower primary education is the particular charge of the Local Boards of Assam. As a general rule Government gives Local Boards liberal grants-in-aid towards the development of primary and other education, but it does not like to interfere unduly with their discretion. Comparatively recently a Compulsory Primary Education Act has been enacted under which Local Boards are now given the statutory power of introducing compulsory primary education in certain areas under certain conditions. The Act has not hitherto had much effect because it was only recently passed, but I think one or two Boards have already come forward with schemes for the introduction of compulsory education in selected areas, and there is nothing to prevent their coming forward now and asking for the introduction of primary education in any area, which may or may not include tea gardens.

F-3198. What kind of support does your Government give to the Local Boards which are ready to take that action?—Two-thirds of the cost will eventually come from the Provincial revenues. The Act contemplates, I believe, that a plebiscite of some kind will be held in the locality. I can get you a copy of the Act.

F-3199. Does that involve the imposition of a rate or tax?—Yes, it involves the imposition of a small rate.

F-3200. Do you anticipate many favourable plebiscites?—That we do not yet know, but we may get them because only one-third of the cost will come from local funds and local taxation.

F-3201. But even so, the local ratepayer in India must be different from the ratepayer we know elsewhere, if you get any great enthusiasm for it?—Yes, but I think the Act has further provisions with which I am not acquainted allowing Government to impose its will under certain conditions.

F-3202. Has your Government ever considered a special kind of education particularly suitable to children on the tea gardens, adapted to their future life rather than the stereotyped kind of primary education?—After 1908 three types of schools were tried in tea gardens, but I think they were all more or less of the normal lower primary type in vogue outside tea gardens; I do not think they were specially designed to meet the educational needs of tea garden coolies as a class. Some of those schools are under the direct control of the manager, and, of course, if he thought fit to have a school run on particular lines to suit the needs of his labour force, there is nothing to prevent it.

F-3203. Supposing the tea industry itself were to devise a type of education particularly suitable to the conditions and life of the tea gardens, always, of course, subject to final approval by the Central Government, would your Government encourage a movement of that kind?—I am perfectly sure they would.

F-3204. Do you not think that a Board of Health and Welfare would assist the individual managers to pool their experience and arrive at a system which might go on by progressive stages?—Yes, I quite agree; if a Board of that kind were constituted it would be very useful in this direction.

F-3205. At the end of your memorandum you supply us with the correspondence that has taken place between your Government, the Government of India and the Indian Tea Association with regard to the amendment of Act VI or the enactment of a new and more simple Act to take its place. Is there anything further, since the date of these letters, which you would wish to put before the Commission?—No, I am not aware of any development since the last letter was written.

F-3206. Then I take it, to summarize what you say in this correspondence, that from the point of view of Assam you wish to see restrictions reduced to a minimum?—That is so.

F-3207. You are anxious to see a system of accredited agents empowered to recruit alongside the existing *sardari* system?—That is so.

F-3208. And from the point of view of getting desirable migrants to Assam, you think that would be a great help?—Yes.

F-3209. In examining the figures of vital statistics on a number of gardens we have found what seems to us to be a flaw which takes away most of the value from the statistics which you collect and which have been presented to us. With regard to the method of registration of still-births, on one garden you find that a still-birth is not counted either as a birth or a death but is entered in a separate register; in some cases you find that the birth is registered and not the death; in some cases it is registered both as a birth and a death. How can you have any valuable statistics if your Government does not issue definite instructions on a point of that kind?—That is a point which I think has not previously been brought to the notice of Government. I quite appreciate the point of your criticism and I can assure you that Government will look into the matter. I do not think there are instructions on that point; if there have been no instructions, they will be issued at once to set that right.

F-3210. I take it that Colonel Murison would agree that the matter of still-births as an entirely separate matter is one of the best indications as to the general health of any population?—(Col. Murison) It is a very important matter and I think the still-births should be registered separately and not counted either as births or deaths, so that we may know something about them.

F-3211. They would not then affect the figures of infantile mortality?—Exactly.

F-3212. I think that is the custom in other countries?—Yes, I think so.

F-3213. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The Manager of the Boloma Tea Garden in the Assam Valley told us he had applied to the Assam Labour Board to be permitted to recruit through an association other than the Tea Districts Labour Association, that the Assam Labour Board had recommended that he should be so permitted, but that he had received no reply from the Government of Assam. Do you know anything about that case?—(Mr. Lainé) I do not, but I will have it looked up and will communicate the facts to you later.

F-3214. Do you know any cases where the Government have refused to give licenses to recruit to any employer or association of employers?—I do not.

F-3215. The bulk of the recruiting is evidently done by the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Yes.

F-3216. We have heard it is pretty much a monopoly and have been wondering why it should be a monopoly. Has your Government attempted directly or indirectly to put monopolistic power into the hands of the Tea Districts Labour Association to the exclusion of other recruiting agencies?—No, I think the fact is that hitherto there has only been the Tea Districts Labour Association in the field, or at any rate very little else.

F-3217. There are one or two other agencies?—Yes, I believe there are.

F-3218. Perhaps you will look up your records and let us know?—I will do so.

F-3219. In reply to the Chairman you said you had no legal power to enforce any recommendations you might wish to make to gardens; have you ever made recommendations to gardens to do certain things?—Frequently.

F-3220. And have they refused to do so?—No, I cannot remember a single instance in which they have refused to do so. In some cases there has been a little delay, but speaking personally, sooner or later I have always had my recommendations carried out.

F-3221. So that really as far as the legal power is concerned, it is immaterial in your experience whether the power is legal or whether it is just an obligation accepted by the tea gardens to do what Government wants them to do?—Hitherto it has been largely immaterial, as you say; whether it will continue to be so I do not know.

F-3222. Give us from your own experience types of communications which you have made to tea gardens asking them to do particular things?—I remember in some cases having condemned the existing water-supply and strongly advised moving the lines to a site where a better supply would be available, or to dig new wells or introduce a pipe system; they have taken up the suggestion and in the course of a year or two carried it out. In other cases I have criticized the hospital accommodation provided and that has been improved. In other cases I have criticized the nature of the lines and the state of repair in which they were kept, and I have found that in every case my recommendations have been attended to.

F-3223. Have you ever attempted to interfere with wages?—On one occasion at least I had occasion to criticize the wages and the system of management generally of a particular garden. I forget whether I conveyed my criticism directly or through the local Government to the managing agents; in any case an improvement was immediately effected.

F-3224. To your knowledge there is no case where a garden has refused to do whatever as a result of your inspections you thought they ought to do?—Speaking personally, I cannot think of any case within my experience, and I do not think any case has been brought to the notice of Government.

F-3225. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921-22 made certain recommendations; have you ever categorically gone into those recommendations and made enquiries as to whether the individual items have been dealt with by the tea gardens or whoever is interested?—I think the extent to which the recommendations of the 1921-22 Committee were adopted by Government was set forth in the Government Resolution which was published after the Committee submitted their report.

F-3226. In that Resolution I think Government approved of certain recommendations and disapproved of others. Since 1922 have you followed up that matter?—Yes, so far as circumstances permitted.

F-3227. *Mr. Cliff:* In the local Government's memorandum the system of advances to which the Labour Enquiry Committee took exception is mentioned; that was the system of issuing rice at concession rates on credit. Your Government say: "To what extent the Committee's recommendations have been accepted, the Government are unable to say." Since that date I do not think Government has made any particular enquiries on this particular point; I am not aware of any.

F-3228. The local Government say: "The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee in agreeing with that view pronounced against the bonus system and stated that in their opinion the first essential of Indian labour is a higher standard of living and any spare money which employers have would be better spent on education, superannuation benefits and welfare work generally. With the views then expressed the Government of Assam are in complete agreement." Have they followed up that

matter?—The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee pronounced against the bonus system, and Government accepted their views. As regards the desirability of raising the standard of living, the Government have pressed their views on the industry in successive annual resolutions.

F-3229. Has the Government followed up what is there said about education?—I think that point has been emphasized in several of the subsequent Government Resolutions on immigration, but, apart from that, I think Government consider this is a matter primarily for the employer.

F-3230. Has any further action been taken with regard to superannuation benefits?—The Government is not aware of any; I do not think any further action has been taken.

F-3231. Apparently the Government favour "welfare work generally," but in their memorandum they say: "Apart from measures for the physical welfare of the labour force.....there is but little welfare work in Assam."—That is so.

F-3232. In the Government memorandum there is the statement: " 'It was suggested to a medical witness that as the question of the introduction of a conservancy system on tea gardens was in a more or less experimental stage, it might be advisable for medical officers to confer together and discuss the matter, and the Committee think that action on these lines might have useful and practical results.' The Government are in general agreement with the Committee's view that while latrines are not necessary or practicable for the labour population living in scattered hamlets, some conservancy system is required for congested barrack lines." Again I put the question: the Government agreeing, have the Government taken any positive action to encourage the tea estates to give effect to those recommendations?—I shall have to look up that point.

F-3233. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What other type of welfare work could you indulge in for these workers?—That is the difficulty. That is a question which requires a good deal of reflection; I am not prepared off hand to make recommendations as to what they should do. I admit that a good deal more could be done for the intellectual welfare of the workers by developing education.

F-3234. I assume you would have to make education compulsory?—Yes, within notified areas, if action is taken under the present Compulsory Education Act.

F-3235. Apart from education, you do not see anything else that could be done beyond what the employers are now doing?—I think in some cases something more could be done, perhaps in the way of providing them with playing fields and encouraging recreation by way of games, etc.

F-3236. I suppose that comes under the head of physical welfare?—Yes.

F-3237. What else?—I take it it is hardly within the province of Government to develop the spiritual welfare of the workers.

F-3238. *Colonel Russell*: What about child-welfare work?—I think on many tea gardens they do all they can for the children on the estate, but possibly they do not do it on the best lines; they help the mothers both before and after the birth and they do look after the children because they realize that the children are their potential labour force of the future.

F-3239. *Sir Alexander Murray*: As I understand it, they give maternity benefit to women before and after child-birth, they give a bonus on the birth of the child and some of them give bonuses yearly and almost until the child reaches working age?—That is so.

F-3240. In many cases they feed the children?—Yes.

F-3241. As you say, they look upon them as a valuable asset, seeing that a recruit costs anything up to Rs. 200?—Yes.

F-3242. Can you tell me any other industry in any part of India where more has been done for child-welfare?—No, I cannot.

F-3243. In the Government memorandum it is said: "Most of the children of school-going age supplement the family earnings, and the loss of this additional income, necessitating perhaps a little more work on their part, condemns the scheme in the eyes of a large majority." What is the compulsory school age in Assam?—I do not remember; I shall have to look up the age proposed under the Compulsory Education Act, of which I have promised to give you a copy.

F-3244. In other provinces we have been told that from 7 to 11 is the compulsory age. Do you suggest that the earnings of children between 7 and 11 are so material that they prevent children attending school if there are schools for them?—In many cases some of the younger children do begin to earn something. If they

do not earn anything, they look after the cattle of the family at a very tender age.

F-3245. We have been told in most gardens that men to look after the cattle are supplied where there are cattle?—I think that is the case in many gardens but I do not think it is the case throughout.

F-3246. In the Government memorandum it is said that the cost of importation of labour is excessive, "but the industry must be left to solve that problem for itself." Does not the whole problem that we are enquiring into resolve itself into the cost of recruitment? What do you mean when you say the industry must be left to solve that problem for itself?—I do not think Government can step in and prescribe what bonus a tea garden should pay to its garden *sardar*, for instance, for recruiting a coolie. That is a matter entirely for the tea industry to adjust themselves.

F-3247. Would any form of recruiting, whether in the form of employment agencies or other outside agencies, entirely eliminate the question of a bonus or commission being paid to the man who brings in most coolies to a garden?—Possibly it might not, but it would certainly very much reduce it.

F-3248. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you think your Government is in a position to pay two-thirds of any compulsory education scheme?—That is a question of funds; at the present moment the Government would not be in a position to contribute very large sums for that purpose.

F-3249. *Mr. Cliff*: Do they give two-thirds now to a garden that does its own education?—It depends on the class of school on the tea garden. The different kinds of schools are described in the Government memorandum.

F-3250. It seems to be an agreed opinion among the tea garden managers that the contribution given by Government is beggarly?—I am not in a position to say anything about that.

F-3251. *The Chairman*: Could you let us know exactly what Government does contribute, if anything, to any of the schools maintained on the tea gardens?—Yes. I will obtain the information.

F-3252. *The Chairman*: Would you also see if tea gardens have applied for a grant-in-aid and been refused?—Yes, I will have this looked up.

F-3253. *Mr. Ahmed*: Would not technical education dealing with methods of pruning, manuring and so on, be more suitable for children of tea garden workers? —It is quite possible that a certain measure of technical education would be very useful, but that is a matter for the tea industry to decide for itself; it is their labour force and their future potential labour force.

F-3254. But would not Government like to take a part in deciding what kind of education would be suitable for the benefit of the industry?—If the tea industry as a whole shows any inclination to develop education on its tea gardens on those lines, Government will do all it can to assist them.

F-3255. *The Chairman*: I think Mr. Ahmed means practical education. In addition to the information just asked for, if there have been cases of refusal of a grant to schools maintained by the tea gardens, could you give us a summary of the reasons for refusal?—I will obtain that information for you.

F-3256. *Mr. Ahmed*: What proportion do the tea garden workers and their families bear to the total population of the province?

Mr. Cliff: It is about one-seventh?

The witness: I will let you have that information.

F-3257. I understand that in Assam there are no Inspectors of Factories except the Deputy Commissioners and the Superintendents of Police; do you think that is a desirable state of things?—Hitherto we have shared at least one officer with Bengal and attempts have been made during the last 18 months to secure an officer of our own. I think one man if not two were provisionally selected, but eventually they refused appointments as Inspectors of Factories. At the present moment I think we have another man in view who is likely to accept.

F-3258. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You mean you are not offering enough money to induce them to come out?—That is possibly the reason, but I do not know.

F-3259. *Mr. Ahmed*: I suppose the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police are not qualified as far as matters of health and sanitation are concerned?—I agree they are not technically qualified in those subjects.

F-3260. I suppose qualified men are required to do such work?—Certainly; so far as factory inspection is concerned where a certain amount of technical knowledge is more or less essential, I think a whole-time Factory Inspector is required.

F-3261. As far as your Government is concerned, there is nobody to make enquiries in the garden area regarding the health and sanitation of the workers?—That is not quite the case, because if a garden is classed as unhealthy it is inspected automatically by the Civil Surgeon who is in fact at present in charge of the public health of the district.

F-3262. Is that so in all the districts?—Yes, there is a Civil Surgeon in every district. In addition to that, even though the garden may not be classed as unhealthy, if there is anything about the garden which the Deputy Commissioner or the Subdivisional Officer feels requires to be looked into by a professional man, he requests the Civil Surgeon to make a special visit and these special visits are made from time to time.

F-3263. In view of the magnitude of this work and that the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and Civil Surgeons have so many other duties, would you not like to follow the example of other provinces in this respect; for instance, in Bengal we have a Health Officer in every district in addition to the Civil Surgeon, we have in industrial areas Inspector of Factories, and so forth?—The possibility of introducing Public Health Officers in districts has been recently under the consideration of Government, and a scheme was formulated under which I think five appointments were to be made in certain districts experimentally. When this came up before the Finance Committee the other day, the non-official members elected by the Council to that Committee threw out the scheme bacuse they considered that the money which it was proposed to spend on these five District Officers of public health could be more usefully employed elsewhere on other forms of public health work; that was the considered view of the elected members of the Finance Committee.

F-3264. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Were these Public Health Officers intended to be specially for the tea gardens?—No; they were for ordinary district work which might include tea garden work; they were to be designated District Health Officers.

F-3265. *Mr. Ahmed*: Have the Local Boards and District Boards any sanitary inspectors or medical officers to look into conditions in the rural areas?—No.

F-3266. Would your Government favour the appointment of such officers?—The finances of the Assam Government are such that it could not possibly finance a scheme of that dimension at present.

F-3267. In the tea garden areas we have been told that difficulties arise owing to the fact that the only roads are private, there being in many parts apparently no public roads. Have your Government, District Boards and Local Boards taken any steps to deal with that question?—Yes, the question of garden roads came up for consideration a short time ago in consequence of certain questions and resolutions which I think were put and moved in the Assam Council. In 1929 the local Government published a Resolution in which they summarized their views and the policy which they proposed to follow. I can let you have a copy of that Resolution.

The Chairman: Yes please.

F-3268. *Mr. Ahmed*: Have you any *chowkidars, panchayats* or other agencies which can supply you with accurate information as to what happens in the tea garden areas?—No. In the upper districts of Assam we have no *panchayats* or *chowkidars*; they exist only in the district of Sylhet and in the district of Goalpara under the Bengal Chowkidari Act. We have agencies in the rest of Assam which are entrusted with certain analogous duties which are laid down in the Assam Land and Revenue Manual, but their duties are not so extensive as the duties assigned to a *panchayat* or *chowkidar* under the Bengal system. These agencies are called "*gaonburas.*"

F-3269. Would your Government be in favour of setting up a union board?—If you start a *chowkidari, panchayat* and a union board that would involve further taxation and I am inclined to think the Assam Legislative Council would strongly oppose it. In fact, I think on occasion questions have been put, or resolutions moved, suggesting the abolition of the *chowkidari* system where it does exist.

F-3270. *Mr. Cliff*: I wish to draw your attention to what is said in the introduction to the memorandum of the Government of Assam. I think you said education of tea garden workers is a matter for the tea industry itself?—Until the tea industry itself takes some interest in it, it is very difficult for Government to take any effective measures. I think the difficulty is that Government cannot very well

take measures on behalf of tea garden labour alone; it must also take into consideration the other parts of a district; you can hardly expect Government to promote or stimulate the promotion in a certain area of an improved standard of living or education and to leave the adjacent areas untouched; the district and the province have to be treated more or less as a whole.

F-3271. Does that mean that the Government says that the tea industry has a special responsibility to the labour it imports?—As with other employers of labour, I think the educational interests of their employees should be a matter of special concern to the tea garden employers.

F-3272. Do you say it is to the interests of the tea industry to educate its labour force?—Yes. Of course, that again depends on the form of education that is imparted; if it is a useful form of education, I do not think there is any gainsaying that it must be to their interest, but you may find persons who will criticize the form of education which is being imparted in lower primary schools.

F-3273. There are leaders of the tea industry who say that education is a matter for the Government and for the whole of the province and that the industry should not be singled out; but your Government definitely says that "it is the preparation of the ground that at present demands the most attention," and that seems to me to be a correct statement of the position. Whose duty is it to prepare the ground?—I should say it is the duty of Government, of Local Bodies, of employers of labour and in fact of the whole population.

F-3274. Government are encouraging and will ultimately profit by the importation of a very mixed population; is Government taking any steps to secure co-operation between itself and the tea industry in raising the standard of life and educating the tea garden workers?—I am not aware of any special measures that have been taken to raise the standard of life.

F-3275. Would it be an unfair assumption that Government in looking forward to the next decade have no considered policy for dealing with this problem?—No, I do not think that would be exactly fair; I think the policy of Government all along has been to encourage education both for its own sake and as likely to import a stimulus towards a higher standard of life and to continue to develop primary education to the best of its ability, but it has to recognize in the case of these people who are drawn from more or less aboriginal, illiterate and credulous classes that they offer a special problem, and that the education which might be suitable for an ordinary plainsman might not be suitable for this type of person. In the same way very often the form of education which is suitable for a plainsman is not entirely suitable for a hill man who has a different mentality and has different prejudices.

F-3276. Seeing that it is a special problem, the responsibility for dealing with this problem may be said to rest on both the Government and the tea industry?—Yes, I admit that it lies on all.

F-3277. But does it not appear to you that the initiative for taking measures to deal with this problem should be with the Government?—I cannot deny that a certain responsibility does rest on Government.

F-3278. Then what has the Government done to deal with this problem?—There are quite a number of tea garden children who attend lower primary schools outside the tea gardens. We have no separate figures with regard to those. I do not know that anything very special has been done for the labour force beyond what has been done for the population of the district as a whole, and beyond what has been mentioned in the Government memorandum.

F-3279. I understand that you regard the question of wages to be a matter for the industry itself?—Very largely; it is a matter for the industry and the labourers concerned.

F-3280. With regard to recruitment has any consideration been given to the suggestion that a higher standard of wages might attract more labour and a more efficient type of labour?—If I remember rightly, I think that has come up from time to time; I believe the 1906 and the 1921-22 Committees made recommendations which were somewhat on those lines.

F-3281. Is it your opinion that a higher wage standard would result in an improved type of labour and an increased supply of labour?—I think so; an increase in wages would, I believe, be bound to attract more labour.

F-3282. In the Government memorandum it is said that there has been a steady increase in wages since the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921-22, but the figures with which a comparison is made are the figures of wages for 1920-21. If we take the period following upon that Committee, is the increase

in earnings as great as stated here?—As will be seen from the Annual Immigration Reports, I think there has been a small but steady annual increase in the average wage paid to garden labour since 1921-22.

F-3283. This Committee sat in 1921-22, a period which followed the disturbances, in which period there were increases of wages?—There were in a number of cases.

F-3284. But the comparison offered to us may be dealing with 1920-21, a comparison for the earlier period. The phrase "since then" means since the Committee reported. Is that correct?—If you compare the intermediate years and the average wages given in them you will find the same steady increase throughout.

F-3285. On the question of the increased earnings, are you able from your returns to say whether the increased earnings which are recorded over these two months as years go by are due to increased effort on the part of the worker or higher rates of pay?—It is imposible to tell that from the returns.

F-3286. We have been on many gardens and found a considerable proportion of good workers who are obviously under the impression that they are not free. There are certain facts which tend to make them think that they are not free. In one case people are accepting bonuses and putting a thumb print to an agreement which is identical in terms with the old agreement, with one exception and that is with the penal clauses omitted. Then some people do not apply for bonus because they believe that they are under a "*girmit*" as they call it. This Act has been abolished many years ago. Would it cause any trouble or difficulty to the tea industry if steps were taken to make it known clearly to every tea garden worker that he is not bound in any way by agreement and that he is absolutely free to move. I am putting on one side the question of some stamped agreements for 12 months' labour?—I am not in a position to speak on behalf of the tea industry.

Colonel Garbett: On behalf of the tea industry I should like to say that you will be running grave risks.

F-3287. I am putting that to you as a man who has had experience as a Deputy Commissioner. Among managers of gardens there is a good deal of nervousness against any movement which might help to improve the lot of these garden workers. They fear that there will be trouble. Here are a few citizens of the country who are free from a particular form of compulsion. A great number of people are not aware that they are free. In your opinion as a District Commissioner would it cause any trouble if everyone were made aware of their rights and privileges as citizens?—A great deal will depend on the way in which it is done. You are dealing with a credulous, ignorant and unsophisticated type of persons. It would be equally very easy to give them false impression in the other direction and so excite them and upset them.

F-3288. It might be necessary to excite them and upset them if they are to reach a higher standard of life. That may be bad for the industry, but I am thinking at the moment of the tea garden labourer?—I am not quite sure that I understand what you propose to tell them. In the opinion of the Government there is nothing illegal about a purely civil contract. I do not think Government would be in favour of telling a coolie that he was absolutely free even from the possibility of voluntary restraint under the terms of a civil contract.

F-3289. Take the other side. You say that the difficulty about these people is that they are credulous, easily excited and ignorant. On the other hand they are handled by men who have got all the advantages of a highly civilized state. Is not there a great responsibility upon Government and upon the people who employ them to afford them all the protection necessary?—Yes, there is a special responsibility.

F-3290. It does not appear that any steps have been taken by Government to acquaint the people of the fact that they were no longer bound by the provisions of the old Act. They have been treated, as far as one can ascertain, in exactly the same way as educated labour force is treated. Why is it that dealing with a labour force needing special treatment and special protection they are treated in the same way as educated labour force is treated?—In the matter of bringing an Act to the notice of the persons to whom it applies Government have not in any case, so far as I am aware, taken any special measures beyond the usual publication to acquaint them with their provisions. The tea garden labour force is after all very much of the same type as the

inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. There seems to be no particular reason why in the case of tea garden labourers any special measures shoull be taken to acquaint them with any legislative enactments or their results any more than in the case of ordinary villagers. The information of the Government, however, is that this knowledge has filtered through and reached the workers quickly.

F-3291. With regard to the people who are under a special Act the knowledge has not filtered through. If there were an educated labour force who could read the papers and take cognizance of their rights and privileges themselves there would be no complaint. But having regard to a labour force which the Government itself describes as credulous, ignorant and easily excited and therefore needing special protection, surely special steps have got to be taken in a case of that character?—Possibly, but not without great caution.

F-3292. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How are the statistics appearing in the Immigration Labour Reports dealing with wages collected?—Returns are submitted by garden managers to the Deputy Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners submit them to the Commissioner who compiles the divisional average. Each Commissioner submits his Immigration Report annually for his division and the provincial averages, for the purposes of the Government resolution, are compiled in the Secretariat.

F-3293. There is no check on the statement issued to you?—Speaking personally whenever I inspected a tea garden I invariably took with me the returns submitted by the tea garden for the 2 typical months of the year and checked them with reference to the garden books to satisfy myself that they had been correctly prepared and that the returns were accurate. Government have no reason to suppose that other officers do not test them in the same way.

F-3294. Take the instance of figures with regard to family earnings. How can you say from the books whether a particular woman is the wife of a particular man or not in order to have an accurate check of the family earnings?—You have always to trust the man who gathers the information on the spot.

F-3295. You take a total of the number of men, women and children employed and get the figures?—You will find it explained elsewhere in the Government memorandum as to how the family earnings are arrived at. A family is taken to consist of one man, one woman, 3/10 of a working child, 1 non-working child and 2/10 of an adult non-working dependent. It is admittedly an artificial method of arriving at what constitutes a normal family, but if you are to strike an average you must adopt some system of that kind.

F-3296. Would it not be possible for District Officers to check them every year?—No, the District Officer does not visit the gardens oftener than once in 2 years.

F-3297. Have you figures to show whether there has been any actual increase in the rate for *hazira* since 1922?—I could not tell you. I do not think we have any statistics on the point.

F-3298. Or with regard to the unit system?—We have had casual references from time to time as to whether the rates on a particular tea garden have increased or decreased, but we have no general figures for the province as a whole.

F-3299. If we wanted to see whether there has been an increase in the rates of wages whether under the *hazira* or the unit system the Government departments here in Shillong would not be in a position to give us the necessary figures?—No, we would not be in a position to check this from our present returns.

F-3300. In answer to the Chairman you said that things ran fairly smoothly and considerable progress had been made during the last decade and that the present state of affairs was satisfactory?—I was referring to the extent to which garden managers had adopted the recommendations of inspecting officers.

F-3301. Do you think that the present state of affairs in regard to education is satisfactory?—No.

F-3302. You had a resolution passed by the Legislative Council in 1924 recommending that the tea planters should be compelled to open up schools where there are 30 or more children under the age of 14. Why was no effect given to that resolution?—I will look up the papers and let you know.

F-3303. In your memorandum you say: "The managers with a few exceptions do not actively interest themselves in the question, more from the fear of upsetting their labour force than from any antagonism to the principle of the scheme. This policy may be short-sighted, but so long as labour is so scarce, it would be too much to expect employers to risk the loss of labour by any attempt to insist on the education of the children, and little improvement can be expected until the supply of labour increases." Realizing the position that there is antagonism on the part of the employers and there is willingness on the part of the representatives of the people of Assam, I mean the elected representatives of the Legislative Council?—I should like to point out here that the elected representatives of the people are under the present system hardly the representatives of the tea garden population.

F-3304. I shall come to that presently. But the employers are antagonistic to the system of introducing education?—No, there is no special antagonism. I do not think you can read that in the views expressed by Government.

F-3305. Anyhow you will agree with me that they have not done it and do not want to do it, no matter for what reasons. The Council consisting of the representatives of the people of Assam, not necessarily the garden workers, the more honour to them to have suggested certain steps when they do not represent the garden workers. Did the Government compel the tea gardens to introduce this system of education?—I do not think I can go much beyond what Government have stated in their memorandum.

F-3306. Do you consider that this is a satisfactory state of affairs?—I do not entirely. You will find that Government itself admits that the results are disappointing.

F-3307. In the light of the remarks you have made in the introduction to your memorandum, namely, that education is one of the main factors that go to improve the standard of life of the worker has your Government any policy which they intend to put forward in the near future in regard to the improvement of education on the tea gardens?—I have already said that Government recognize its liability not only towards the tea garden labour but towards the entire population. There are many classes of the population which are just as backward, credulous and ignorant as the tea garden labourers. Government is not prepared to hold that any special measures are necessary for tea garden labourers which are not equally necessary for other backward populations under its charge.

F-3308. *The Chairman*: Did not I understand you to say that if the industry itself came forward with a scheme particularly suitable and applicable to the tea garden workers the Government would support it?—I am quite sure it would. I did say so.

F-3309. Quite apart from any general scheme?—Yes.

F-3310. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In the introduction to your memorandum you have stated that "on the contrary the tendency of this labour force too often is to treat with suspicion and resent any change that is introduced, however well intentioned, and their resentment is quickly fanned into violence." Have you any instance of a change for the betterment of the workers introduced on a tea estate which has resulted in violence?—I am not in a position to give any instance at present without looking up the records.

F-3311. Would you agree with me if I put it like this: if better conditions of employment are guaranteed to the workers on the tea estates they would respond to that?—I do not think any exception can be taken to a proposition as general as that.

F-3312. So far as the private roads of the tea estates are concerned has your Government any policy with regard to their use by outsiders?—I shall send the commission a copy of the resolution of the Government on the subject.

F-3313. In the Labour Immigration Report for 1929, page 4, it is stated: "About 200 coolies of Messa Tea Estate went on strike on the 27th May 1929 and marched to Samaguri about 9 miles off. They were taken back to the garden and most of them resumed work. The refractory coolies were bound down to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for one year. Since then there has been no trouble in the garden and all the coolies are working regularly." Is it the policy of your Government to take such action against coolies who leave their work because they are not satisfied with their conditions of work and bind them down to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for a year?—I

think the full facts are not before the Commission at present. If they were bound down to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for one year, there must have been evidence before the Court to show that it was not merely a case of unwillingness to work; they must have been prepared to use violent methods.

F-3314. You know the section and I know the section. It does not refer to any future violence on the part of those who are bound down. It is section 107. If there is any fear on the part of the magistracy that there may be trouble then the section is put into force. You know that it has been used a number of times merely because it has been found advisable to bind down a particular man. Here is a case where the coolies went on a strike. Is section 107 to be used to bring them back to the garden?—I must demur to your suggestion that it has been used for the purpose of dealing with strikes. If the full facts were before you you would probably find that there was a great deal more in it than you knew now.

F-3315. Could you get us the record of that case?—It is probably in the district in which it happened. We may have some special reports in the Secretariat. We may have a copy of the judgment.

F-3316. *The Chairman*: Is that a case in which there is an appeal pending? Would you supply us with a copy of the judgment for further information?—Yes, I will.

F-3317. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: On page 3 of the same report there is reference made to another case: "Two or three coolies of the Namdang Colliery having assaulted a *chowkidar* were sent for by the manager and one was given two strokes with a cane whereupon some thirty of them assaulted and chased him into a shop where he was beaten. Eight were prosecuted under section 146, Indian Penal Code, of whom six were convicted and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment." Was any action taken against the manager for the assault?—I am not in a position to tell you. I have not the records before me now.

F-3318. I suppose if it had been it would have been mentioned in this report?—I am unable to say one way or the other.

F-3319. Take the next but one case: "Some 230 Telenga and Uria coolies of Singri Tea Estate walked into Texpur on the 30th May 1929 and filed a petition before the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, which contained various complaints against the management. The Deputy Commissioner examined the leaders and it appeared to him that the cause of the trouble was the action of the manager in fining some women Re. 1 each for not planting 'pulis' properly. It was also alleged that the manager struck one of the women with a cane. The women and their husbands then refused to go out to work and were joined by others. A section of the armed police was sent out as a precautionary measure. The coolies were persuaded to return to the garden without much difficulty after the Deputy Commissioner had promised to have enquiries made. They also complained about the inadequate pay but this was not the real cause of the trouble. The Assistant Superintendent of Police and subsequently the Superintendent of Police made detailed enquiries and settlement was effected between them." The reason why I refer to this case is this. You have here the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police acting as labour leaders in settling the strike. Does your Government contemplate any better system of settling disputes than this?—I would like you to refer to the answers contained in the Government memorandum, to questions 106 and 107 which give the views of the Assam Government on the point.

F-3320. It is stated that "conditions are changing, and the time may not be far off when it may be necessary to call into being the machinery created by the Trade Disputes Act."?—That is the present opinion of Government.

F-3321. Under the Trade Disputes Act, when any trouble is apprehended, application can be made for a court of enquiry or a board of conciliation, but such court or such board can only be set up either if the Government is willing or if both employers and employees agree to the setting up of such a court or board. You see the difficulty of dealing, under the Trade Disputes Act, with a problem such as we are discussing?—Yes.

F-3332. What is the policy of your Government in the matter?—I am not in a position to say anything beyond what is stated in the paragraph which you have just quoted.

F-3323. Do you think it would help if the roads were thrown open to the public and if outsiders were able to go into the tea estates and get into touch with the workers there in order to organize them on trade union lines?—A good deal would depend on the agent, and whether his intention was to organize a *bona fide* trade union or merely to cause trouble in order to embarrass the management and upset the district generally.

F-3324. Have you any other suggestion to make which would meet the situation, and which would overcome the fact that these gardens are really surrounded by a ring-fence?—I dispute the suggestion that they are surrounded by a ring-fence. The coolies are free to come and go out of the estate, and they do so. They attend the weekly *hats*, where they meet not only other tea garden coolies but members of the general public. They are not enclosed within a ring-fence at all.

F-3325. Perhaps you have not read the Government of India's memorandum which makes almost a similar suggestion. If I am a trade union organizer, and if I am not *persona grata* with the tea garden manager, I can be refused entry on the tea estate, and I can even be refused entry on the private roads which pass through the estate?—Yes, in the same way as a member of the public can be kept from trespassing on a private estate all the world over.

F-3326. Would your Government contemplate taking over these roads under the Land Acquisition Act?—I have already explained that the policy of Government has been set forth in the resolution to which I have referred.

F-3327. *Colonel Russell*: Colonel Murison, what public health staff have you in your Department?—The public health staff in Assam is, I regret to say, very deficient. At present the staff comprises a Director, two Assistant Directors, six temporary *kala-azar* assistant surgeons, 10 municipal health officers, 29 permanent and 10 temporary inspectors and sub-inspectors of vaccination, and 104 temporary *kala-azar* sub-assistant surgeons. In addition, there are 5 epidemic units, each unit consisting of 3 sub-assistant surgeons and 6 disinfectant carriers with the usual menial establishment.

F-3328. You have no district health officers for the different districts of the Province?—No.

F-3329. Have you asked for these officers?—I have pressed the point before Government for the last four or five years.

F-3330. Mr. Laine said that the demand for additional staff had been turned down recently?—It was done not by Government. Government this year has seen its way to finding money for five district health officers. It was put into the list of new schemes for the ensuing year, and placed before the Finance Committee a few days ago at which only four elected members were present. Three were against it and one was in favour of it.

F-3331. Were any of these elected members representatives of the Tea Association?—No.

F-3332. *Colonel Russell*: I take it, therefore, that you have to depend to a very great extent on the Medical Department for carrying out public health work?—The Public Health Department as it exists at present is to all intents and purposes only a skeleton. It requires immediate developing. We are very much behind the times in this Province in the matter of public health.

F-3333. What is your idea as to the organization of such a body?—If we are going to reduce our mortality from acute infectious diseases, we must have a thoroughly efficient and ample staff to deal with epidemics. The organization which I put before the Government four years ago was a second Assistant Director of Public Health (who has since been sanctioned; now we have two), and 8 District Health Officers, and the training of my Vaccination Inspecting Staff for the duties of Rural Sanitary Inspectors. Government considered the question of providing five District Health Officers. I want to train my Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Vaccination as Rural Sanitary Inspectors in the elements of sanitation generally, and to be able also to give inoculations against cholera and so forth. At present I have only 39 such Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors, which number is totally inadequate. I propose that Government shall in due course be in a position to give me 101. I propose to locate each one of these officers somewhere in each Thana Circle (one to each circle), where he will be known and where he will be on the spot to receive reports of any outbreaks of epidemics in his circle, and where he can take immediate steps to deal with them. In addition to these rural sanitary inspectors, I propose to have more mobile epidemic units, at least one in each district. In Sylhet I

propose that there should be two, if not three, such units, as cholera is always prevalent there: at the present time there are over 200 cases and 150 deaths in the week. That is a very deplorable and unnecessary loss of life. This is the staff which I propose as the minimum if we are going to function as an efficient department and bring about satisfactory results for Government.

F-3334. At present you have to depend to a considerable extent on the Civil Surgeon, who has very many other duties to perform?—That is why I advocate the creation of these posts of district health officers.

F-3335. Would you prefer a permanent organization in every district?—Yes, run entirely by the Director of Public Health.

F-3336. What would be the cost of your proposals?—The cost for the whole province, as outlined to Government at that time, was approximately Rs. 1,50,000, that was the ultimate recurring cost.

F-3337. What was the amount turned down by the Finance Committee the other day?—Rupees 21,976.

F-3338. I understand that tea gardens constitute one-seventh of the total population of the province?—Yes.

F-3339. In your proposed reorganization of the Public Health Department, what relation would that department have with the population on the tea gardens?—We shall not interfere in any way with the medical officers in charge of tea gardens, but we shall keep in close touch with them. I am sure that the tea garden management generally, and the Branch of the British Medical Association of Assam, would welcome closer co-ordination and co-operation between Government and the tea gardens. So far we have been able to co-operate to a certain extent. When there are outbreaks of cholera or smallpox, we inform the medical officers on the tea gardens of the fact so that they can take necessary defensive measures against the diseases coming into their garden population. We, on the other hand, get the same information from the tea garden managers.

F-3340. The reason I asked the question is that the acting Director in his memorandum says "The Director of Public Health has no contact with tea gardens."—Officially he has not.

F-3341. You deprecate that?—Very strongly.

F-3342. *The Chairman*: Would the point be met by the creation of a Board of Health and Welfare on which you were represented?—Yes, anything which would bring us closer together.

F-3343. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do the tea garden medical officers, although they they have no health diploma, respond to suggestions?—They are very amenable to reason. I have never had any difficulty with them at all. They have generally acted up to my suggestions.

F-3344. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to organization and administration, would you favour treating the tea industry as a unit, or would you prefer that the matter should be dealt with in districts, through the organization which you have for the whole Province?—It would be better if it were done through districts because things which are applicable in one area may not be suitable in another. I think that if the suggested Board was not too large it would work with much greater efficiency.

F-3345. *The Chairman*: Do you think you might lose some of the special interest and power of the tea industry?—I do not think the tea gardens would lose anything by it. They have everything to gain by it. Cordial assistance and help to one another would make for greater efficiency.

F-3346. *Colonel Russell*: Have you any Public Health Act in the province?—No.

F-3347. Have you legislation of any kind dealing with public health?—Under the Assam Municipal Act there are certain clauses which deal with public health.

F-3348. Have you any such clauses in the Local Boards Act?—There are certain Public Health provisions in the Local Self-Government Act of Assam.

F-3349. Do you not think there should be some legislation on these lines?—Yes. I suggested it to the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

F-3350. If legislation was brought into force dealing with public health in local board areas, would you make it applicable to the tea gardens in the

districts concerned?—I think so, but it would be a matter which would have to be gone into because the subjects would be very large and varied. Any such legislation would have to be developed along such lines as would be acceptable.

F-3351. Are any of your staff trained in anti-malarial work?—Both my Assistant Directors of Public Health have attended courses on malaria, and have passed the necessary examinations.

F-3352. Do you envisage at any time a special anti-malarial organization for dealing definitely with anti-malarial work in the Province?—When the finances of the Province will permit, perhaps something may be done. We could carry on research work into malaria at the present time which would not require very much in the way of money, but for any large organized anti-malarial compaign in the province much money would be required.

F-3353. We have been told on more than one occasion that when anti-malarial recommendations have been made they have not resulted in very much improvement. One manager told us that if he had spent the money on the lines which had been suggested to him by an anti-malarial expert, it would have been thrown away?—I understand that a certain amount of anti-malarial work necessitating a considerable expenditure of money has been done in certain gardens in Assam, and as far as I know, the results obtained have not been commensurate with the amount of money which has been spent. They have gone about it on the wrong lines. Conditions that prevail in Malay are totally different from those which prevail in Assam.

F-3354. For the Province of Assam you require an expert anti-malarial staff?—We require a wholetime malariologist.

F-3355. During recent years your biggest problem has been *kala-azar*?—It has loomed prominently and we have carried out an extensive campaign, and Government have spent money handsomely.

F-3356. Has the whole cost of this *kala-azar* work been borne by Government?—Yes, entirely. In one year we treated nearly 70,000 patients. That number has now been reduced to under 20,000.

F-3357. We have been told that cholera is endemic in Assam?—I would not say that it is endemic, but we have always got it with us. It is chiefly due to people drinking from contaminated water channels into which poor people frequently throw their dead, to eating over-ripe fruit, and so forth.

F-3358. Is there much of it occurring on tea gardens?—Generally not, because the moment it breaks out prompt precautionary measures are taken by the management.

F-3359. On some of the gardens we have visited we have seen a considerable amount of hookworm. The Government memorandum says "Dr. Jameson is of opinion that hookworm is mostly contracted on the garden,"—I have not had the opportunity of studying that question, but the opinion generally held is that it is prevalent in tea gardens and is contracted through the soil.

F-3360. The memorandum also says that some conservancy system is required?—A good deal has been done on tea gardens in that connection. Special precautions for the provisions of *aqua* privies and septic tanks, and so forth, have been taken.

F-3361. Do you think that coolies generally would use latrines if they were provided?—They will have to be taught. In some gardens in spite of what has been done, the management has had difficulties in that connection.

F-3362. If there was a septic tank system in the lines of an estate, and that was provided with a flush-out and so on, and kept properly clean, do you think the coolies would use it?—I think they could be induced to use it, ultimately.

F-3363. It is laid down that a garden can only be labelled unhealthy if the death rate is 7 per cent., i.e., 70 per thousand. Do you consider that figure unduly high? Would you be in favour of reducing it to, say, 4 per cent.?—Yes, I think it could be reduced.

F-3364. Are you doing any child welfare work in the province?—A certain amount.

F-3365. Do you think there would be any difficulty in inducing tea estate managers to develop that kind of work on their estates?—No. Provided it was organized on proper lines, I think they would welcome it.

F-3366. Do you think there would be any difficulty in getting suitable women to do health visitor work?—I should not think so.

F-3367. Has the Government any proposal for the training of health visitors?—They train a certain number of *dais*. That is done through the Medical Department.

F-3368. The Government have a scheme for the training of *dais*?—Yes.

F-3369. Would you be in favour of the development of a health visitors' scheme?—Yes.

F-3370. Would there be any difficulty in appointing one or two lady medical officers for supervising that work?—If the whole maternity and child welfare work on tea gardens was organized on good lines I am sure that the tea management generally in the province would welcome a form of provision of that kind.

F-3371. Under present arrangements, are you an Inspector of Factories on tea gardens?—No. The official Inspectors of Factories are the Civil Surgeon and the Deputy Commissioner. All unhealthy estates in a district are inspected once by the Civil Surgeon and thereafter annually by the Deputy Commissioners.

F-3372. Have you any official power to go into any garden you like and inspect it?—No. I go there by invitation and at the request of the manager of the garden.

F-3373. Would it not be advisable for you to be an official Inspector?—I do not anticipate any difficulty if I was.

F-3374. Has the suggestion ever been made?—Not to my knowledge.

F-3375. We visited the hospital at Gauhati for the accommodation of coolies coming to and going back from the gardens. I understand that that hospital is financed half by the Government of India and half by the Tea Districts Association. When I inspected it I found that a very considerable proportion of the patients came from the municipality and from local boards? —Probably they were people living in rural areas who had been taken ill within municipal limits. The municipality pays for each patient.

F-3376. Who gets the receipts?—The Government of India.

F-3377. Do you have any power to inspect this hospital?—Yes. That hospital is directly under me.

F-3378. *Rev. Saikia*: Do the parents of children on tea estates send their children to school on their own initiative or do you think persuasion is necessary?—(*Mr. Laine*) Only a very small proportion of the coolies willingly send their children to school. They will only do so if a certain amount of pressure is applied.

F-3379. We know that the earnings of a child go to swell the family earnings. Do you think it possible to supplement the earnings of the parents during the time their children are at school?—The matter of compensating the parents for a possible loss in their earnings through sending their children to school is one for the tea industry to consider.

Colonel Garbett: On one of my estates we found that the children were not attending schools in the numbers we desired. We therefore tried a system of sending them to school for an hour during their working time, for which period they were paid. I am sorry to say that the experiment failed after a few months.

F-3380. *Rev. Saikia*: Cannot the small children on the tea gardens be compelled to go to school?—I think it would be a difficult proposition.

F-3381. Do the gardens supply good schools for the children with properly trained masters?—The practice varies a good deal. Some gardens have started good schools with trained masters. On the other hand I have seen one or two tea gardens where the schools were poorly staffed. Where the manager has taken a continuous interest in the matter some measure of success has been achieved.

F-3382. *Miss Power*: In the memorandum of the Government of Assam it is stated, dealing with the question of maternity benefit, "if legislation is required, the utmost that need be enacted would be the fixing of a minimum benefit, the utmost discretion being allowed to the local Government to prescribe by rule or executive order the estates to which it should apply and the manner in which it should be enforced." Would your Government be in favour of a scheme of compulsory maternity benefits for tea gardens in order to bring all gardens up to a uniform level?—That question has already been dealt with in another portion of

the memorandum. There are very few gardens indeed in which substantial maternity benefits are not now being given.

F-3383. What about the exceptions?—I admit that, if there were legislation empowering Government to apply some form of compulsion, it would remedy those particular cases which are now outside the general scheme.

F-3384. Both as to the extent of the benefit and the amount of time that the woman could remain off work?—Yes.

F-3385. The memorandum states that the Government was against the Bill, because the apprehension was freely expressed that such an enactment might result in a reduction of the generous maternity benefits now enjoyed to the minimum which would be prescribed by law. That is an argument which has been brought forward almost universally in respect, for instance, of the fixing of minimum rates of wages, namely, that it would reduce the earnings of all workers to the minimum, but that argument has been proved, in every country concerned to have no foundation. Have you any serious reason to think that those tea garden managers who have found it economically profitable to pay a generous maternity benefit, would reduce it because there was an actual minimum fixed by law?—Those who had found it economically profitable to pay generous maternity benefit would no doubt continue to do so even though legislation might fix a lower minimum benefit.

F-3386. Is not the whole idea behind the present scheme of maternity benefits that it is economically profitable?—That is so. There are cases, however, in which possibly some short-sighted concerns might take advantage of the minimum prescribed by law, and reduce their present benefits.

F-3387. If this were so, such cases would be offset by the fact that the minimum would be enforced on all gardens?—Yes.

F-3388. If the matter came up again, have you any reason to believe that the Government would revise its attitude?—I think the Government will be prepared to give this matter very serious consideration and to see whether it will not be possible to devise some means of roping in those gardens which are now outside these schemes and which do not give maternity benefits.

F-3389. Do you not think that there should be some compulsion exercised on tea garden managers to take steps to notify the relations of recruited labourers when deaths take place?—Yes, I do.

F-3390. There is also the even more important question of orphans. Where both the parents die, I understand that the gardens have arrangements whereby they bring up those orphans as potential workers. No steps are taken to find out whether those children might not be returned to their relations in the villages from which their parents were originally recruited. Do you not think there should be a legal obligation on the managers to ascertain whether the relations of the children desire their return to their villages?—I certainly think that more steps should be taken than are now taken to enable coolies to correspond at more regular intervals with the homes from which they come. That would cover the case of the intimation of any deaths to which you have referred.

F-3391. Do you think that an orphan child should necessarily be obliged to become a tea garden coolie because its parents happened to have died on the tea garden?—No, but it is quite possible that there may be no one in the children's villages who would be willing to undertake the responsibility of educating them and bringing them up.

F-3392. But do you not think that steps should be taken to ascertain whether that is the position or not?—Government would raise no objection to an arrangement of that kind under which a tea garden manager should make some enquiry as to whether there is anybody in the village from which the parents of the children came who would be willing and able to take charge of them and look after them.

F-3393. The memorandum also states: "It must be remembered that in Assam the demand for labour exceeds the supply and where such a condition exists, wages generally will be comparatively high." Would you say that that rule applied in the case of the illiterate and often primitive garden coolie who is quite unconscious of any connection between his economic value and his scarcity, and who is quite incapable of bargaining with his employer as to his industrial value?—If you take into consideration the fact that wages here are not only in the form of cash, but in the form of other benefits received, when labour is scarce the wages will necessarily be comparatively high.

F-3394. Would you say that the garden coolie is being paid at a comparatively high rate because of his scarcity?—I think he is being paid a very decent wage. That is shown by the fact that from many of the surrounding villages labour comes willingly into the gardens. It would not do so if the rates paid were utterly inadequate.

F-3395. They come willingly, but they have no real knowledge of the fact that they have an increased bargaining power because of their scarcity?—They do not think about it, I agree.

F-3396. They do not know the implication between scarcity of labour and bargaining power?—No.

F-3397. The economic truth of that statement lies only where there is a reasonable equality in education between the employer and the employee?—I do not think the mentality of the coolie has much to do with it. The question is whether, in a district where there is a comparative scarcity of labour, wages will not necessarily be above the minimum economic level.

F-3398. Has it ever been known that a bunch of coolies recruited to a garden have actually bargained with the employer as to the rate that should be paid to them because of the relative scarcity of labour on that particular garden?—I have no information on that point, but coolies have been brought experimentally to Assam from recruiting districts by garden managements in order that they might be able to look round and see what the life is like and the kind of pay they get. If they have been satisfied they go back and bring their families. I have known of specific instances in which coolies who have been brought up to Assam under those conditions have gone back and brought their families here. The presumption must be that they were satisfied with the conditions as they found them on the estate.

F-3399. Do you not feel that, on the whole, it would be advisable to have one or more inspectors to specialize on tea garden inspection?—It may become necessary, because the District Officers' and Subdivisional Officers' work is increasing year by year.

F-3400. Is there not a certain embarrassment to a District Magistrate between his dual capacity as a District Magistrate and an Inspector of gardens?—There is at times, but it is embarrassment which is felt in other spheres also.

F-3401. If you were able to have such specialized officers, how many do you think you would require for adequate inspection of the gardens—one in each valley?—That point would require a good deal of consideration.

F-3402. How does the salary of the one Factory Inspector for Assam, for which you are advertising, compare with that of the Bengal officer out-housed at Jalpaiguri?—I have no information, but I will let you know that later.

F-3403. Will you be able to tell us how much ground he would have to cover as compared with the Jalpaiguri officer?—I do not know anything about the latter officer.

F-3404. It has been stated in the Government evidence that no effort has been made on any tea garden to establish any form of adult education. Would the Director of Public Instruction be able to supply any manager, who wanted to inaugurate classes of that kind, instructions as to the best method for carrying them on?—I am quite sure that the Director of Public Instruction would give such advice to the best of his ability.

F-3405. It would have to be personal advice? There are no pamphlets issued on the subject?—I do not think there are any pamphlets of that kind.

F-3406. *Mr. Clow*: Will you refer to the letter of February 1929 to the Government of India on the revision of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act. The effect of the proposal contained therein would be practically to give the employers security against enticement, would it not?—I think that would be one of the effects—one of the intentions anyhow.

F-3407. Do you not think that would be fraught with considerable danger?—It is a very difficult subject. I am hardly qualified to express an opinion on the question of the desirability of this or that form of legislation.

F-3408. Some of us have got the impression already that the labourers on some tea estates generally are not quite as free as we should like to see. There is not that free operation of demand and supply to which your memorandum alludes elsewhere. Would not this proposal have the effect of strengthening the employer as against the employee?—I think this point is one for its further consideration from that point of view.

F-3409. As regards the local Government's letter on the Workmen's Compensation Act, it is suggested that any relative who proves that he or she was actually dependent should be added to the definition of "dependent." In other words, that would be altering the persons entitled to claim compensation from "relatives" to actual dependents?—The idea is that this is a matter in which the Commissioner might very well be allowed some discretion in interpreting the provisions as to whom compensation should be paid.

F-3410. If you made this alteration, would it not be only fair to the employer that persons who were not actually dependent should be excluded? Suppose at present the deceased leaves a single relative coming within the category mentioned in the Act. That relative may not be actually dependent. Under the Act as it at present stands, compensation must be paid to that relative in full. In other words, it goes on the principle of paying compensation to relatives and not to dependents. You propose to add dependents. Is it not rather questionable to add dependents and leave in relatives who are not dependents?—I do not think the wording of the section has been examined from that point of view.

F-3411. I take it that if tea gardens are included within the scope of the Act, although a very large number of persons will be protected, the number of additional cases will probably be very small?—I agree.

F-3412. Do you consider there is much excessive drinking on tea gardens?—There is a great deal.

F-3413. Looking through the Excise Manual, I came across a somewhat curious rule by which prosecutions in respect of the possession of *pachwai* were not to be instituted in gardens without the consent of the manager of the garden?—I believe there is an executive instruction to that effect.

F-3414. Is the idea underlying that that a manager can be trusted to see that his coolies do not possess any excessive amount of *pachwai*?—The idea is to prevent the letting loose on tea gardens of excise subordinates, who might upset the whole labour force and precipitate a riot which it would be left for the Government to deal with afterwards.

F-3415. I take it that this rule would prevent even the Deputy Commissioner from instituting a prosecution unless the manager consented?—That is not the idea. What generally happens is when it comes to the attention of the Deputy Commissioner that illegal practices are being carried on in tea gardens, the Deputy Commissioner has to arrange for a raid to be made in consultation with, and in conjunction with, the garden manager in such a way as not to upset the labour force more than need be. That is the intention of the instruction. It does not mean that no prosecution is to be instituted without the consent of the manager. I am sure that is not either the wording or the intention of the instruction.

F-3416. The wording is "In the case of coolies resident on tea gardens, prosecutions in respect of *pachwai* should not be instituted for possession above the legal maximum except at the request of the manager of the tea estate?"—*Pachwai* brewing has hitherto been dealt with in a class by itself, in the same way as in the hill districts *pachwai* brewing is freely allowed.

F-3417. In other words, the law is not in conformity with what the Government regard as reasonable?—For various reasons it has hitherto been held inadvisable to interfere with that particular form of drink.

F-3418. In what parts of the province is there a tenancy law giving coolies rights over land which they have cultivated for a specified period?—There is no tenancy law proper in the Upper Assam districts. There is an antiquated Tenancy Act in force in Sylhet and a Tenancy Act has recently been passed for Goalpara.

F-3419. Do you agree with the view expressed by some managers that if they offer higher rates of pay they will not get any more work done; that the coolie works to a fixed amount of money and cannot be induced to earn more?—I think there is something in that. It has been shown by experience in the past that when there has been an increase in the rate of wages, in many cases the coolie has not been better off but has simply worked for a shorter time. He works enough just to earn sufficient to keep himself going and to have a little over for his modest extra needs.

F-3420. If that were generally true it would be impossible to raise wages apart from a depreciation of the currency; it would be impossible to raise real wages?—I do not say it is generally true, but it is true in a number of cases.

F-3421. *The Chairman*: In some cases it has been admitted to have had a temporary effect, which has worn off after a short time?—I think that has been the case in some instances.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. F. C. KING, I.C.S., Chairman, Assam Labour Board.

F-3422. *The Chairman*: I understand that you are the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board which is an appointment in the hands of the Government of India; is that so?—**Yes.**

F-3423. Since when have you held that post?—Since April 1928.

F-3424. And previously had you any experience of the conditions in Assam?—No.

F-3425. What were your duties prior to that?—I was the Deputy Commissioner at Sambalpur in Bihar and Orissa.

F-3426. Then you had experience of the recruiting district from the other end?—Yes, for many years.

F-3427. For how many years?—I was first posted to a recruiting district as a subdivisional officer of Gumla in the Ranchi district in 1914, and I spent four years there. I went back in a judicial capacity to Ranchi for a short time; I was for 2½ years in Sambalpur. Altogether, I have been in the districts where a good deal of recruiting goes on for 6½ years.

F-3428. Did you have an opportunity of coming into close contact with the actual recruits or potential recruits for Assam?—I did.

F-3429. And you feel that you came to know fairly well the reasons which led them to come or not to come, as the case may be, to the tea gardens?—I have got a good idea.

F-3430. For the last year and nine months you have been the Chairman of the Labour Board?—Yes.

F-3431. Would you tell me exactly how your duties are carried out in that respect? You are a full-time officer, I suppose, and you have no other duties?—No.

F-3432. And the Board, apart from yourself, consists of?—Fifteen representatives of the tea industry.

F-3433. How often does the Board meet?—Twice a year normally, in March and September.

F-3434. How is the work actually carried out with such a small number of meetings?—There is an executive committee which is consulted if any matter arises on which their advice is needed, and if any member of the executive committee considers that the matter should be referred to the whole Board that is done very often by correspondence and circulating papers.

F-3435. Where does the Board meet?—It always has met at Calcutta, but it may meet anywhere if summoned.

F-3436. Your colleagues on the Board are representatives of the Tea Association?—There are 8 representatives of the agency houses representing the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, and the London branch, and there are four representatives of the Assam Valley Branch and 3 of the Surma Valley Branch. The representatives from the Assam and Surma Valleys represent the planters, and the Calcutta representatives represent the agency houses.

F-3437. The duties of the Board are solely confined to the supervision of recruiting?—Yes.

F-3438. You have nothing whatever to do with the condition of the garden workers once they are delivered on to the plantations?—No.

F-3439. I suppose your colleagues all being men who have many other duties to carry, it is only occasionally that you meet them?—Yes.

F-3440. For the most part you are working entirely alone?—Yes.

F-3441. Have you a staff of clerks?—I have got two clerks and a stenographer. I have also three supervisors.

F-3442. Are the supervisors under your orders and do they inspect local agents?—Yes.

F-3443. Where are they stationed?—One is stationed at Ranchi, one at Raipur and one at Waltair.

F-3444. Your own headquarters lie in Calcutta?—**Yes.**

F-3445. How frequently do you yourself travel about the recruiting areas?—I inspect practically every local agency at least once, and I pay about two visits to Assam a year.

F-3446. Can you tell me the total annual cost of the Board?—It is just under Rs. 1½ lakhs.

F-3447. In your memorandum you recount the advantages of the tea garden workers' life and you say "...it will not occasion surprise to find that the labour force is on the whole well off, happy and contented." On what did you base that opinion?—I based it on my visits to the tea gardens.

F-3448. Then you do visit the tea gardens?—As I have already explained, I go about twice or three times a year to Assam. It is not part of my duty, but it has been the practice I follow.

F-3449. Although your official duties are merely the supervision of recruitment, you do make it a practice of visiting the gardens to see what the conditions are?—Yes, and to consult managers.

F-3450. In your memorandum there is a phrase I do not quite understand. You say "The abolition of restrictive labour rules, which is now under contemplation by the tea industry, will contribute further to the progress of the coolie." What is the abolition that you are speaking of there?—At the time when I was writing this memorandum the industry, I understood, were considering the abolition or modification of their existing labour rules. I have no information what progress has been made since then.

F-3451. Then you say that short-term recruitment has proved remarkably successful in Ranchi district. Are you speaking there merely because of the numbers who have been taken under that, 6, 9 and 12 months' system?—Yes.

F-3452. You do not know how far it has been economical?—I do not imply that I consider it an economical system at all.

F-3453. You tell us that the high commission paid by managers to *sardars* has brought into existence a plentiful supply of petty professional recruiters in the guise of garden *sardars*. We have ourselves come across one or two cases of that kind, but your experience would appear to go further. To what extent do you think there are men who are making it a profession and who go free?—I think in some districts there are a considerable number. In a district like Ranchi, which is an old recruiting field of the industry, I do not think there are very many, but I find that in the Central Provinces and in the United Provinces they are more frequent.

F-3454. Men who go on changing from garden to garden and getting sent down after a few weeks; is that the practice?—Yes, and who employ *arkattis* to procure coolies for them.

F-3455. *Colonel Garbett*: Have you any figures to show how many professional recruiters there are?—No.

F-3456. You are making a general statement?—Yes; some have come to my notice.

F-3457. *The Chairman*: I see you say here that you frequently find instances of garden *sardars* being sent down to recruit after spending a few days on the garden?—Yes.

F-3458. *Colonel Garbett*: Do you consider it wrong to do that?—I think a few days is probably wrong because it would indicate, I think, that he had come up with the promise that he would be sent down again. I know that it is sometimes said that these men come up to see the gardens before recruiting their own relations, and that may be an explanation in a number of cases.

F-3459. The local agencies may ask for the quick return of the *sardar*?—Yes. The *sardar* may go up simply with a view to inspect the conditions in the gardens before he decides to take up his own family.

F-3460. *The Chairman*: Why inspecting the conditions, because to be a *sardar* he must have already worked on the garden?—He comes up as a coolie and goes down as a *sardar* after a few days.

F-3461. *Mr. Clow*: Whatever the merits of the system may be, that was not what the Act contemplated?—No.

Colonel Garbett: The new coolie makes most recruiting.

F-3462. *The Chairman*: I suppose what happens is this: If a new worker goes up and says "Well, I have several relations and I can bring them up," he gets round the manager and gets another free trip whether or not he turns up again to that garden?—Yes.

F-3463. He may get himself recruited by another *sardar* to another garden?—That is not at all unheard of.

F-3464. These gentlemen are not quite innocent as some people would make out?—No; the very clever ones generally become known.

F-3465. Anyhow the effect of your examination of the present system is that you speak of the breakdown of the *sardari* system, which is inadequate to the needs of the industry, and you recommend for our consideration a proposal that there should be a more elastic system. And I think that system may be summed up by saying that although you would not wipe out the *sardari* system at one blow, you would set up side by side with it a system which would probably reduce the *sardari* system to perhaps a half or one-third of what it is now as the new system was successful?—I think that the scope for *sardari* recruitment is very limited, as it is supposed to be confined to acquaintances and relatives of the *sardar*. That is the original idea; it is not in the law, but that was the idea put forward at the time the *sardari* recruitment ousted the contractor system.

F-3466. You would suggest that there should be responsible accredited agents allowed to recruit, but under the same control and veto as the *sardars* are at the present time?—I would not exactly say under the same control and veto as the *sardars* are; I would propose modifications in control.

F-3467. You would allow more liberty?—Yes.

F-3468. We have it somewhere that these recruiting agents should be required to deposit a fairly substantial security for good behaviour. Is that contained in your note?—No.

F-3469. But I take it that your suggestion is that he should be a man with some position and responsibility in the area in which he recruited?—I do not think you should lay that down. I would leave the employer absolutely free to choose his own agent, and the only restriction I would suggest would be that if this agent misbehaves and proves an undesirable person, the District Magistrate should have power to prohibit further recruitment by him.

F-3470. We have been considering a suggestion that possibly one of the most important solutions of the present trouble would be a guaranteed repatriation at the end of a reasonable period, let us say three years, of the tea garden worker if on any ground he found the life unsuitable to himself or he desired not to settle permanently in Assam. Will that not remove many of the prejudices which still exist against going into Assam and would in itself substantially increase the flow of recruits so that much more careful selection would be made in the recruiting areas? Have you anything to say about a suggestion of that kind?—I think that anything which would ensure that the coolie visited his home more frequently would popularize recruitment, but at the same time I do not think that there should be any legislation on the subject of repatriation and that any fixed term for repatriation should be laid down. I have two reasons for that: In the first place, I think that it should be a voluntary agreement between the employer and his labour, such as exists in short-term recruitment and in Bombay recruitment, and it has been found that the employer can be thoroughly trusted to honour these agreements. I think it would be a mistake for the State to interfere by legislation or any compulsory system, as the ideal is to get away as far as possible from State interference and leave the problem to settle itself. Secondly, I fear that if any fixed term were laid down for repatriation, the coolie, who is a very ignorant person, might feel that he was bound for that term and that he would not consider himself so free to go and come as if there were no term fixed. I would prefer to see the coolie allowed to provide for his own repatriation if the employer did not enter into a voluntary agreement, and his wages should be calculated on the scale which would enable him to save the cost of repatriation and a little over after a fixed period.

F-3471. You mean that if it were made plain to the coolie in the depôt when he was recruited, as it presumably would have been by the *sardar* who recruited him, that he would be repatriated at the garden expense if he so desired not later than at the end of three years, that would lead him to think that he was bound for three years?—I think it would be quite possible that he would consider that he entered into a contract for three years.

F-3472. Even if during that period he had himself gone down as a *sardar* on leave?—Yes, I think so.

F-3473. But you are no doubt aware the feeling still remains in many of the recruiting areas that when a man goes to Assam he is gone for ever?—It certainly did exist very strongly, but I think it is dying away.

F-3474. Your further recommendation is one based on the Ceylon system that instead of employers recruiting for individual gardens or groups of gardens under one management, the whole of the recruiting for Assam should be pooled.....?—The expenses should be pooled.

F-3475. But would you allow a recruit to say "I will go to a particular garden, not to any other"?—Certainly. What I intend to convey by my proposal is that the employer's own recruiter will recruit the men for his own garden.

F-3476. Then your only suggestion in that respect is the pooling of the expenses so as to avoid competition in fixing higher rates of commission to the *sardars*?—That is my idea.

F-3477. Under this system that you suggest, would the Tea Districts Labour Association be still required to exist?—Yes. The system which I have suggested does not involve taking over recruitment at all; the recruitment would have to be carried on by the Tea Districts Labour Association or whatever other organization the employers may prefer to have, but I should like to see the forwarding done by the employers' agency. It is only on condition that the Tea Districts Labour Association or other employers' association refuses to forward that I have made an alternative suggestion that forwarding should be undertaken by an Immigration Fund Committee. So that the only function which I would take away from the Tea Districts Labour Association would be the registration of coolies.

F-3478. With whom would you entrust that?—I would entrust it to the staff of official registering officers.

F-3479. When you say "official," do you mean Government?—Probably it would be Government.

F-3480. The Local Government or the Central Government?—The Central Government.

F-3481. Would that be an additional expense to the total on recruitment?—I expect it would be. It would depend on what view the Central Government took. The expenses have to be provided somehow, and I imagine that they would be provided by registration fees or some such charge.

F-3482. On what reason do you recommend that transfer of registration?—The tea industry have themselves asked for the control of recruitment, and I consider that some form of supervision is desirable. I consider that my system of registration by a cadre of official registering officers would enable control over recruitment to be reduced to the minimum, and it is with this end in view that I propose that registration should be handed over to official registering officers specially appointed for the purpose. If any form of official control is to be maintained, the control should be in direct touch with what is going on in the recruiting field. To ensure this, registration must be done by officials and not by employers' agents. Registration is the stage at which recruiting abuses come to light, and the only simple and direct way of ensuring that the controlling authority will know what is going on is that registration should be in the hands of officers working under the controller or controlling body. If registering officers had power to reject recruits on the ground of undue influence, fraud, misrepresentation or coercion in their recruitment, practically no further check would be required and recruitment would be practically free. In my opinion, registration should take place in the recruiting districts and not in Assam. It may be asked why should registration be taken out of the hands of the Tea Districts Labour Association and similar associations. So long as the Assam Labour Board system continues, registration could be done by local agents as though local agents are not servants of the Labour Board, which is the controlling authority; they are *de facto* subordinate to it, inasmuch as the Board is a body representative of the employers for whom the local agents work. If, as I understand, the Indian Tea Association proposes, the Assam Labour Board is abolished and if in consequence an official authority is set up to take its place, the local agents would not be subordinate to the official authority; their real loyalty would be to their employers. Even under the Assam Labour Board system I do not consider the system of registration by local agents who are also concerned in recruitment is satisfactory. The local agents are expected by the employers to do all they can to see that the employers get labourers and at the same time they are required by law to act as a check

on their employers for the District Magistrate. It is an unnatural position, and it is only due to constant supervision that it can be maintained. I would like to see local agents relieved from such an incongruous position and left free to devote themselves whole-heartedly to the promotion of recruitment for their employers instead of spending more than half their time checking it. My system would not involve the abolition of the Tea Districts Labour Association. It would merely free their local agents for their proper work, namely, promotion of recruitment, and would leave recruitment, forwarding, etc., still in the hands of the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-3483. Your complaint, I understand, is that they have in one sense to act in the interests of their employers and in the other sense they are *quasi*-public officials for certain public duties imposed upon them?—Yes. It would be much preferable if that duty could be performed by real public officials.

F-3484. Do you think that that accounts for some small number of cases one hears of quite unsuitable persons getting into the gardens and having to be sent back?—I have no complaints to make against local agents.

F-3485. *Colonel Garbett:* Referring to the Assam Labour Board, how was it, first of all, called into being? Was it not constituted at the express wish of the tea industry to help them to clear up the abuses that were being made after the Act ceased?—Yes.

F-3486. Would you kindly let us know what type of labourer you consider suitable for tea gardens? Do you think anybody would do?—I do not think so. I think that the agricultural type of labourer is required and that the aboriginal agriculturist is the best.

F-3487. But if the other types are also suitable for tea gardens, do you think the gardens would be able to get all the labour they require if they could take everybody?—I think that if they took every one they would have much less difficulty than they have, but I think they would get a lot of unsuitable labour.

F-3488. Because the industrial class of labour is not suitable to the Assam tea gardens, therefore perhaps that may be counted as one of the reasons why we are short of labour?—Some types of industrial labour are not suited while certain types are suited. Most industries take the same kind of labourer as you take, but they take other types too which are not suitable to you You are more particular about the type of labour you recruit than most industries are.

F-3489. We want an agriculturist and a man who is likely to settle down in Assam?—Yes.

F-3490. In your memorandum you speak of establishment of public employment agencies for recruitment of labour for Assam. Do you think that such a system would work well?—It is impossible to say without having seen it in action whether it would work, but I certainly think that it is very well worth trying.

F-3491. *The Chairman:* Do you mean to set up public recruiting agencies manned by civil servants as an experiment?—No. I mean by employment agency an office where any one seeking work could be put into touch with an employer who needs labour.

F-3492. If the experiment failed would they not all require compensation for loss of office?—I suppose they would unless they were temporarily employed. By "experiment" I mean there should be selected areas where it would be started to see how it would work.

F-3493. You would try in one area where there is naturally a large field for recruitment, like Ranchi?—I do not wish to specify any particular place, but I would try in one or more places.

F-3494. *Colonel Garbett:* Do you consider the local agents appointed under the Act have proved trustworthy and efficient? In the event of all restrictions being withdrawn, would local Governments be willing to leave the work of supervising recruitment to them?—I cannot answer for the local Governments.

F-3495. Do you not think that the local Governments would be willing to trust the local agents?—I cannot say whether they would be willing or not.

F-3496. In your experience you find the local agents to be trustworthy and efficient?—Yes.

F-3497. You do not know whether local Governments would trust them with the work of supervising recruitment?—No.

F-3498. You have never discussed with them?—I am not in a position to express an opinion.

F-3499. Do you attribute the high cost of recruitment to the restrictions imposed by Act VI?—Yes, undoubtedly that is a contributory factor.

F-3500. You consider that the abolition of the present restrictions would tend to promote a freer flow of labour?—Yes, certainly.

F-3501. You say that the monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association could not be maintained without legal backing and that it does not exist in Dooars recruitment nor in recruitment for Assam from Bombay. Do you not think that the extent of the monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association in the case of Dooars recruitment is practically the same as in the case of Assam? —I do not consider it is.

F-3502. Your statement that it does not exist in Bombay, I am informed, is not quite correct?—Until very recently there were other agencies but I am told that they have gone out of the field; I am not certain. Bombay is not under me I should explain; Act VI does not apply to Bombay.

F-3503. By whom is your salary paid?—Rupees 500 is paid by the Government of India and the remainder is paid by the Assam Labour Board from the cess they levy on *sardars* and emigrants.

F-3504. *Mr. Clow:* The Government of India also bear charges for pension and leave?—Yes.

F-3505. *The Chairman:* How are your travelling expenses met?—Out of the Assam Labour Board fund.

F-3506. *Colonel Garbett:* Do you consider that the systems under which recruitment is done for Ceylon and Malay are superior to that of Assam? Can you tell us about the complete monopoly on which these systems are based in contrast with the partial monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association?—What do you mean by the complete monopoly on which these systems are based?

F-3507. You appear to consider that the systems of Ceylon and Malay recruitment are superior to that of Assam?—I think each recruiter gets more recruits and the cost of recruitment is much lower. In these two respects I certainly think that the systems are superior.

F-3508. They are based on a system of monopoly, I might say, are they not, to which you object in the case of Assam?—No, but there is complete official control in both those cases.

F-3509. Was not the present system started by the planters themselves, in the first instance? Then afterwards Government found it working very smoothly and they gave it an official status as it were?—I think the Government found it working quite the contrary; they took it over and set it right.

F-3510. Is that so?—That is my impression.

F-3511. I think that is not quite correct from the information that I gathered. In the first instance, the system was set up by the planters and afterwards the Government gave it an official status. It is more or less monopoly in the case of Malay and Ceylon?—It is official control.

Mr. Cliff: In what sense are you using the word "monopoly"?

Colonel Garbett: I am only quoting the word used by Mr. King in his memorandum. I do not quite understand what he means.

F-3512. *Mr. Cliff:* What does it imply?—The meaning I attach to "monopoly" in this memorandum, when speaking of the Tea Districts Labour Association monopoly, is that practically no other association can render recruiting services except the Tea Districts Labour Association, who have got a complete monopoly of recruiting work. I am not blaming the Tea Districts Labour Association but am blaming the system.

F-3513. *Sir Alexander Murray:* Do you suggest that you turned down applications from other people because your Board consists of tea planters chiefly?—I think it is human nature that people will not welcome rivals.

F-3514. Have you actually turned down applications from people to form associations and do you say that it was done because the members of the Board were all planters?—The only application I have had was an application from certain Indian Managers who wanted to form an association.

F-3515. Did you turn it down?—No.

F-3516. Can you quote any other case?—For instance, the Doom Dooma company, which is a very large company and recruits a very large number of

labourers applied for setting up a separate recruiting agency, and this was not approved of by the Assam Labour Board.

F-3517. *The Chairman:* Do you think it would be practicable to have half a dozen channels all of them permitted to establish new systems of recruiting?—I think each employer might be able to do his own recruiting. If he found to his benefit to join a large association then he should be free to do so, but if he wished to do his own recruiting he should be allowed to do so.

F-3518. *Sir Alexander Murray:* What was the reason for turning down the Doom Dooma application by the Assam Labour Board?—The chief reason, I think, was that they did not want to have other recruiting organizations in the field. If Doom Dooma broke away it was thought that various other companies would also break away from the Tea Districts Labour Association and the results might not be desirable.

F-3519. *Colonel Garbett:* The board, if I remember the case aright, advised the Doom Dooma company not to break away, and the Superintendent thought it over and changed his mind afterwards?—I do not know, I only know that the Board did not recommend the application.

F-3520. *The Chairman:* Is there, in fact, an association of Indian managed gardens with a separate system to-day?—No association exists at present; an application is pending.

F-3521. *Sir Alexander Murray:* We were told that there were three or four associations working at Ranchi?—There are 3 or 4 independent agencies.

F-3522. *Colonel Garbett:* I should like to explain that the Tea Districts Labour Association was started about 35 years ago. About five or six Calcutta firms joined together with a view to cutting out competition and formed the Tea Districts Labour Association. The growth of the Tea Districts Labour Association has been slow but sure, and as years passed on companies found that it was worth their while to join the Tea Districts Labour Association until to-day we see that it has got 93 per cent. of the companies in Assam. Therefore to say that it has the monopoly is, in my opinion, not correct; it is one of growth and not monopoly?—I have tried to explain that this growth is backed up by legal monopoly under the Act. I would say that if the monopoly were a free growth it should be allowed to grow, but I do not think it is.

F-3523. You agree that it is much easier for the Government to deal with one organization than dozens of organizations?—I agree.

Colonel Garbett: I do not think the word "monopoly" is the right word to use.

F-3524. *Sir Alexander Murray:* You say: "I am not criticizing the administration of the Tea Districts Labour Association but the system under which they work." What do you exactly mean by that?—They have done work very well. Under absolutely free conditions they might have attained the same position of predominance that they have at present.

F-3525. *Miss Power:* In your memorandum you deal with the possibility of using public employment agencies and you say "It would greatly cheapen the cost of securing labour and would at the same time be a help and a safeguard to the labourer." I take it that you would need *sardars* to bring the worker from the village to the exchange, would you not? Otherwise how would the worker in the village obtain a knowledge of the existence of these exchanges and the information to be obtained from them?—I think if exchanges were set up it would be the duty of Government to make it very widely known that such exchanges had been set up and that any one seeking employment could go there and get information as to the employment available.

F-3526. How many such agencies would be necessary? In your supplementary note you suggest that every registering centre should be constituted as an employment bureau?—That might be done.

F-3527. I take it there are a good many of them, are there not?—I would not start with a good many; I would start with a small number and see how they worked; if the experiment justified itself, then I would extend.

F-3528. The propaganda to get the existence of these bureaux known in the numerous villages would be a very expensive matter?—I do not think so.

F-3529. How do you suggest it could be done?—There is a Government *chowkidar* in every village; Government may require him to publish the fact. There are village *panchayats* and village headmen and this information can be published through them also without any expense.

F-3530. On whom would the expense of these bureaux fall, on the Central or Provincial Government, or the industry, or on a combination of all these?—I think, first of all, if there were registering centres for Assam under the system I propose, the cost would naturally be borne by the tea industry if they were working for the tea industry only; but if they were also constituted as employment bureaux and working on behalf of Government to contribute towards solving the problem of unemployment, then Government should bear a portion of the cost.

F-3531. A portion of the cost would be borne by the tea industry?—Yes, in view of the fact that they would be set up for tea garden recruitment.

F-3532. *The Chairman*: They might be recruiting for coal and oil?—Yes, coal and oil might also utilize them. I think it would be a very generous thing if Government bore the entire cost of such centres, but very much doubt if they would.

F-3533. *Mr. Cliff*: You mean the Assam Government, because it wants to develop its Province by colonization of its waste areas and so on?

Mr. Clow: Inter-provincial migration is a central subject and any work done by a local Government in that behalf is done as an agent of the Central Government. If the cost of such a centre should fall on any Government it should fall on the Central Government under the constitution as it at present stands.

The witness: It is not merely for the benefit of Assam but also for the benefit of the recruiting areas as it relieves surplus population and reduces the pressure on the soil.

F-3534. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you quote the rule relating to the detention at the depôts of women and minors for a period of three days. Then you suggest that the time should be extended to 10 days. We had a Government witness from Bihar and Orissa who told us that, where abuses existed in regard to recruitment, they were mainly in regard to women and minors. What is your experience?—I think it is quite correct to say that. I think there is another way which would avoid this detention. If the employers who recruit gave an undertaking to repatriate when called on to do so by the District Magistrate of the recruiting district, that undertaking might be accepted in a very large number of cases.

F-3535. Of course it would be better to discover the illegality before the recruit is sent up?—Yes, it would be.

F-3536. The Government of Bihar and Orissa agreed that there might be considerable use for a woman official in connection with recruitment of women and minors in those areas where recruitment is heaviest. Would you agree to that?—I do not think that a woman official could possibly put a stop to these abuses. I think the best means is registration. You then know where the people have gone and they can be got back if necessary.

F-3537. You do not think it is possible invariably to get the consent of the relations before a woman or minor is forwarded, allowing 10 days for this and for the relations to make a protest if there has been any illegality?—Do you suggest that in each case an enquiry should be made? It would then involve a tremendous amount of delay and expense. Probably the result would be that the recruit would get sick of all these delays and enquiries and never go to the agency again.

F-3538. What percentage of cases would come under that category?—Not more than 80 or 90 come to our notice out of about 40,000.

F-3539. You suspect there are more existing than actually come to notice?—Yes, there must be people who abscond or, elope and are not known of; no complaint is made.

F-3540. *Colonel Garbett*: When a complaint is made they are easily traceable?—Yes, easily traceable.

F-3541. *Miss Power*: You do not get many who arrive up here and then have to be repatriated?—No, not more than 80 cases are ordinarily reported.

F-3542. In your memorandum you deal with the medical examination of recruits at the source of recruitment. Would it not be better if this were not left optional but made compulsory?—I think so. Most companies do have medical examination at the source. But if a local agent sees a man who is obviously unfitted for work on a garden he will not forward him. I think it may be cheaper to repatriate undesirable recruits who have been sent up than have a medical examination of all the recruits at the source.

F-3543. With regard to the *sardar's* commission has there been any attempt on the part of the Indian Tea Association to regulate that?—It is regulated to a certain extent.

F-3544. But it is very high?—It varies from Rs. 20 Rs. 50 or higher.

F-3545. In your memorandum you say: "On the other hand, the other form of competition for labour, i.e., increase of wages and the offer of better conditions, is restricted by the control exercised by the circle committees." Would you explain that?—If any garden wishes to raise its wages, I understand it has got to consult the circle committee before doing so.

F-3546. Lower down you say: "Till wages find their true level, there will not be a free flow of labour to the tea industry." Yet dealing with minimum wages the Assam Government memorandum says: "It must be remembered that in Assam the demand for labour exceeds the supply and where such a condition exists, wages generally will be comparatively high." I take it you would not agree with the Government view that the wages are high?—No.

F-3547. Your view is that if the wage level is raised and if certain restrictions are removed there will be a greater flow of labour?—I think that if the wage level is raised there would be a greater flow of labour.

F-3548. You also think that the wage level would rise if certain restrictions were removed?—I think so.

F-3549. Referring to the Assam Labour Board the Government of Assam say that "on such a Board labour has no real claim to be represented." Do you agree with that view?—I rather agree with that, because I consider it would be an unworkable system to have labour representatives controlling the local agents appointed by the employers. I consider that recruitment has nothing to do with the conditions of labour on the garden. Labour would certainly have a claim to be represented if there was any body constituted to control the conditions under which labour works on the gardens.

F-3550. *The Chairman*: If there was a Board of Health and Welfare in Assam that would be the place for the representatives of labour?—Yes, that would be the place for labour representatives. I do not think it is necessary for labour to be represented to control recruitment. The best form of control would be official control.

F-3551. Would not labour representation on such a Board tend to increase recruitment?—I do not think so; it might tend to the contrary.

F-3552. *Mr. Clow*: What is the actual work done by the Assam Labour Board?—Inspection of local agencies is the chief work with a view to ascertaining whether abuses exist.

F-3553. Putting it candidly, suppose the Board were to disappear what would be the practical effect?—The practical effect would be that supervision would be withdrawn and abuses might go on.

F-3554. In actual practice most of the cases that are taken up are brought to light by the local agents, that is by persons in the service of the Tea Districts Labour Association and not of the Board at all?—Yes.

F-3555. The Board's supervisors are engaged in supervising the work in theory of persons who are not in any way subordinate to it?—Yes.

F-3556. Would it not be feasible to start with a system of free recruiting to industries other than the tea industry in Assam?—The tea industry has as good a claim to free recruitment as any other industry in Assam. It would be unfair to the tea industry to single it out for control.

F-3557. Those who are qualified to speak for the tea industry say that some form of control is necessary. Would it be possible to start free recruiting for coolies who have had previous experience of Assam?—If you had free recruiting for one section or one industry it would be very difficult to control another section or another industry in Assam. I am in favour of free recruiting, but as the tea industry have asked for control and as the local Governments have asked for control I suggest there should be registration to prevent abuses.

F-3558. Am I right in saying that a number of years ago when there was a certain amount very badly controlled recruiting the cost of bringing a labourer to Assam was a good deal higher than it is even now?—That was before the passing of Act VIII of 1915. I have not much experience of that time.

F-3558a. The effect of the partial monopoly of the Tea Districts Labour Association has been on the whole to bring down the cost of recruiting rather than raise it?—The abolition of the *arkatti* recruiting has brought down the cost of bringing a labourer to Assam.

F-3559. The Board has mentioned in its last report that there were some places where plenty of recruits were anxious to go to Assam but were prevented

by money-lenders and those who had hold over them?—Yes, I do believe there is a good deal of interested opposition from money-lenders and zamindars and people to whose interest it is to keep the labour in the recruiting district itself.

F-3560. *The Chairman*: Does that apply to the 5 areas in the United Provinces where recruiting is closed?—I think so. I believe there is opposition there.

F-3561. You think there is a considerable number of potential recruits in those closed areas to whose advantage it would be to have an opening in Assam?—I believe so.

F-3562. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I notice that in more than one place you refer to the *sardari* system as a very good one and as a matter of fact a very safe method for the labourer?—I said it was so in theory.

F-3563. Do you not think that a *sardar* or anybody else who goes down from a garden will be a fairer recruiter than a professional recruiter or any other recruiter?—The professional recruiter is not necessarily an evil person. I dare say that the *sardars* would be equally mischievous if they were not controlled.

F-3564. In theory at least a *sardar* must be relatively better than a professional recruiter. Do you agree with that?—I would not say that.

F-3565. You would still allow a garden to recruit from any area it liked. You would not restrict the area of recruitment to particular places?—No.

F-3566. When you experiment with an employment agency which particular place will you select?—I have not thought over the matter. I should like to get more information.

F-3567. Will you start that in a difficult place or easy place?—An easy place.

F-3568. If you are going to give opportunities for propaganda, remove all the existing restrictions and start the experiment in an easy place, do you think that it would be fair to compare the results of an experiment like that with the results of the *sardari* system which has been put under so many restrictions?—I think that the tea industry should be very glad if these agencies are successful and can help them. I do not condemn the *sardari* system, but I want to remove the restrictions placed on recruitment.

F-3569. You refer to the breakdown of the *sardari* system. Is that on the question of the cost?—It has not produced the supply of labour which the tea gardens require although the industry commenced recruiting about 1863.

F-3570. I have looked at the Robertson Report of 1906. That says that in 20 years they recruited 931,000 labourers. The average from 1885 down to 1900 when restrictions were imposed under Act VI of 1901 was 52,000 a year. In 1901 for four years it dropped to 21,000 a year. Does not that show that the restrictions caused a drop in recruitment?—That is what I say.

F-3571. If really these restrictions stand in the way of recruitment who is responsible for the breakdown of the *sardari* system?—The restrictions together with the unduly high commissions and various other factors I have mentioned.

F-3572. Taking the 16 years 1905-06 to 1920-21 when the troubles took place and the next committee enquired into the matter there was an average annual recruitment of 66,000. So that in spite of all the restrictions the Association has so adapted itself to altered circumstances that it has raised recruitment from 21,000 to an average of 66,000 per year?—I think these figures are very largely affected by the figures of famine periods that come in. They depend very largely on scarcity, famine and other conditions besides these restrictions.

F-3573. In your memorandum you make a calculation regarding the number of *sardars* sent down to the recruiting districts. You say that out of a total of one million odd labourers on the books of the tea garden managers they sent down 41,000 odd *sardars* and that represents 4 per cent. sent down to recruit. But you send down only adults as *sardars*?—Yes.

F-3574. You give the average daily working strength (men and women) as 355,000 odd. Therefore roughly speaking, you send down 12 per cent. of the average daily working strength either on a holiday or recruiting?—Yes.

F-3575. How many of them are women, will it be 1 in 3 or 4?—I have no figures.

F-3576. Is not a great deal of the expense due to the long time taken to bring the people up? We met some people on a garden who had been 15 days on the way. They came from Jashpur one of the Ranchi districts. Why should they take 15 days?—I think they walked from Jashpur to Gumla and then from Gumla to Lohardaga. They probably took four days walking.

F-3577. Why should they be kept so long?—I cannot say. It is not under any orders of the Assam Labour Board.

F-3578. How long does it take a recruit from Madras to go to Ceylon?—There is a detention of 6 days in a quarantine camp. There are several collecting stations and one big depôt. They pass through them very quickly.

F-3579. Do the railways give any concession to these people who move up and down so often?—I do not know. The Tea Districts Labour Association would know. I know that there was some talk about that.

F-3580. You arrive at certain costs in your memorandum. I think you have been unfair in the figures you have taken. You have deliberately taken out of the returns the very highest you can get. You make it even higher than the return makes it. You have taken the instance of a coolie coming from the Ganjam Agency to Lakhimpur district which is the farthest that any coolie travels?—That is where most of the coolies go.

F-3581. You have taken Ganjam Agency; that is not where most of the coolies come from?—Ganjam is about the central district.

F-3582. Take this Jashpur from where about 13,000 coolies came last year. The average advance given there is Rs. 13-7 per adult recruit. But you pick out the very highest in the list and take the advance paid as Rs. 51-12. Is that quite a fair comparison to make?—It does not apply to agencies where they get a large number of recruits per *sardar*.

F-3583. In supporting your case you wanted to pick out the most extreme case of the lot?—That is not the most extreme case. I could have possibly picked out more extreme cases.

F-3584. No, you could not have?—I certainly took out facts which support my case.

F-3585. You say that the oil fields get cheaper recruiting?—Yes, they pay nothing.

F-3586. We had Mr. McAllister, the General Manager of the Assam Oil Co., Ld., in front of us and we asked him: "When a man came before you, did you ask him where he actually came from." He said he did not ask any question but simply employed him. Is it fair to compare the oil fields and the tea gardens for recruiting purposes?—What do you suggest?

F-3587. I will let you draw the inference. You say that the total cost of recruitment in the coal-fields comes to Rs. 100 per head. As a matter of fact there can be no comparison between the oil fields and the coal-fields and the tea industry. Tea garden labour is agricultural.—I think there is a comparison. They should be compared.

F-3588. In your memorandum you say: "Any employer, or, on behalf of an employer, any association or firm duly authorized by general or special order of the Governor-General in Council for the purpose of this clause, may apply for a license as aforesaid, to be granted to a specified person." Under the existing position any employer can apply for a license?—Any individual employer can. That is the existing position.

F-3589. Why are they not allowed to recruit?—They are not allowed to recruit themselves; there must be a local agent in the recruiting district.

F-3590. Do you know of any case where individual employers have applied for a license and have had their application rejected?—I know of no such case.

F-3591. We inspected the Boloma Tea Garden and the manager told us that he had applied for a license, that it was passed by the Assam Labour Board and that it went no further. Why has it been hung up?—He and 8 other planters applied to have a local agent before I became Chairman in 1927. The Assam Labour Board asked them to give the names of the local agents whom they wanted to employ. There was some delay. After I joined the Board they gave the names of the men they wanted to employ as local agents. We recommended the case to the local Government. I do not know what happened afterwards. I believe the Assam Government consulted other local Governments.

F-3592. You have not followed up the case. Do you not think that the man has cause for grievance?—No, he has no cause for grievance against the Board. The Board only gives its opinion when asked for. It has made no delay. The Board's opinion was in favour of the application.

F-3593. Have you a list of the local agents here?—No, not here.

F-3594. Could you tell us from the list who this man is who signs for one of the agencies? (Pointing to the document obtained from the Boloma Tea Estate

regarding certain points to be noted by managers in sending *sardars* down for recruitment.)—I will let you know by referring to the list. It might be the local agent at Cuttack, Dr. Gupta.

F-3595. In your memorandum you give us a list of the chief items which enter into the cost of recruitment. They are seven in number. How many of them still would be necessary if the system were changed?—I do not know whether item (*i*) would be necessary or not; it would depend on the nature of the system adopted. Items (*ii*) and (*iii*) would have to be incurred under any system. The bonus for labourers is optional with the employer. With regard to item (*iv*) if the local agents devoted themselves to recruiting work instead of registering and so forth they could do this job.

F-3596. Do you not think they should be supervised by somebody?—I do not think so. They would be the representatives of the employers and why should the employers put another man to supervise these men?

F-3597. You contemplate appointing local agents all over the place without any supervisors?—Yes, except the supervision involved in official repatriation of emigrants. With regard to item (*v*) some cess would have to be levied in order to provide the cost of registering officers. Item (*vi*) would have to continue but it might be cut down considerably. And so should item (*vii*).

F-3598. All these items would have to continue under any system?—Most of them. The Tea Association need not go through all this elaborate system of recruitment if recruits voluntarily enrolled themselves to come to Assam. I hope that this may happen and that a lot of people would roll up voluntarily and ask to be sent to Assam. Then you would have none of these expenses.

F-3599. You contemplate commissions to be paid?—Not if a person comes in voluntarily. No commission need be paid in that case.

F-3600. You expect men to come voluntarily?—I think they might come.

F-3601. Dealing with possible substitutes you say: "I would allow employers to select their recruiters from any class of persons, subject only to the conditions that the recruiter must be duly authorized by a certificate from the employer who appoints him, that he be a person of good character, that he be registered as a recruiter in the office of the official" and so on. We have met garden managers of all descriptions and come across *sardars* of all descriptions. If a man came to you with a certificate from a garden manager stating that he is a man of good character, you would immediately allow him to recruit?—Yes.

F-3602. What is the Immigration Fund to be composed of?—The Immigration Fund is simply my suggestion as to how recruitment costs could be reduced. No reduction can be effected without the co-operation of the tea industry and if the tea industry do not accept the proposal it cannot work. If they do not accept it, it is for them to suggest something else which will effect the desired results. They have proposed nothing else and I come forward with this proposal. It works in Ceylon and Malaya and I do not see why it should not be a success if the tea industry co-operated in its working.

F-3603. You say: "The aim of any new system of control which may be set up should be to place the tea industry, as nearly as circumstances permit, on a level with other industries which are uncontrolled in respect of their recruitment." But are not these restrictions directed against the tea industry?—My effort has been to reduce the control, not to increase it.

F-3604. You do not want to place the tea industry in the same position as any other industry?—As nearly as circumstances permit. The tea industry themselves say that they are not fit to be placed on the same level as other industries.

F-3605. I appreciate that. You say, "as nearly as circumstances permit." In your memorandum you say: "The Ceylon and the Malay systems provide a very detailed system of control, but in view of the clean record of the tea industry for the past fifteen years, I consider a lot, which is provided for by law in the Ceylon and Malay systems, may be left to the good faith of the industry." What do you actually mean by that?—I mean that I have omitted a great number of restrictions which find place in the Ceylon and Malay systems.

F-3606. You finish up by saying that "for the expenses incurred in recruitment prior to the registration of the labourer a fixed sum, to be determined in consultation with the tea industry, would be paid for each labourer recruited." Have you thought of what will be the likely amount?—Rupees 10 is the rate in Ceylon and I think that should be enough here.

F-3607. *Mr. Ahmed*: What is the main object of the Assam Labour Board?—To suppress abuses and ensure clean recruiting.

F-3608. If the planters have any difficulties can they be removed by the Labour Board or will they have to go to the Government of India?—What kind of difficulties? For instance they have a grievance against Act VI. The Labour Board cannot do anything in the matter. They have to go to the Government of India.

F-3609. They have asked for the abolition of your office?—Yes.

F-3610. Are you in favour of it?—I think it might be abolished.

F-3611. Will that be for the benefit of labour?—There must be some official control, if the Assam Labour Board is abolished.

F-3612. You do not want to abolish the *sardari* system altogether?—No.

F-3613. Have you told the Government of India that the present Board should be abolished?—No.

F-3614. I suppose the Government of India know that it will be for the benefit of labour if the present Board is abolished?—I do not know. The Indian Tea Association may have suggested its abolition to the Government of India.

F-3615. You want that the labour rules should be abolished and that there should be free labour?—I should be glad to see all restrictions removed.

F-3616. Suppose there is an employment agency and an employment bureau consisting of the representatives of labour and of employers. Would not that be a better system?—I have not thought about it. I am not certain whether it would be necessary to set up a bureau of that character.

F-3617. Why do the coolies prefer industrial occupation in factories? Is it because they get higher wages there?—I have not compared wages. I do believe they get higher wages in some industries. In coal mines they probably get higher wages. In Jamshedpur probably they get higher wages.

F-3618. *Mr. Cliff*: In your memorandum you refer to the grant of clothing and blankets. I was in a depôt the other day and I noticed that in some cases blankets were given to men. There is no mention of clothing given to children. Is it a practice that the grant of clothing is all entered on a form?—I do not know.

F-3619. These forms are not official forms at all?—They are from the depôt of the Tea Districts Labour Association. It is a matter for the supervision of the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-3620. Do not the agencies come under your supervision?—Only for recruitment. The clothing and outfit are not prescribed by law.

F-3621. Is not the name "Assam Labour Board" a misnomer? Does it not convey the impression that the Assam Labour Board looks after the conditions of labour?—Yes, it is a misnomer. "Assam Recruitment Control Board" would be better.

F-3622. Apart from the supervision of local agents has the Assam Labour Board any power to improve the system of recruitment?—It cannot, because it is bound by law.

F-3623. Has the Board as at present constituted any policy in connection with recruitment at all?—No. It is only to supervise recruiting and check abuses.

F-3624. *Mr. Clow*: It is really an endeavour to get the industry to police itself?—Yes.

F-3625. *Mr. Cliff*: Would the Board itself have anything to do with the type of labour that were suitable for tea garden labour. Does that come within their province?—If recruitment were carried on in an area where the labourers were found to be unsuited for Assam the Board might recommend the local agent's license should not be renewed and thereby put an end to undesirable recruiting.

F-3626. To whom would they recommend?—To the District Magistrate of the district in which the recruiting was taking place.

F-3627. Could they similarly recommend that another area should be opened up?—They might bring it to the notice of the tea industry or the Tea Districts Labour Association but they could not issue orders on the subject.

F-3628. Would the Tea Districts Labour Association be able to make recommendations?—The Tea Districts Labour Association could apply for a local agent's license and start recruiting.

F-3629. Has it ever been shown that there is an insufficiency of suitable labour for tea gardens?—I think there is a sufficiency of labour in the recruiting districts.

F-3630. Has the tea industry been sending recruiters for the past 70 or 80 years now?—Yes.

F-3631. Do you know of any other industry in the same position as the tea industry which has been recruiting for such a long period and which has not yet got a satisfactory supply of labour?—No.

F-3632. Is not the difference between the system of recruiting adopted in Ceylon and the system of recruiting adopted here that the one has succeeded and the other has not?—It is noticeable that Ceylon is more successful.. I have no personal experience of Ceylon. The Controller in his report says that Ceylon has as much labour as it wants, but I cannot say whether that is true or not.

F-3633. Is it true that a good deal of the labour recruited for the tea gardens is recruited during famine seasons?—During famine seasons there is a great increase in the number of recruits, but those recruits do not stay on the garden but go back again when the famine conditions have passed away.

F-3634. Is it the fact that whenever food is dear or whenever there is a famine or an apprehension with regard to the monsoon, the tea industry is able to get an influx of labour?—Yes.

F-3635. Would it be possible to abolish recruiters altogether?—I do not think the tea industry would get its labour if it abolished recruiters.

F-3636. If the Tea Districts Labour Association with its agencies could be the recruiting agency, and if it declared what were the conditions in the full light of day, and if the public of the country could be assured that there was protection and necessary regulation of the labourers, would there be an improvement in the situation, do you think?—Yes, I think so.

F-3637. Would it not be possible also to abolish the recruiters altogether under that system?—It might be possible in course of time, but it would take a considerable time before the free flow, which you have in mind, would be established. It would take some time before the labourers got into the habit of moving of their own accord. They are now being sent by recruiters, and that is the only system which has been in vogue. I do not think you could pass over to any other system at once.

F-3638. If you could not pass over to any other system to-morrow, what suggestion would you make as to how one could begin to pass over?—I have suggested that alongside the recruiting system there should be employment agencies opened whereby the terms and conditions would be made known, and whereby any labour which wished to move through these agencies could be sent to the employer.

F-3639. I take it that the main concern of the public of India is that the conditions of the people when they are on the estate should be such as ought to obtain in any well regulated employment?—Yes.

F-3640. Is there any objection to the Tea Association being able to make free and full use of any legitimate propaganda?—No.

F-3641. May I take it that in your opinion first of all the existing system should be done away with, that a new system of control should be brought into being, and that, alongside that, you would from your experience be prepared to recommend that there should be an experiment in certain districts on the other system?—Yes.

F-3642. I understand that part of your duty as Chairman of the Board is to supervise the local agents?—Yes.

F-3643. We came into possession, at one of the tea estates which we visited, of a note which was attached to one of the Tea Districts Labour Association printed forms. I cannot decipher the signature, but the agent describes himself as "local agent." This is the kind of thing which is stated in it. "*Sardars* who are not sent down under a state of affairs" (which are previously stated) "and who have been too long on the garden and have never recruited before are considered to be not well selected. Such *Sardars* can only be expected to be successful in famine stricken districts." Is that the kind of advice that one expects an agent to give to a tea planter?—If I understand that the local agent says that a *sardar* who has been on the garden for a long time is not a suitable recruiter, that is the view generally held.

F-3644. Then it says that such *sardars* can only be expected to be successful in famine stricken districts?—It depends on what he means by "successful." If he means securing a large number of recruits I think it is true; unless he resorts to *arkattis* to assist him, because he has lost his connection with the recruiting districts through lapse of time.

F-3645. *The Chairman*: Does it mean that in all probability his immediate circle of relatives has been exhausted, and therefore any recruiting he can do will be amongst people who are in extreme distress?—Yes.

F-3646. *Mr. Cliff*: What I am anxious to know is whether one would expect an agent to be giving advice to the effect that the *sardar* can only be expected to be successful in famine-stricken districts?—I think it is going too far to rule out altogether such a man as is referred to, but I think he is not a suitable kind of recruiter.

F-3647. The note goes on to say "Garden wives and children, specially of low castes, who are young, should not be considered enough security, even in cases of successful *sardars*, unless they have landed and other properties of some worth on the gardens and are in easy circumstances there"?—That advice would not be endorsed by any decent employer in the tea industry.

F-3648. The note further says: "Not more than one or two *sardars* belonging to the same village should be sent down unless there be scarcity of food." Is that the kind of advice that is given?—I do not think so. I am sure that is not authorized by the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-3649. Taking the next paragraph of the note, is it recognized by the Assam Labour Board and the Tea Districts Labour Association that "it is always a system to send *sardars* before December and after May in season unless the abnormal conditions prevailing in the district warrant it"?—The Tea Districts Labour Association advise their constituents to send their *sardars* between November and May, as they have more chance of getting recruits then.

F-3650. *Colonel Garbett*: Is it not a fact that during June, July, August, September and October, the people are busy with their own crops?—Yes.

F-3651. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it to be taken that as far as the recruiting districts to which you go, are concerned, it is impossible to obtain labour in those months?—It is very difficult indeed to do so.

F-3652. Can it be taken that, taking India through, there is not suitable labour for the tea industry?—I think there is a sufficiency of suitable labour if you take India.

F-3653. If the Tea Districts Labour Association can go into new districts why are not those new districts tapped?—The Tea Distrists Labour Association is prohibited from going into some of those districts.

F-3654. But they can go into the other districts. If there is an adequate supply of labour in India I cannot understand why the tea industry cannot get its supply of labour, if conditions are what the tea industry say they are?—I believe that higher pay would attract labour. There are other reasons why the tea industry cannot get all the labour it wants. It has Act VI to contend with. That hampers it very much. It cannot send men down to the recruiting districts in order to let it be known what the prospects are in Assam, whereas other industries may. Then they have the year 1921 to contend with, and the previous bad reputation of Assam; and there are various other handicaps.

F-3655. If as a general policy a higher standard wage was adopted it seems to me that there should be no difficulty about recruiting labour?—I agree that a higher wage standard would go a very long way towards solving the problem.

F-3656. Does it not come to this. The tea industry is seeking to recruit its labour on the present wage standard and on the present standard of life?—Yes.

F-3657. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You admit that if higher wages were paid it would increase the flow of labour. Would it help matters if you had a Welfare Board in Assam and if the public knew that that Board was looking after the welfare of workers on the tea estates?—That would be a new idea to the labourers. The mere fact that there was a Welfare Board would not induce labourers to come to Assam; if the Welfare Board improved conditions in Assam the labourers would come if that became known.

F-3658. Suppose it were known that the workers could take their grievances before an impartial tribunal and get them adjusted, or, if they wanted higher wages, that they could place their case before an impartial body and get the matter settled one way or the other, and suppose that they knew thereby that they were not left completely at the sweet mercy of the manager, do you not

think that that would very largely solve the difficulty?—I think that might unsettle the labour force. Instead of giving the tea industry a more satisfactory labour force it might leave them worse off. So far as I know such a system is not working in any industry.

F-3659. If a regular system were introduced, whereby the workers had the right to go before an impartial tribunal and say "These are the reasons why we want higher wages: will you listen to our case," would that settle them more on the estate, or would that lead to an unsettling of the minds of the workers?—I think it would be dangerous. In the first place, I doubt if it would be possible to get a Board which would be competent to decide these matters, because conditions vary so very greatly from one garden to another. It would be very hard for any Board to give a just decision in all these disputes. The best safeguard for the labourer would be his freedom to go to the best market, and also the competition of employers for his labour.

F-3660. Would you agree that if freedom of movement is allowed it would be better for the worker as well as for recruitment. Similarly, if the impression, which is now in the mind of the public that roads on tea estates are not public property, were removed, would it not also help?—Yes.

F-3661. Again, if the land which is given out to workers by the tea garden managers had some fixity of tenure attached to it, that would also help to attract more labour, would it not?—I do not think so, because there is so little land, comparatively speaking, and most of it has already been taken up. Therefore new labourers would not be attracted by the very remote prospect of getting fixity of tenure on land which is already occupied.

F-3662. We have heard that there is on almost every tea plantation a fairly large amount of land still unoccupied?—I do not think that is so. All the rice land is already let out.

F-3663. Let me take the case of those who have already got land. Would it help to keep them there if they had fixity of tenure?—Yes.

F-3664. With regard to the question of repatriation, you think it would undoubtedly help recruitment if the worker knew that after a certain period, for reasons to be laid down and investigated by a board let us say, he had the right to be repatriated?—Yes. The mere fact that there was more frequent going and coming between Assam and the recruiting districts would always have a beneficial effect.

F-3665. *The Chairman*: Is not the present position this that repatriation at the garden expense can take place where the labourer is unsuitable to the garden work; there are two grounds, I think, on which the Magistrate can order repatriation?—Yes.

F-3666. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say in your memorandum that since 1920-21 onwards there has been an increase in the quantity of the advances paid. What is that due to?—I cannot say why they have given higher advances. Probably one reason is that everything is dearer and prices have risen and the value of money has fallen.

F-3667. Suppose the Assam Labour Board is abolished, what sort of control would you suggest?—I would suggest official registering officers with a controller at their head and the controller to be assisted by two or three assistants in the supervision of these registering centres.

F-3668. You would have them in the recruiting centres?—Yes.

F-3669. Would it be of any advantage in having dual registration, that is, both in the recruiting area as well as here in Assam?—I think that would make it very expensive; I doubt if it would be worth it.

F-3670. If the District Magistrate of the recruiting district only were to have the information about those who are licensed, how could that information be made available here?—If that were required it would be very easy to ask the garden managers to send in a list of every labourer who was imported into their estates. There would be no extra staff required for that purpose. It would be quite easy to ask the garden managers to send in a list in whatever form it is wanted.

F-3671. Would it be feasible to hand that information over to the Welfare Board if it is set up?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-sixth Meeting.

SHILLONG.

Friday, 17th January, 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
MR. JOHN CLIFF.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA ..
LT.-COL. H. C. GARBETT, SUPERINTENDENT, ..
KANJIKOAH BUDLA BETA TEA CO., LTD. .. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN, *Lady Assessor.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S. .. .. .. } *Joint Secretaries.*
MR. A. DIBDIN .. .. .. }

Mr. J. INSCH, M.L.C., Chairman, and Mr. T. C. CRAWFORD, Vice-Chairman, representatives of the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta.

F-3672. *The Chairman*: What is the constitution of your Indian Tea Association?—(Mr. Insch) The Association was formed in 1881; the objects and duty of the Association are to promote the common interests of all persons connected with the cultivation of tea. The area under cultivation in north-east India is 628,000 acres, of which the Indian Tea Association represents 530,000 acres, or 83·45 per cent.

F-3673. Are the headquarters of the Indian Tea Association in Calcutta or London?—The headquarters of the Indian Tea Association are in Calcutta; we also have a London Indian Tea Association.

F-3674. Where is the body which considers the general policy of the Association relating to matters affecting the industry?—We consult London on any big matters; ordinary matters are decided in Calcutta.

F-3675. Has London any overriding power?—No, it is simply consultation.

F-3676. Your Association is the body which has the power, covering 83 per cent. of the industry, to take decisions on matters of policy?—Yes. In any matter vital to the industry we would certainly consult London.

F-3677. What is your position *vis-a-vis* your constituent members?—We communicate regularly with them also; they discuss problems with us.

F-3678. Are your constituent members the individual tea estates or are they groups that come under one management?—They are both; agents and managers are eligible for election.

F-3679. How do they stand as subscribing members of your Association?—We all pay the same: annas 10 per acre under tea; that is the basis of our finance.

F-3680. Is the representation on a proportional basis in that respect?—Yes.

F-3681. I presume you have an Executive Committee?—Yes; nine firms are represented; they are elected by votes once a year.

F-3682. Does that Executive Committee sit from time to time in Calcutta?—Regularly fortnightly and more frequently if there are any important matters to discuss.

F-3683. And they discuss all matters relating to the welfare of the industry.—That is so.

F-3684. As to the amount of control in matters of policy, are your decisions executive decisions, or are they simply advice to your constituent members?—(Mr. Crawford) They are recommendations.

F-3685. You consider any matters affecting the welfare of the industry and all the persons engaged in it, and you work by means of advice to your constituent members?—Yes.

F-3686. But there is no agreement which enables you to impose decisions on your constituent members?—(Mr. Insch) We do not endeavour to impose our decisions; our recommendations are generally carried out.

F-3687. Is the Tea Districts Labour Association a body entirely under your control?—No, it is entirely separate from our control.

F-3688. Surely there must be some point of contact between you?—There is a main point of contact; we discuss important labour matters.

F-3689. But your Association does not in any way control the activities of the Tea Districts Labour Association?—No; they are two separate associations.

F-3690. And it is possible for a tea garden to be a member of the Tea Districts Labour Association and not a member of your Association?—Yes, and the other way also.

F-3691 You have told us that your Association includes both managing agents and individual managers of tea gardens?—Yes; it is really an association of producers.

F-3692. We understand that the methods of managing agents in connection with the managers of their tea estates vary in different cases; I am thinking for the moment of the method of remuneration of the managers of the tea estates?—Yes, there is no common policy; each agency house would arrange its own terms.

F-3693. For instance, one of the things in which we have been interested is the question of expenditure on welfare on the tea gardens, and it has appeared to us that in some cases the arrangements might have the effect that the manager of a tea garden wishing to spend money on what is generally called welfare for the benefit of the workers on the estate, would know that such expenditure would come out of his remuneration, and that would lead to a natural conflict in his mind as to how far he was justified in indulging in such expenditure. Am I to take it that that is a matter you leave entirely to the individual groups of agents and which you do not discuss as a matter of policy in your Association?—We do discuss amongst ourselves what different agencies are doing.

F-3694. And would you be in a position to make recommendations on a matter of that kind?—(*Mr. Crawford*) I think that would be rather a matter of policy for the directorate or the control of the companies concerned.

F-3695. Would you agree that the managers of estates ought not to be in a position where in regard to what in their opinion, and of course within reason, was necessary expenditure for the future benefit of the estate in the form of welfare activities, they should be penalized if they undertook such work?—(*Mr. Insch*) I have never known a manager to be penalized for putting forward anything to benefit his labour force.

F-3696. I am referring to the question as to whether expenditure of that kind ought to go to block account and not to be charged against revenue and therefore affect the manager's commission?—I do not see how we could charge a recurring expenditure to block account; we always have to differentiate between revenue and block. (*Mr. Crawford*) I take it you are referring to items of some importance and not to possibly Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. For instance,

expenditure on medicines is charged to estate expenditure, as are Malarial schemes, unless they are of a particularly expensive nature, because I think it may be contended that the manager indirectly derives benefit from the results of that expenditure by the resulting improved health conditions. I cannot, of course, speak for everyone, but so far as our own practice is concerned, we should charge a new hospital to block, and a certain percentage, more or less based on income-tax percentage, is charged as depreciation through the estate accounts; that would affect the manager to the extent of, say, 5 per cent. on the depreciation charge, which would be a very small amount; he is presumably deriving benefit from the improved health of his workers.

F-3697. But you cannot say that the practice you have just described is invariably followed?—In our agencies it is (but I cannot speak generally. (Mr. Insch) Our practice is slightly different. All medicines would be charged to revenue; a new hospital would be charged to block and nothing would be deducted from the manager's commission. If we replaced an existing hospital with a better one, we would charge the difference to block.

F-3698. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What proportion of the tea industry do your two agencies represent?—(Mr. Crawford) Speaking of India I should think 22·35 per cent.

F-3699. *The Chairman*: What actually is the practice on your estates as regards block expenditure and revenue expenditure generally?—(Mr. Insch) New coolie lines would be block. A new water-supply would be block. We have been digging tube-wells; that is a block outlay.

F-3700. What would happen in the case of a new school, for instance, costing Rs. 400?—We would leave that to the manager; we would put it to block if he thought he was losing in any way.

F-3701. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any standing rule as to expenditure above or below a certain sum?—(Mr. Crawford) An expenditure below Rs. 1,000 is generally charged to revenue. We have a number of schools in our south India properties and they are all charged to block, the manager paying depreciation. It is a very small charge on the manager's commission. Schools costing Rs. 400 or Rs. 500 would be charged to revenue. (Mr. Insch) Yes, a small item would certainly be charged to revenue.

F-3702. *The Chairman*: Is this a matter which you discuss within your Association?—Not within our Association; we discuss that with our managers.

F-3703. Then your Association has no policy that you recommend to all your constituents on a matter of that kind?—No.

F-3704. You would agree that it is desirable that managers should not be put in the position that they themselves would suffer seriously financially because of their desire to progress in providing more amenities for the workers?—We always endeavour to encourage them in that respect; we would never discourage them.

F-3705. With regard to the policy of your Association on the matter of recruiting, it seems to be generally agreed that the industry needs more labour than it at present obtains?—Yes.

F-3706. And that it could make considerable progress, both in improved cultivation and in expansion of the industry, if more labour were available?—Yes.

F-3707. Therefore one of the chief matters always in front of your Association must be methods whereby the stream of labour to Assam in particular can be increased both in quality and quantity?—Yes.

F-3708. We have become aware in our visits to the recruiting areas that there is still lingering some prejudice against migrating to Assam. That may be partly, or perhaps mainly, due to the idea that Assam is a very distant place. I am speaking of what we think is in the minds of the villagers from whom you would hope to recruit. We have had a suggestion that a great deal of that prejudice might be removed in a single stroke, and thereby greatly increase the flow of would-be recruits, if there were a general agreement that after a reasonable period—let us say three years—of experience on the tea gardens, there should be a right of repatriation to those who do not desire to stay in Assam, the idea being that that might have the effect of so increasing the flow of would-be migrants that you might have more people applying at your depots than you needed, and would be able to make a more careful selection. We have found that that suggestion so far I think has received general favour.

Now we have the opportunity of putting it before your Association; do you think you as an Association would be in favour of a step of that kind?—If restrictions were lighter we would certainly favour it.

F-3709. I am, of course, assuming that many of the restrictions on propaganda, assisting and these things that have grown up out of the unhappy Act VI were done away with, and possibly also there might be a widening of the area of recritment. Supposing those things accompanied such a proposal, you as an Association, I take it from what you have just said, would be prepared to agree to repatriation after a specified period at the expense of the gardens?—Yes.

F-3710. So that you would by that means ensure retaining no one on your estates who was discontented with the life; you would have then a body of workers who had freely made the decision after a reasonable experience that they liked the life and wished to stay?—Yes. (Mr. Crawford) I take it that that repatriation which we would concede would not be a general right to repatriation. I mean the labourer would have an opportunity at the end of the first three years to repatriation, but if he did not avail himself of that right at that time, he would forego that right. I wish to make the position clear, because after that period labour difficulties might arise, when, if there were not that stipulation, the whole labour force would be in a position to claim repatriation.

F-3711. Of course that has been present to our minds; I was only putting the proposition in a very broad sense. There are a good many questions as to methods which would require more detailed consideration. I see, of course, the point that you could not have at any one time the whole or any substantial body of your workers claiming on the instant such a right of repatriation?—That is what I mean.

F-3712. But, taken as a broad principle, from what you have said I take it you would be prepared to agree?—(Mr. Insch) We favour it, yes.

F-3713. As a part of the general proposition there have been suggestions as to basing it on working days instead of years; but it is a question for consideration as to whether the simpler the right the more easy it would be in administration; but I do not think we need go into that point of detail at the moment. Another suggestion has been present to our minds. The Assam Labour Board appears to be a body which suffers from misdescription; from its title it would appear to be a body concerned with the conditions and welfare of the labour force in Assam; as a matter of fact, it has nothing at all to do with that; it is really dealing with recruiting and not with conditions on the estates. We have seen with much interest and pleasure the experiments that have been made in recent years, particularly in the matter of health, medical arrangements, in some cases education, and other amenities of life on the gardens, but we are at the same time impressed with the great variation in matters of that kind between one estate and another. Do you think it would be an advantage to the industry as a whole if there were in Assam some body such as a Board of Health and Welfare, mainly concerned to bring up the more backward estates to the level of the better ones, and generally helping and advising the individual estates how to raise the standard of living and therefore the desire to earn more on the part of the workers in the gardens?—This matter has been taken up in regard to another district. We were very anxious to include all tea estates in that particular district and also the surrounding areas, because very often cholera and other diseases are brought in from the adjoining villages. We wanted to have the whole area controlled; it was felt to be not much good carrying out special work on particular estates unless a body also controlled the adjoining area.

F-3714. If there were a Board of Health and Welfare under which certain Government officials would be linked up with the managers of tea gardens and certain other representatives particularly concerned in the welfare, education and so on of the garden workers, that would be a body which would work in the direction you have just indicated?—Yes. I was talking of health only at the moment. You also bring in welfare and education?

F-3715. To some extent the two matters of health and welfare are allied?—We consider that to be so, yes.

F-3715a. You would not be opposed to a suggestion of that kind? The suggestion is it should be an Advisory Board, leaving executive action, where it was proper, to lie with Government; any question of issuing of orders would lie with Government on advice tendered by such a board?—I feel certain it

would be sympathetically considered if the whole area surrounding the estate were brought in. (Mr. Crawford) That was the reason that influenced this proposition in another district, it was the influx of cholera and other epidemics from the congested area surrounding certain tea areas, and it was thought that if this board were set up it would be some restriction of our troubles in that respect. That was in the Dooars. For political reasons the Government did not press it. Mr. Travers will give you all the particulars because he was identified with it.

F-3716. You tell us in your memorandum that for reasons of policy when Act XIII disappeared, the bonus was continued. Naturally you did not wish to withdraw the Rs. 12, or whatever it is, per annum from your workers; they might have misunderstood and resented such a withdrawal. But in that matter we have found in individual estates widely varying practice as to the manner of payment. In some cases there has been executed what is called a civil agreement on the receipt of the bonus. In others a simple receipt with a thumb print is taken. In a third class of cases it is paid without even a receipt. But we have found almost universally lingering in the mind of the individual worker the idea that the bonus carries with it an obligation—they think a legal obligation. The managers tell us if there is any obligation at all, it is merely a moral and honorable obligation to work for another year. Has that question ever been discussed as a matter of policy by your Association? Did you ever recommend the substitution of a civil agreement?—(Mr. Insch) Through the Association we did not recommend a civil agreement, no; we all recommended a continuation of the bonus to the worker.

F-3717. That was a distinct recommendation?—Not from the Association.

F-3718. But from agents to their gardens?—Yes. The coolie would have considered it a hardship if he had not been allowed the money. (Mr. Crawford) I take it there is no objection legally to the civil agreement. I do not wish it to be understood that I support it, but the objection is to the interference that remains in the mind of the coolie that he is bound by contract.

F-3719. You have told us that your Association looks in general to all matters affecting the welfare of all persons engaged in the industry; I thought perhaps you would have had some discussions on that question and would have arrived at a common policy?—I think we have had some discussions in the past, but I do not remember our recommending any common policy. Speaking for the agency with which I am connected, we consulted managers as to whether the bonus should continue or not, the concensus of opinion was in favour of that and we agreed to it, but I do not think we laid down any common policy in regard to how it was to be done. I think our understanding has been that it is merely an entry in the garden books.

F-3720. Then as an Association you certainly have not even recommended a policy which involved a civil agreement or a thumb print being taken?—I do not recollect it.

F-3721. With regard to education I take it from what we have seen that there is no common policy advised by your Association to your individual members. Is that left entirely to the managers of individual gardens?—(Mr. Insch) It is left to the managers, after discussion with the managing agents.

F-3722. Can we take it as the general view of your Association that endeavours should be made to progress along the lines of education for children?—Endeavours have been made, but it has been very difficult to impress on the coolie that he will gain by education.

F-3723. Has your Association ever considered evolving a type of education which would recommend itself to the children and be particularly suitable to the future life of these children on the garden estates?—I do not know that the Association has done that.

F-3724. Would you be prepared to consider such a proposal as an Association, or must you leave all such matters to your individuals constituents?—Yes, a matter of that sort at present would be left to individual constituents; but if there was to be general education and it was made compulsory, of course we would take it up then.

F-3725. But your industry is such a great industry and such an important part of Assam; would you not be prepared to take a lead rather than wait for the rest of the community in an important matter of that kind?—May I leave the Association out of consideration for a moment and see what we have done individually. This matter was discussed and it was thought when we were budgeting that the first matter was to see to the health of the coolies; if we

could educate them in hygiene, then education was more likely to follow. Although we have schools on each garden, provide school houses and pay the school master, we still thought that hygiene should have first attention.

F-3726. Would not hygiene itself be best attained through the children rather than through the adults?—I am thinking of a practical type of education which would include hygiene and the facts of a cultivator's life. I am looking to your great industry possibly to evolve a type of education peculiarly suited on the practical side to the life of these children who will be your future workers?—Yes, we also look at it in that light.

F-3727. You have told us quite clearly I think in your memorandum your views about Act VI; you give us an interesting summary as to the principal defects of the existing Act; then you tell us of three principal directions in which increased freedom should be given: propaganda and assistance to *sardars* in their work, assistance to voluntary immigrants, arranging for short-term labourers or providing recruiting nuclei to employers who have no connections. In all those respects you submit to us that great assistance would be given to you in increasing the flow of migrants and enabling you to make a better selection of those who offer themselves for work in Assam. Am I to take it you would like to see Act VI swept away?—I have a précis on that subject and perhaps I may submit it. (Same handed in.) (Mr. Crawford) This details the defects of the Act and also makes suggestions for an alternative to the present system; it is to supplement what we have said.

F-3728. I want to arrive at a much greater simplicity and directness.—That is what we desire.

F-3729. *Sir Alexander Murray*: One of the difficulties we find in connection with *sardari* recruiting arises when you open up a new area and have no *sardars* to send there; what is your suggestion in connection with that?—It has been suggested that there should be public employment agencies.—If this freer system of recruiting is given us, I think it will fill the position of public employment agencies to ourselves: in other words, it would give us the connections which we cannot obtain under the present system of recruiting under Act VI.

F-3730. In Assam do you find people wandering about from garden to garden seeking employment or anything of that sort?—No. (Mr. Insch) I have never heard of an able-bodied worker being out of employment in Assam and I have never met one.

F-3731. Comparisons have been made between the wages paid on the gardens and in Jorhat, Silchar and other towns, and it seems to us that higher wages are paid in the towns than are paid, especially from a cash point of view, in the gardens. Have you any views on that?—They are employing casual labour, whereas we endeavour to settle the people. (Mr. Crawford) In the gardens houses are provided and they have advantages in the gardens which they do not have in the towns.

F-3732. The principal items of expenditure in connection with your recruiting, apart from travelling and administration expenses, consist in the advances that are given to the *sardars* in the districts and in the commissions that are given to the *sardars* after they come to Assam. Who regulates advances given to *sardars* and on what basis are they paid?—The advances to the *sardars* were regulated by a special Committee; that Committee came to a decision with regard to the first amounts to be advanced to *sardars* in the recruiting areas, and we have kept to that. There are special cases in which people have tried to get past that, but that has been over-ruled by the Tea Districts Labour Association. As regards second and third advances which may be Rs. 10 or possibly Rs. 5, the local agent has discretion on the basis of his recruiting results.

F-3733. Does the Assam Labour Board control that in any way?—It does not. They may bring the matter to our notice if, they consider the local agent is going past this, but I would not say they control it. If our agreement in regard to advances was being exceeded, they would bring it to our notice.

F-3734. What is the agreement?—I have not brought it, but I think the maximum is Rs. 45 I can give you that information possibly this afternoon.

F-3735. Does Mr. King's system contemplate reducing these amounts which are being paid in the shape of advances?—Presumably from his figures he must be contemplating some very radical reduction in recruiting expenditure.

F-3736. Could you of your own volition reduce these advances to *sardars*, because they come to very substantial amounts?—We did have it under consideration I think possibly two years ago but nothing was definitely decided. In fact it

was raised by some people who wanted to exceed the amount. We, the Tea Districts Labour Association, considered the question and we refused to entertain it. I cannot remember whether it was referred to the Tea Association also.

F-3737. Is there an understanding as to the amount of commission paid to the *sardar* when he brings coolies up?—No, there is not. Speaking for the agency with which I am connected, we have an understanding; our limit I think is Rs. 20 per head or Rs. 45 for a married couple, and no man is allowed to exceed that without special sanction. I think there is one garden where we pay Rs. 5 more, but that was owing to the manager misinterpreting our instructions and we did not like to ask him to go back on his word to the coolie. Other concerns pay a considerable commission I understand; they recover their advances in some cases, and part of their advances in other cases, from commission. I have had no experience of that; I am just speaking from conversations.

F-3738. If you had an emigration fund out of which the expenses would be paid to the *sardars*, the advances and commissions being regulated, is there any reason why this cost should not be very materially reduced?—I do not think there is any stipulation as to advances in Malaya, and advances are permissible in Ceylon up to Rs. 10 or Rs. 15, speaking from my information. Our advances are high, but it must be borne in mind that the coolie under our system may have a considerable distance to go, whereas in Ceylon he is usually near.

F-3739. We have had criticisms of the Assam Labour Board on the ground that it consists almost entirely of representatives of tea garden managing agents?—I think that constitution is more or less to be expected, because the Board was inaugurated at the express desire of the industry to stop the abuses which were prevailing then in connection with *arkatti* recruitment. The managers are also represented on the Board. There are two practical managers on the Executive Committee.

F-3740. How often does that Committee meet?—It is at the Chairman's option. I think the General Committee meets twice a year; any special matters are dealt with by circular, and if any difference of opinion arises as the result of circulation I presume the Chairman would call a special meeting. The Executive Committee generally meets just after the General Committee. The Chairman circulates papers to the Executive Committee as necessary.

F-3741. The view of your Association, not speaking of the Tea Districts Labour Association, is that there is no longer any necessity for the Assam Labour Board—(Mr. Insch) Yes, that it has outlived its usefulness.

F-3742. There has been criticism on the ground that somebody has been responsible for refusing applications from tea gardens for separate recruiting agencies, and it has been suggested to us that that has been due to the influence on the Assam Labour Board of members of the Indian Tea Association who do not want serious competition with the Tea Districts Labour Association. The Doom Dooma case in particular was referred to?—(Mr. Crawford) It so happens that the Doom Dooma case is within my personal knowledge. I think the Indian Tea Association considered that application, because we were anxious not to have anybody breaking away from the recruiting organization and forcing up rates. If my recollection is correct, it was also referred to the Government of Assam who disapproved of granting to the Doom Dooma Company the right of having another local agency.

F-3743. *Mr. Clow*: When you refer to forcing up rates, do you mean forcing up rates of wages?—No, there was no suggestion of that; I am talking of advances. That is within our knowledge in the Dooars. Before we had an agreement in the Dooars we were operating against one another in particular areas, and it was very remarkable the way in which advances increased in the short period of 18 months even.

F-3744. *Sir Alexander Murray*: People who are not members of the Tea Districts Labour Association might decide to form an association with a view to recruiting without the intervention of the Tea Districts Labour Association. Have you refused any applications of that kind?—The only one we have discountenanced was that of the Doom Dooma Company. There was one put by the Government of Bihar and Orissa of a local agent to represent a certain group of Indian gardens.

F-3745. That is a local agent which is another matter.—You are referring to a separate organization. There was one case which came before the Board to which I think Mr. King referred yesterday. We have no objection to that.

F-3746. Are there any other applications which you have refused?—Not within my recollection.

F-3747. If we could put cases to you you could express your opinion as to them. There is a difference, is there not, between a man who is a member of Tea Districts Labour Association wanting to break away, and you pointing out the advantages to him of not breaking away, and the case of an outside agency not under your control at all wanting to be set up?—Yes.

F-3748. There are only two cases within your knowledge: the Doom Dooma Company and Boloma?—Not Boloma. I could not say what gardens applied for this, but as far as I remember there were six gardens.

F-3749. I suppose you look upon the Assam Labour Board as a child of your own?—We do.

F-3750. Constituted for the express purpose of helping you to put down abuses?—Yes.

F-3751. And it has done that. You say the Assam Labour Board has outlived its usefulness; what is to take its place?—I think we can control ourselves in ourselves. One system is the withdrawal of Section 3 notifications, and recruiting under 92, in which case the Act is still operative, so that if we cannot combine to work to the satisfaction of the Government, the notifications under Section 3 can still be reintroduced. The other is on the lines of our draft bill submitted to the Government of India, which provides for such control as the Government of India or the local Governments may think necessary.

F-3752. Do you suggest if you were left free entirely that Government ought not to re-utilize Section 3 unless they found there were abuses?—I take it the policy of the Government of India as already declared is ultimately the free movement of labour, and that in so far as we are concerned there is an intermediate period during which legislation may apply and in which we shall be on trial. If we come through that trial satisfactorily, then the question of entire freedom can be considered.

F-3753. Would you not need some supervising agency of some description on behalf of Government?—Under the new Act of course it remains with Government to say what control they wish to have.

F-3754. *The Chairman*: Your policy is that you would like to take sole responsibility for a period of, say, 7 or 10 years, to prove at the end of that period that all restrictions can be abolished?—I think so.

F-3755. Therefore you would be on your honour or on your metal to see that nothing is wrong, in order to prove that after what you call an intermediate period there is no need to treat Assam differently from any other part of the country?—That is so.

F-3756. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The statement which you have just handed in does not make it clear what would be the effect if you removed the operation of Section 3?—We should have entire freedom; we could recruit in any way we liked. There would be restrictions in regard to the forwarding.

F-3757. Section 163 would still remain in force?—It would.

F-3758. What would you say is the average working time of your labour force on the garden?—Our information is that the limit of working is round about 6 hours.

F-3759. I am not speaking of the individual worker but of the numbers employed; you have over a million souls in your gardens?—I think possibly the efficiency would be round about 60 per cent.; that is to say, 60 per cent. of the labour force turn out to work.

F-3760. The report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921-22 at page 32 shows that of the total number of labourers on the books—not the souls on the garden—over a period of years the proportion that turned out to work was 77 per cent. of the men, 74 per cent. of the women and 72 per cent. of the children. That is in the months of March and September. The reports on immigrant labour in Assam for the past year show the corresponding figures: 76 per cent. of the men, 73 per cent. of the women and 69 per cent. of the children. What means, active or passive, are employed to get the workers to come out to work?—(Mr. Insch) Tactful handling.

F-3761. Have you any views to express as to why the workers are not turning out as well now as they used to?

The Chairman: There is not much difference in the figures. We were told on the gardens that one factor was the increase of *khet* land.

F-3762. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You consider that increased earnings result in a lowering of efficiency?

The Chairman: Do you not really mean "effectiveness" rather than "efficiency"?—Yes. That answer was given after discussing the matter with the tea managers, and that is the impression we got from them.

F-3763. *Mr. Cliff*: One *sardar* clearly demonstrated to us his method of getting them to work; his method was the use of a cane. I do not know whether you agree with him or not?—(Mr. Crawford) No.

F-3764. *Colonel Garbett*: Is it not a fact that the mentality of the labourer is such that he only wishes to work for a sufficient time to get a sufficient wage to provide for his food for that day, that he does not look to the future and saving money is not in his programme at all?—(Mr. Insch) He is contented with a simple life.

F-3765. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Does that mean that the members of the Indian Tea Association claim to be experts in psychology?

Sir Alexander Murray: I should think the successful manager is.

F-3766. A Government Resolution followed on the 1921-22 report in which it was suggested that the District Sub-Committee should recommend what they considered to be a decent monthly or daily rate of wage. What have you done following on that Resolution?—(Mr. Crawford) I was Chairman then. We convened a special meeting of our Association at Calcutta to discuss the Resolution and the terms of the report with more particular reference to this question of wages. It had never been the practice before for the District Sub-Committees to be directly interested in wages though they may have consulted together to some extent. They had never any powers because these powers were more or less taken up by directors and proprietors. At that time, speaking for my own agency, we could not increase wages without reference to the Board of Directors at home. That was the case with regard to sterling companies, while rupee companies had to refer to the Board of Directors in Calcutta. We passed a resolution that the matter should be referred to the District Sub-Committees. The London Association agreed with the suggestion, and following on that the Tea Association in Calcutta referred the matter to the branches in Assam and Surma Valleys who put it before the District Sub-Committees. Following on that reference there were some adjustments here and there, and, previous to that, some action had been taken in many places with regard to readjustment of wages. In view of the express desire of the Government of Assam that they should be left free, no suggestion was made from the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, in regard to the matter at all; we merely put the position before the branches for the necessary report from the Sub-Committees.

F-3767. The Resolution also said: "The Government of Assam are of opinion that the standard wages for the standard task should, apart from *ticca* earnings, be sufficient to provide a labourer of average capacity and industry with wholesome food, sufficient clothes and a little money over." Have you ever followed that up?—As I have already said, we left the matter entirely to the District Sub-Committees. They reduced the task and in certain cases they increased the wages.

F-3768. When visiting the tea gardens we found women were able to finish the task, without *ticca* work, in 3 hours. Have you ever indicated to your people that instead of working 3 hours they should work 6 or 7 hours?—As an Association we have not; as individuals we leave our managers fairly full powers on questions of that kind. The minimum wage has been continued in the form of *hazira*.

F-3769. But would it not facilitate recruiting if your recruiters told the people that they could earn annas 12 or 14 for 6 hours work?

Diwan Chaman Lall: But can they do it if they are doing heavy hoeing? —Speaking of the agency with which I am connected, there has been a tendency for our cultivation rates to increase. (Mr. Insch) We pay more for the production of tea than we were paying some years ago.

F-3770. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Although you are getting more per bush than you used to get?—That is so.

F-3771. *Mr. Ahmed*: I understand you desire to remove the restrictions on recruitment?—(Mr. Crawford) There are two proposals to give the industry greater freedom; one is to work under Act VI; the other is to work under new legislation. The first proposal would give us complete freedom in regard to recruiting operations, with the possibility that if undesirable features were introduced the Government of India might intervene and again apply the restrictions of Act VI.

F-3772. But you are in favour of recruitment without any restrictions?—Yes, except with regard to forwarding.

F-3773. I take it you are in favour of the abolition of the *sardari* system of recruitment?—No.

F-3774. I do not understand why not, in view of the difficulties and expense of that system. For instance, the State of Bastar do not permit recruiting?—The reason why recruiting was prohibited in Bastar State is that recruiting was so effective there that the officials stopped recruiting because of the tremendous drain from their area.

F-3775. Do you agree with Mr. King that a popular method of recruitment through public agency in addition to the *sardari* system is required?—Yes.

F-3776. I understand that under the *sardari* system each recruit costs you no less than Rs. 150?—It is very difficult to calculate the cost of recruitment per head. There are numerous methods of making the calculation; for instance, the figure is increased if you take into consideration in your calculation the ineffective *sardars*.

F-3777. We have evidence that at least one-third of the *sardars* who go to the recruiting areas do not return to Assam. Is that so?—Yes.

F-3778. That being so, why do you allow so many of your workers to return to the recruiting areas as *sardars* when you have no guarantee that they will bring any recruits or even return themselves?—I think possibly that question could be better answered by the managers who are on the spot, but, speaking from an agency point of view, we have never discouraged our managers from sending down a certain percentage of their labourers in order to keep in touch with the recruiting areas. It is true that many of those who apply for licenses as *sardars* return to their own country, make no attempt to get recruits but merely return to their original agricultural occupations.

F-3779. How do you realize the money you have advanced to those who do not return?—We do not realize the money.

F-3780. So that in the long run the members of your Association are losers?—It is a philanthropic institution.

F-3781. Are you in favour of public employment agencies?—No. I do not think public agencies are necessary under the scheme which we have formulated. (Mr. Insch) We are, of course, prepared to consider any scheme of that sort.

F-3782. You have told the Chairman you are in favour of a scheme by which recruits would have a right to be repatriated at the end of a period such as three years?—Yes, we favour considering it.

F-3783. A reasonable time might be 18 months, 2 years or 3 years?—The time would have to be arranged.

F-3784. As a broad matter of principle, you are prepared to agree that it is a good thing that no restrictions should be placed upon repatriation?—Yes. That is the same as the last matter you referred to.

F-3785. You take short-term recruits for 6 months or a year?—Yes.

F-3786. And you pay for the cost of their repatriation?—Yes, we pay their fares both ways. We employ short-term recruits in certain cases.

F-3787. We have made enquiries in tea gardens and we have found that the coolie thinks that when he receives the bonus of Rs. 12 under agreement he is bound to work in the garden for 12 months and cannot go away.—I have also enquired and I have not found the same impression. They may use the word *girmit* but they certainly attach a different meaning to it.

F-3788. Is your Association in favour of a policy of removing this false impression from the minds of the coolies?—I do not admit that such an impression exists in the minds of the coolies.

F-3789. Does your Association know that the letters addressed to coolies living in the lines are not delivered to them in the lines themselves, but the coolies have to go to the post office to take delivery of them?—That would not happen with regard to unstamped letters.

F-3790. *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Insch, you said that the object of your Association was to promote the common interests of all concerned in the tea industry particularly that of the cultivators?—Yes.

F-3791. Can that by any stretch of imagination be termed to include the common interest of tea garden workers?—The object of the Association is to

"promote the common interests of all persons concerned in the cultivation of tea in India."

The Chairman: In terms it does cover the welfare of the workers.

F-3792. *Mr. Cliff*: Has your Association as an Association taken a survey of the labour problem in the tea industry at all?—The Association has discussed the reports issued by the different Commissions.

F-3793. Is it fair to say that your Association as an Association has from time to time discussed matters that are forced upon their attention?—These particular reports referred to have been forced upon our attention.

F-3794. Can you fairly say that you have visualized the labour problem and taken a proper survey of it?—It is left to the managing agents.

F-3795. Is it true to say that in facing this problem of labour you have no declared policy?—(Mr. Crawford) I do not quite understand what you mean. The principal problem is that of recruitment of labour to which the Association has given considerable attention. Are you referring to welfare of labour?

F-3796. Has your Association ever made an estimate of the man power that is required at the present moment to staff the tea estates with their present area under cultivation?—We aim at having 1½ coolies an acre.

F-3797. You mean actual workers?—A resident force of 1½ coolies an acre. We take the children as half.

F-3798. Does your Association as an Association in dealing with the labour problem continue to take the child labour power in its estimates and provide for their labour?—(Mr. Insch) The Association does not say that.

F-3799. Who says that?—That is the calculation of the managers.

F-3800. Is it part of your policy to employ children or not? Or has it simply grown up with the managing agents and the tea garden managers?—It is the custom of the people and we have endeavoured as far as possible not to upset those customs.

F-3801. You have been in considerable difficulty to attract a satisfactory supply of labour. Has your Association as an Association dealt with the question of wage standards and conditions of work?—(Mr. Crawford) The Association has not done that. That is a matter entirely at the discretion of the companies and the employers.

F-3802. With regard to recruiting you are asking that all restrictions shall be removed and that in any enactment that shall be brought forward there shall be power for the responsible minister to act executively if there is any abuse?—Under the new Act we have that power retained.

F-3803. That is a kind of supervision?—Supervision is provided for in the Act, but the nature of it was never considered. The Minister would reintroduce the notifications under section 3.

F-3804. Otherwise you desire to be perfectly free in regard to recruitment?—As free as possible.

F-3805. Is it your policy always to attract settlers?—Yes.

F-3806. How far have you succeeded in attracting settlers?—(Mr. Insch) Taking into consideration the development of the province and the more intensive cultivation of the gardens, we have more settlers now than we had some 15 years ago.

F-3807. What percentage would you say that represents for the tea industry in Assam?—It has been estimated roughly between 70 to 90 per cent.

F-3808. If you take 90 per cent., then there is no labour problem?—But they want more labour.

F-3809. *The Chairman*: Ninety per cent. of the existing force are permanent settlers?—Yes.

F-3810. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the average duration of the labour force?—I have had an estimate put at 10 years.—I could not say whether it is accurate or not.

F-3811. Has your Association attempted to make an estimate?—No.

F-3812. *The Chairman*: I suppose it varies immensely on the different gardens?—Yes, it does.

F-3813. *Mr. Cliff*: If you could give us an idea about the average duration of the labour force that would help us?—Yes.

F-3814. *The Chairman*: Would it meet your point if we get the average loss per year?—We were told at one place that it was 10 per cent. There again I take it, it varies immensely from one garden to another?—Some estates do not recruit at all; they have a settled population. But estates which have reached the saturation point are few.

F-3815. Would it be wrong if I took it that the annual loss varied from 10 per cent. to as much as 50 per cent. on individual gardens?—I do not know of a case of 50 per cent. I would put it from nothing to 20 per cent.

F-3816. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to recruitment in Assam itself, you have some fixed labour rules governing the movement of labour. Would you be in favour of establishing an agency even under your own supervision within Assam itself through whom alone gardens should employ labour found in Assam?—It is a new point of view to me. I would have to think it over.

Colonel Garbett: It would be rather a hardship on labour in this way. A worker may desire to transfer himself from one garden to another in which he has got his relations. If the other garden is not in the same agency as the first garden, there would be a difficulty.

F-3817. *Mr. Cliff*: It is a matter of transfer. If there are flaws in the scheme, they may be remedied. The labour rules are now weighted in favour of the employer. Labour ought to be free to move and not be liable to be enticed by false promises. On the other hand, the employers must be protected from losing their labour. If the conditions of employment can be clearly stated to a labourer by an agency of this character through whom alone employers should employ labour and at which place all the labour will be registered, then there will be a safeguard for the industry and a safeguard for the labourer?—(Mr. Crawford) That is worthy of consideration. The labour rules are under revision, and in revising them we are going to leave the labour entirely free and direct our attention mainly against enticement.

F-3818. With regard to the lines in which the labourers live, is there any legitimate or sound reason why they should not be a public place?—(Mr. Insch) I do not know whether the coolies themselves would desire this to be done. When we have a line situated near a bazaar, the better type of coolies prefer to go to another line which gives them some privacy.

F-3819. At the moment you are speaking for the Association?—I am speaking for the coolie resident. They generally do not wish to be disturbed by living near the bazaar. They come from the country districts and they want privacy.

F-3820. That is a point of view with regard to the coolies that I must take note of. From the point of view of the Association, is there any legitimate or sound reason why the lines in which there is a population of just over a million should not be made public?—Then you would have to make the whole estate public in that case. The property is a private property. There are generally public roads through the property.

F-3821. You have got a population of just over a million. Is there any sound and legitimate reason why those people should not live in a public place?—It is private property. We pay rent for it. I do not see how we can make it public property.

F-3822. Suppose the Government were to enact, subject to proper compensation, that where these people live is a public place. From the point of view of the Association, is there any sound or legitimate reason why that should not be done?—You mean applying the Land Acquisition Act and taking over the whole of our lines?—I cannot see why we should make it public if it is private now.

F-3823. At the moment I do not see why a million people should be compelled, by certain circumstances probably, to reside in private lines. That is a system that has grown up. It was once prevalent in the southern states of America. Is there any sound or legitimate reason that you can urge against their being made public?—I would like to put it the other way. They are not compelled to live on private lines.

F-3824. Suppose you are not compelling. Take it as a fact that they are living there?—They are free to move.

F-3825. Never mind the question of my having access to them as a well-disposed person. If a proposal was made that these places should be made public, is there any reason that you can urge against it?—We consider this is a question for the people and the managers concerned

F-3826. Would you consider this in the light of the whole community of India?—(Mr. Crawford) I do not think any such law would exclusively apply to the Assam tea industry. It is quite a common practice in India for workers in mills and mines and so on to live on the private lines of their employers.

F-3827. There are many things in India pretty deeply entrenched and well established which a great many people want to alter. What I ask is: Is there any legitimate or sound reason that you can urge against a proposal of that kind?—The only thing we can say is that there is nothing to object to a well-disposed person having access to the lines. We have to consider people who are not well disposed. (Mr. Insch) Everyone wants a little privacy. I myself want a little bit of land to live on and be private.

F-3828. In another case you say there is not much difference between a villager and a tea garden worker with regard to the standard of education?—(*Mr. Crawford*) It is not a question for the Association. It is a matter concerning the proprietors. The Association might make a recommendation about it. But they cannot commit the gardens.

F-3829. Could they not consult their constituents and put up a considered reply as regards their policy in the matter of education?—I shall pass on to another point. There are members of the Commission who have visited the tea estates and several managers who have travelled with them, who have realized that there are a number of people still working on the gardens who believe that they are bound; and apparently no steps were taken in dealing with the tea garden labourers to notify them with regard to the changes in their legal status. If a proposal was put up for the legal status of the tea garden labourer to be made as clear to him as it is to the people in this room, would you have any objection to this being done?—We prefer that it should be done through the managers who know them.

F-3830. Would you object to a person accompanying the manager in order that the public may be perfectly satisfied that the tea garden labourer knows his rights and privileges?—(*Mr. Insch*) It is a surprise to me that he does not know his rights and privileges. I was under the impression that the worker did know that he was free. (*Mr. Crawford*) I take it that the person who accompanies the manager would be an official of Government. There is always the possibility of unsettling the labour force as happened in Ceylon when the *tundu* system was withdrawn.

F-3831. I see your difficulty, but the thing that is paramount is that the tea garden labourer knows his status?—(*Mr. Insch*) My view is that he knows it.

F-3832. I have put this question to several garden managers and they believe they would have trouble if the labourers had some knowledge of their freedom. Let me go on. Have you any objection to the tea garden labourers being able to combine?—There is nothing to prevent them doing it.

F-3833. There is a very great bar as I see it at the moment, and that is their illiteracy. Have you any objection to people who want to secure combination amongst the tea garden labourers taking legitimate steps to bring about that combination?—I should rather see education dealt with first.

F-3834. In some cases in the world, education has come as a result of such combination and it might be so here. You have got a combination here on your own side; what about a combination on the other side?—I appreciate that.

F-3835. It seems to me that they require assistance in order that they may obtain the combination to which they are entitled. Would the Association have any objection in the way of such combination being brought about?—(*Mr. Crawford*) I should like to know the suggested combination.

F-3836. What I am concerned at the moment is whether the tea garden labourer shall as a result of that unity be able to put himself on something like equal terms with the Indian Tea Association to wit if you will. Will you tell us later the views of your Association?—(*Mr. Insch*) It is difficult. It does not matter if they object to the labour force combining. The labour force would combine if they wish to. That is the only reply that the Association could give. (*Mr. Crawford*) We do not object to any development within the garden labour itself. The question is about the outward assistance that you want to introduce. That is where we are suspicious.

F-3837. If you boil it down, it means this: Here is a representative trade union movement in India, a body which is recognized and consulted by the Government. These are the most likely people to take up this question of

organization and assistance?—(*Mr. Insch*) You mean the Trade Union Congress. (*Mr. Crawford*) We had a representative of the All-India Trade Union Congress to whom we afforded special privileges. He misused them and naturally we are cautious.

F-3838. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I would like to be clear in regard to the proposal which the Indian Tea Association is making for the revision of this Act. Is it the Association's suggestion to leave section 3 as it is?—(*Mr. Crawford*) Yes.

F-3839. You want to leave section 3 as it is without the notification, and work it with section 163. Is that the idea?—Yes.

F-3840. *The Chairman*: Is it a fact that your suggestion of what I might describe as "living on the corpse of Act VI" has been ruled out of court by the Government Legal Department?—Certain points were over-ruled by Government.

F-3841. But you have got round those points?—We have.

F-3842. And you have an amended "corpse" to live on?—Yes.

F-3843. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Section 3 substantively refers to notifications?—Yes.

F-3844. If you are going to do away with those notifications, what is the value of section 3?—There is no value.

F-3845. You want section 92?—Yes.

F-3846. Section 92 is also governed by section 3?—It is subject to the provisions of section 3. There would be no notifications under section 3.

F-3847. Section 3 gives the power of issuing notifications?—That is so.

F-3848. You want that to remain?—The power will remain, but the notifications will be withdrawn.

F-3849. The power remains of issuing notifications?—Yes.

F-3850. Do you not think that in tinkering with this particular Act you may possibly get into a worse mess? Is your object to have a new Act whereby freedom is left to you to recruit, and the power is left in the hands of the Local Government to issue such notifications as they choose in regard to the conditions of those recruited, the manner in which they are to be brought to the tea estates, and the provisions to be made for them during the course of their journey to the tea estates?—I might explain, with regard to tinkering with the "corpse," that we could go through an intermediate period of, say, five years, and if during that time everything went satisfactorily, presumably the Government would allow us entire freedom. On the other hand, if there was any indication that the tea industry was not giving a straight deal in the matter, the Government would always have behind them the power of notifications under section 3.

F-3851. Your object is to leave the Local Government free to issue notifications at such times as they choose, but leaving you complete freedom to recruit in any manner that you choose?—Yes. There would be an agreement similar to what there is in the Dooars in regard to the freedom of recruitment amongst ourselves.

F-3852. But being governed by section 163 in regard to the forwarding?—Yes.

F-3853. There is only one difficulty that presents itself to me. All this legislation came into being because of the abuses that had arisen in regard to the *arkatti* system. What control or check do you leave in the hands of the Local Government to prevent such abuses?—There is nothing in these proposals to suggest that the Assam Labour Board should be done away with.

F-3854. Suppose the Assam Labour Board were to be done away with?—There is no check beyond that.

F-3855. Is it your suggestion that you should have some sort of check?—No. The Local Government can keep in touch with developments. We will give them such information as they desire in regard to our operations.

F-3856. The only power which you want to leave in the hands of the Government is power in connection with forwarding?—Yes.

F-3857. Would you not leave any power in the hands of the Local Government to check any abuses in recruiting, if such abuses came to the notice of the Local Government?—The power of the Government would entirely be on

the basis of the re-introduction of section 3, notifications, which we do not desire.

F-3858. *The Chairman*: You do leave in the hands of the Local Government, under your proposals, the power to withdraw a licence from either a *sardar* or a recruiter, do you not?—No. There would be entire freedom under the first scheme.

F-3859. Then your additional recruiting agents would not be subject to having their licences withdrawn by the local authorities?—No. I think it would be better to discuss these legal points with Mr. Milligan this afternoon.

F-3860. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I am not worrying about legal points. I want to get at the system you contemplate. Supposing all restrictions were withdrawn and all power of the Local Government to check abuses in recruiting was withdrawn?—The power is not withdrawn. There is still section 3 under which they can re-issue notifications.

F-3861. I am afraid we are getting into a little confusion. The only power which section 3 gives is the issue of notifications in consonance with the provisions of this Act, which you want done away with. Once you accept the Chairman's point, namely, that it is a skeleton which is left, there are no provisions in regard to which any notifications can be issued?—That is so.

Diwan Chaman Lall: So that it is a position which is contradictory. You give the power to the Local Government to issue notifications in consonance with the provisions of the Act, and yet you say that those provisions have to be done away with, thereby robbing the Local Government of any power to issue notifications.

Sir Alexander Murray: The notifications issued under section 3 are of two kinds—one which deals with the area in which recruiting may or may not be carried on, and the other which deals with the type of recruiters in particular areas.

Diwan Chaman Lall: The wording is "Otherwise than in accordance with such of the provisions of this Act as may be specified in the notifications."

Sir Alexander Murray: These notifications all deal with areas or the personnel of the recruiters.

Diwan Chaman Lall: That may be the position, but the fact is that it must be in consonance with the actual provisions in the Act. They cannot issue notifications except in consonance with the provisions of the Act.

F-3862. *The Chairman*: Would it not be better to have an Act which the ordinary man could understand?—I must admit that it is a controversial question. I have put our position before the Commission.

The Chairman: I understand your position, but at the same time it would be possible to have an Act in which the period was limited to 5 or 10 years.

F-3863. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If that suggestion is accepted, would you be agreeable to there being some power whereby the conditions of employment and the wages in Assam could be regulated?—I take it your point is that if the Chairman's suggestion is acceptable to us, would we accept your proposition that there should be provision for a wage board. I should not think so. If such a wage board were applied to industries generally in India, we could not take exception, but I do not think the Assam tea industry should be singled out specially for that.

F-3864. You are singling out the Assam tea industry for the purpose of recruitment—a condition which does not apply to other industries; and since you are singling out that industry in that particular manner, what objections would you have to setting up a wage board?—There are practical objections which I have not dealt with. There are various differences within the estates themselves. You are also isolating Assam on the point of the wage board. Assam has got to compete with the Dooars, South India, and with other places. I do not see why we should be singled out for the introduction of an innovation in the form of a wage board.

F-3865. How would the existence of a wage board isolate Assam, any more than Assam is isolated from the rest of India at present?—The existence of a wage board would make a difference between Assam and other tea-producing areas.

F-3866. On the contrary, would it not make the position of labour on the tea estates more attractive?—No, I do not think so. The industry has already committed itself to repatriation. Do you expect it to commit itself further than that?

F-3867. *The Chairman*: You think that repatriation would be the real safeguard against any unfair dealing with the labour force?—I think so, ultimately; but there is no doubt that if a garden is unpopular with labour, labour will not remain on it.

F-3868. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Suppose a case where the workers want an increase in wages. They have no trade union. They are dealing with a very highly organized body, the Indian Tea Association and the managers representing it. Do you not think the balance is very heavily weighted in favour of the employers as against the workers, and that some protection ought to be given to the workers?—I do not agree with you.

F-3869. In a particular case the workers on an estate wanted an increase in wages. Action was taken against their leaders?—(*Mr. Insch*) I take it they had broken the law.

F-3870. Action was taken under section 107 under which executive action can be taken against anybody—yourself and myself included—who is breaking any section of the law, if it is held that there is an apprehension in the mind of the particular Magistrate that a breach of the peace is likely to be indulged in?—(*Mr. Crawford*) That is entirely within the power of the Magistrate.

F-3871. Would it not be better to provide some channel whereby such differences could be settled both in the interests of the industry and in the interests of the workers?—Are you not overlooking the fact that we have to give attractions on the gardens in order to encourage labour to come. If those attractions are not sufficient, under this repatriation scheme they can return to their homes or move elsewhere. Furthermore it has been suggested by Mr. Cliff that it should be announced by "beat of drum" that they are free to move anywhere. Do you not think it is asking a little too much to press your suggestion of a wage board?

F-3872. Why is it asking too much? Mr. Cliff reminds me that you just now said that you would be agreeable to an All-India wage board?—I think we are conceding quite enough as an industry.

F-3873. Suppose the workers feel that the wage they are getting is not satisfactory or that you are making deductions (a grave matter referred to by the 1922 Enquiry Committee) which you are not justified in making?—In cases like that they have always recourse to the managers, and my personal opinion is that the managers are a very fair minded lot.

F-3874. Can you tell me what particular increase in wages there has been on the unit system since 1922?—(*Mr. Insch*) We have to go back to the cost of production again which we know has been increased.

F-3875. Have you any figures to show whether, on the unit system, there has been any increase in the rate since 1922, and if so, how much?—I have not brought any comparative figures.

F-3876. Can you get them?—We could send to the different gardens, but we could only pick out a few estates. You would get a much truer account by getting the figures for yourself on your way round.

F-3877. The 1922 Enquiry Committee report says that the rate was increased in certain gardens from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7 for a man, and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 for a woman. Is that the average monthly rate fixed for minimum work (*hazira*) at the present moment?—I rather expected the Commission would get that information on the gardens.

F-3878. Do you not think, as an Association representing employers who employ nearly one million workers, that it is part of your duty to keep in touch with the correct wage statistics, and the fluctuations in the wages paid year by year?—You are now confusing the employers with the Indian Tea Association, because the Association is not an employer of labour. So far as my own firm is concerned, we obtain every month from Assam statistics of the average wages on each garden. We also get statistics of the earnings of the 15 best men and the 15 best women, with the names given, and those statistics are abstracted and sent home to the Directors for information. On the other hand we are bound by the Government of Assam's resolutions to leave the question of wages to District Sub-Committees to arrange.

F-3879. District Sub-Committees of the Tea Association?—Of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association.

F-3880. Does your Association at headquarters get these reports from the districts?—No, that is entirely a matter for the agencies.

F-3881. So that all you are concerned with is the bonus rule, rule No. 1. All you are concerned with is that if one particular garden wishes to pay the workers in the district higher wages than are paid by other gardens, you lay down a prohibitory rule?—(*Mr. Insch*) you are referring now to the original articles of Association. They are inoperative now.

F-3882. Have you a rule to that effect now?—(*Mr. Crawford*) The rule is still there.

F-3883. Is it your policy in practice?—(*Mr. Insch*) No, it is not. (*Mr. Crawford*) I have just proved to you that it is not. I have just shown you that we have, in this particular matter, referred the question to District Sub-Committees in accordance with the recommendation of the 1922 enquiry. If we had stood by that particular rule, we should not have done so.

F-3884. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Apart from these rules there are other rules, and that is what regulates enticement?—Yes.

F-3885. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there a similar provision under which a manager is prevented from engaging workers from another garden by offering higher wages?

Sir Alexander Murray: No.

F-3886. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is that the practice or not?—Our practice is to discourage the enticement of labour.

F-3887. That is to say, the rule remains in practice?—The labour rules remain; and I consider it a business proposition.

F-3888. The fact remains that a manager is prohibited from recruiting a worker from another garden?—He is not prohibited, provided he pays the charges as defined in the rule.

F-3889. *The Chairman*: Is there any agreement or rule within your Association or your Branches or your sub-committees to standardize remuneration?—There is no such rule.

F-3890. On the other hand you have told us that, as far as the sub-committees are concerned, they do regulate by agreement?—That is so.

F-3891. There is no force of law or power of compulsion, but as a practical matter you do notify your local sub-committees to attempt uniformity within their area. Is that correct?—That is correct.

The Chairman: There is, through the sub-committees, in particular areas, an endeavour made to standardize wages.

F-3892. *Rev. Saikia*: Is there any attempt to recruit labourers from amongst the Assamese?—(*Mr. Insch*) Assamese labour is occasionally used for clearing land. I understand that such labour will not settle on the tea estates. (*Mr. Crawford*) The Assamese are not readily available for agricultural purposes. There is a system, through the Tea Districts Labour Association of recruiting Cacharies for seasonal work only in the cold weather.

F-3893. Many coolies come out of the gardens and settle in outlying villages near the gardens. Is any attempt made to employ those people in the gardens? —(*Mr. Insch*) Yes. They get temporary employment. We are always willing to give them employment whenever they come for it. (*Mr. Crawford*) The difficulty about that class of labour is that it is only available in non-harvest or non-sowing periods.

F-3894. *The Chairman*: But you do employ it as far as it is willing to come?—Yes.

F-3895. *Rev. Saikia*: Would it not make for better recruiting if the labourers knew that provision was going to be made for them in their old age? —(*Mr. Insch*) It would be an inducement. There is at present no provident fund for the ordinary worker. We have such a fund for the higher staff, and it is being gradually extended.

F-3896. Many of the coolies when they get old, go out of the gardens and earn their living by begging. If other coolies see that state of things, do you not think it will hinder recruitment?—Can you give us any instances of coolies from gardens begging? Managers always safeguard against that sort of thing by giving allowances. (*Mr. Crawford*) There is a provision made called "subsistence allowance" to meet these particular cases.

F-3897. I can give you many instances?—(*Mr. Insch*) Will you give us the names of the gardens?

F-3898. I am quite willing to furnish the names of the coolies and of the gardens if you want them?—We do. The Association would welcome that information in order to make enquiries.

F-3899. *The Chairman*: Rev. Saikia will send you the information direct. We may take it that it is in your view the exception, and an exception which ought not to exist?—It ought not to exist. (*Mr. Crawford*) I know from our accounts that money is provided for that particular purpose.

F-3900. *Rev. Saikia*: How many schools on each garden would be necessary in order to provide education for the children on the garden?—(*Mr. Insch*) You are a Missionary and perhaps you will make a suggestion.

F-3901. I would suggest that there should be two schools on each garden, one for the boys and one for the girls?—At present we only have one school on one garden.

F-3902. There must be many gardens in Assam which are not represented by the Tea Association. What are they doing towards being represented here? —There are 17 per cent. not in the Indian Association. They could send a memorandum if they wanted to.

F-3903. The *Chairman*: Is your Association open to receive them if they wish to come in?—Yes, they can apply for membership.

F-3904. *Colonel Garbett*: Mr. Chaman Lall said that you stated that the industry would be agreeable to a wage board provided one was set up for all India. What do you mean by "all India"?—(*Mr. Crawford*) I did not quite catch Mr. Chaman Lall's question, but I take it he took up my previous statement that we would not object to a wage board if such were applied to all industries in India. I should like to amplify that. We have to consider our position with regard to agricultural labour. We are coming into competition with them. We are more concerned with the wages of agricultural labour with which we have to compete than with the wages of industrial labour.

F-3905. Do you have provident funds throughout all your Companies?—(*Mr. Insch*) Yes. I cannot answer for the Indian Tea Association, but all big agency houses have provident funds.

F-3906. For the Indian staff as well?—Yes.

F-3907. What is the limit?—(*Mr. Crawford*) Rs. 25 a month is the minimum. We are very gratified at the response to our provident fund. Ninety per cent. of those eligible for membership have applied. There is no compulsion at all.

F-3908. They receive interest at 4 or 5 per cent.?—Yes. (*Mr. Insch*) They subscribe one anna in the rupee with us.

F-3909. Does the tea industry pay any income-tax to the Government?—(*Mr. Crawford*) On forty per cent. of the profits.

F-3910. It used to be 25, did it not?—Yes.

F-3911. Why was it increased?—It was due to the action of the Government of India.

F-3912. *The Chairman*: I understand that you are taxed by income-tax more heavily than an ordinary farmer?—(*Mr. Insch*) The agriculturist is not taxed in India.

F-3913. Is there a special provision for tea gardens?—Yes.

F-3914. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: There was a remission on the tea duty which benefited the industry, was there not?—The duty was a temporary war measure.

F-3915. That remission benefited the industry to the extent of about six lakhs, did it not?—There was never any benefit. When the duty was remitted the proportion of profits taxable was increased from 25 to 40 per cent. We are also maintaining the Tea Cess Organization.

F-3916. *Miss Power*: I wanted to revert, if I might, to the question of education. A number of managers of tea gardens have given as a reason for their objecting to the entry of outside influences, such, for instance, as trade union organizers, to the coolie lines, the fact that the coolie is too uneducated as yet to receive influences of that kind. That naturally raises the question as to what has been the educational policy of the Indian Tea Association to prepare their big labour force for influences which must inevitably break in upon them very shortly, since it is not possible to keep developments in the outside world indefinitely from the coolie lines. If you admit that your workers have been protected

in the sense referred to by these managers, will you tell us what you people as trustees of this big labour force have done to prepare them for these influences?—(Mr. Insch) The tea garden worker is more superstitious than the person in the west.

F-3917. We are prepared to accept that the average coolie is superstitious because he is an uneducated person?—He needs education and the industry as a whole is very sympathetic towards education.

F-3918. But what has your association, as an association, done in that respect?—It is not for the association to deal with it but for those who have to pay for schools and teaching to deal with the question.

F-3919. You feel you have a responsibility for housing and health and matters of that kind but no responsibility for education?—We all feel our responsibility for education. The question was discussed very fully not by the association but by the employers. It was thought that, in the first place, attention should be paid to the improvement of health and hygiene and when this is done improvement of education could be attended to. As a matter of fact, we are making gradual progress in the matter of education.

F-3920. Take the question of adult education. The Assam Government report says quite frankly that there is no industry—it is not a question of the tea industry alone, but of all industries—in the province that is maintaining any school for adult education. Has your association ever considered employing some skilled person who would go into the question of how to educate the adult coolie by modern methods such as the cinematograph?—No.

F-3921. I suppose you know that there are film companies which are now engaged exclusively upon getting out educational films?—Yes; we are pleased to learn that.

F-3922. I was recently hearing of the very excellent work that had been done by one manager who happens to be an enthusiast in this question of the use of the bioscope, and it struck me that it might be quite possible for your association to initiate a travelling library of such films for the use of your members which would be a very valuable work in the education of adult coolies throughout Assam. I wonder whether it had occurred to your association to investigate all the new movements that are taking place in the realm of education for the benefit of the illiterate adult?—The association will gladly consider the suggestion. (Mr. Crawford) Some years ago when I was the Chairman of the Tea Association, we organized a cinema tour all over the tea districts with a view to interest labour and our action then resulted in a considerable number of cinema shows being shown at different places. Our managers had specific instructions to arrange for cinema shows on their estates, whenever it was possible, and charge the expense to the estate. In regard to educational films, I have not seen them here yet. I should think that the proposal is worth considering. In regard to schooling, I think you referred to Assam particularly. I think that the Dooars is in a more advanced position in regard to schools than Assam; that is my understanding of the position. We have encouraged it in every possible way in the Dooars. All the managers have discretion to start schools.

F-3923. Education and particularly adult education is a very technical subject which is more properly the province of a specialist. You cannot expect the manager of a tea garden, who is primarily a business man, also to be an educational expert, knowing how to get hold of the type of machinery which would be the best medium for educating coolies of the kind that you employ in the tea industry. Would it not be a valuable thing if your association, which I take it is a reasonably prosperous one, were to consider employing an expert to advise your different companies and gather together for them the available material of this kind with a view to a concerted campaign of adult education?—I certainly think it would be considered, but we require a proposition to be put before us. We, in Calcutta, are not experts either in that particular sphere.

F-3924. The reason why I particularly emphasize this matter is this: At Christmas, I watched the first bioscope film that had ever been shown to a collection of over a thousand Mughs. The programme itself is little worth detailing with the exception of one item which dealt with steam ploughs. These people, who up to that time had been comparatively apathetic, gave one tremendous shout of excitement when they saw the film dealing with steam ploughs. The film was a comparatively old one. There are better steam ploughs manufactured now. But the immediate gripping of the attention of these thousand primitive people by this film was an example of what could be done if you could give, for instance, suitable shows twice a week on your tea gardens. You could collect together a travelling library of films and pass them round to the members of your

association. This could very easily be done if you had an expert who kept himself in touch with the film companies in England, America and elsewhere that are now producing educational films for people in all stages of development. For instance, you could improve the technical skill of your workers by showing a film on the cultivation of tea such as I understand one manager did with a great measure of success on his estate. It is merely a suggestion and I wondered whether it had occurred to any of you?—We are following it in the State of Travancore, where we have a cinema house of our own. We have made arrangements with cinema firms both in Madras and in Bombay for the supply of films. These are meeting with a good reception. I think three or four performances a week are given. But these films are not all educational films.

F-3925. Take now the question of the children. I understand from some managers that one of the difficulties now is that the children having a considerable earning capacity, are not allowed by their parents to avail themselves of such facilities as may exist. If you had education through the eye by films for the grown-ups and also included them in the children's programme, and at the same time made it clear that only after so many hours' education would a child be allowed to do so many hours work, would you not find that much of the prejudice of parents and children against education would die down?—(*Mr. Insch*): Yes.

F-3926. Would there be any likelihood of recruiting of coolies being easier if some term other than "coolie" were used to denote the tea garden worker? I take it that your worker is a skilled and not an unskilled person?—You mean the term "coolie" connotes an unskilled worker?

F-3927. Yes, and moreover is there not a certain amount of prejudice against the use of that term?—Not amongst the coolies themselves, as far as I know.

F-3928. Are you sure that that is so? Is it possible for any body of persons so designated to be dissociated entirely from the prejudice which exists in connection with that word?

Lieutenant-Colonel Garbett: I think there is a certain amount of prejudice. For instance, if you address a coolie as *sardar* he feels proud and throws out his chest.

F-3929. *Miss Power*: Do you feel that the industry might gain by giving its trained workers some recognition of their skill by calling them by some term which conveys a higher status than that implied by the expression "coolie"?—(*Mr. Crawford*) That is a new idea.

Colonel Garbett: I think they would appreciate it.

F-3930. *The Chairman*: On that point we were distinctly informed that one reason, perhaps the main reason, why the Assamese do not freely offer themselves for work in the garden when they need employment was because they regarded themselves as being higher in status than a coolie and that if some other name such as the tea garden labourer were universally used to describe the worker in a tea garden, that might remove the prejudice of the Assamese, and you might thereby do two good things—increase your own supply of labour and increase the avenues of appointment open to the Assamese villagers in the neighbourhood who, I understand, are in some cases much worse off than the worker on the tea garden. That is only an additional point to the point raised by Miss Power. It does seem to me—and I have it in my notes also—well-worth considering by your association that you should completely eliminate the term "coolie" from your literature and from ordinary use, if you can, throughout the tea gardens. Possibly it is a step that would cost you nothing?—No. The same thing would, of course, apply to the Assam Labour Board.

F-3931. *Miss Power*: What percentage of the coolies on the gardens of your association are women and children?—I have the figures of sex proportion. In 1928-29, 77·4 women against 100 men in the Assam Valley and 99·4 women against 100 men in the Surma Valley.

F-3932. That includes children as well?—Yes.

F-3933. You have no statistics to show the percentage of women and children?—I can get it for you later on.

F-3934. Would it be fairly accurate to say that two-thirds of your labour force consists of women and children?—I could not say that. I can easily find it out for you.

F-3935. It does not matter about the exact figures, but in view of the large number of women and children who are concerned in this industry, I wondered whether it had ever occurred to the Indian Tea Association that it might be valuable to have a woman official associated with it?—(*Mr. Insch*): You mean a

woman who could deal with the enforcement of laws in connection with health and hygiene?

F-3936. I think she would probably attend to that also, but at the moment I was not thinking of a woman official employed by Government for the enforcement of laws, but rather of a woman worker of your business association. I agree that there is a great necessity for a woman official; that we have already discussed with the official witnesses. Would you be prepared to consider that other point?—We shall have to put it before the committee, but I am not quite sure whether it is a point that should be considered by the association as such.

F-3937. Take an instance of the value of a woman's view point which I have raised with other witnesses. I have been struck by the very great care taken by the garden management of orphan children where an epidemic has removed both parents, but I find that it has never once occurred to the management to ascertain whether any relations of those orphan children exist in the recruiting areas from which their parents came who might desire to claim those children after the death of their parents and bring them up. The gardens retain those children taking every care of them as potential labour force but they are never returned to the bosom of the family?—Really they are adopted; if not adopted they are brought up.

F-3938. They become tea garden coolies?—Normally, yes.

F-3939. I feel that it should be open to their families to have them returned to their relations as we should do in the case of any relation of ours. Do you not think that the woman's point of view might usefully be associated with the garden management by this means?—We shall consider the proposal.

F-3940. Mr. Chaman Lall, when dealing with the question of a minimum wage, raised the matter of making the tea garden labour attractive to potential recruits. Do you not think, if such things as maternity benefits and minimum wage had a legal basis so that the *sardar* could definitely state, for instance, that not less than so much wage could be earned by a reasonably diligent coolie and that such and such facilities were legally obtainable by every woman in case of child-birth, that you would increase the attractiveness of tea garden labour?—We are not in favour of making it legal.

F-3941. For instance, we understand that the coal mines at Margherita have no difficulty in recruitment, one of the reasons stated being that they have a guaranteed minimum. It is not a legal minimum but the Company is able to say to a worker "you cannot earn less than so much". It is true that it is a higher wage than is earned in the tea garden, but the attraction probably in part is that the workers know that they cannot earn less than so much?—(*Mr. Crawford*) The coal mines practically employ what we call casual or temporary labour. In our case it is only since the last three years that we have started recruiting short-term labour for Assam on any appreciable scale, but our case is different from that of the coal mines.

F-3942. Yes, but taking the situation as a whole, do you not think that a guaranteed minimum wage would form an attraction to your workers?—I do not think so. A tremendous lot depends on the *sardar* and his personal knowledge of the gardens. I do not think there is any necessity for legislation, say, in regard to maternity benefits because we ourselves are now giving very liberal benefits.

F-3943. Do I understand that as an association you are against the fixing of a legal minimum wage?—(*Mr. Insch*): We consider that one of the attractions of the tea garden, particularly with the unit system, has been that the coolie can work for a short spell, say, for two hours if he wished to and spend the rest of the time in attending to his own work.

F-3944. A minimum wage would not preclude that. There seems to be a confusion in the minds of Assam employers between the length of time for which a man is required to work and the question of a minimum wage. All that a minimum wage law would do, if it were passed, would be to require a tea garden to pay such a piece-rate as would yield the agreed minimum hourly wage to a coolie. That piece-rate would vary according to the occupation that he was engaged upon, the season of the year and so forth, but it would do no more than make it ineumbent upon the garden management so to fix its piece-rates as to yield to an ordinarily diligent coolie not less than so much an hour?—We are doing that now.

F-3945. If most of the members of your association are already doing it, why do you as a body object to the fixation of a minimum rate which would bring the worst gardens up to the level of the others?—(*Mr. Crawford*) Your suggestion is to introduce a machinery to see that this minimum wage is complied with.

F-3946. The general principle behind a minimum wage is that it should be fixed where there are no arrangements existing for the effective regulation of wages by collective agreement or otherwise. I presume you would admit that there is no possibility of collective agreement as between tea garden coolies and a body of managing agents such as your association? You would agree that there is no possibility of collective bargaining as between even the garden coolies and their garden managers?—I thought you were referring to the collective bargaining as between the Tea Association and the garden coolies and not as between the managers and the coolies. The Tea Association is not principally concerned in the matter of wages; that has been left to the sub-committee to put up recommendations, or in other words to the managers; so any bargaining will be as between the coolies and the managers.

F-3947. What I am asking is whether you as an association consider that there is any real possibility of collective bargaining between even your managers and the tea garden coolies in their present state of education?—I think so.

F-3948. *Mrs. Rahman*: In your memorandum you refer to the Indian assistants being frequently placed in charge of outlying divisions of an estate. May I know the percentage that you employ?—(*Mr. Insch*) If you want the percentage for the association as a whole, I am afraid I cannot give it now. I can only tell you personally that we have two Indian managers on our property. (*Mr. Crawford*) We have also two Indian managers on our estates.

F-3949. What will be the difference in pay between the Indian assistants and European assistants occupying the same position?—(*Mr. Insch*) It depends on their experience. These men that I refer to are paid about the same as European assistants with a year or two years' experience.

F-3950. Are they paid the same salary?—Not in all cases. If the Indian manager is a beginner in the line he is started on about Rs. 250 a month. (*Mr. Crawford*) We also pay our men commission.

F-3951. That is the minimum that he draws?—(*Mr. Insch*) Yes; he also draws his commission.

F-3952. With regard to garden doctors you say that estates are gradually being staffed with qualified men with the L.M.F. degree or its equivalent. May I know what this degree represents?—I cannot say, but these are the men that we are advised to engage. Our difficulty has been that we cannot dismiss the men who have been in service for a long time, but as vacancies occur we fill them by qualified men. You will admit that it is most unfair to dismiss people who have served for many years.

F-3953. *Mr. Clow*: You have suggested, practically that the operation of section 3 of Act VI should be suspended for a number of years?—(*Mr. Crawford*) Yes. I do not want to enter into a technical discussion with you, but I think section 92 and rules under section 163 will be a sufficient safeguard in the matter of recruitment and that all the notifications under section 3 may be cancelled.

F-3954. But 163 only refers to forwarding?—Yes. I should like to clear the position. The reason why we are suggesting this change is because we want an intermediate control, our idea being ultimately to get entire freedom.

F-3955. I do not see that there is any intermediate control at all?—Under the Act, of course, not, but we have no guarantee that if an Act providing for such control is mooted it will be considered by the Legislative Assembly.

F-3956. You have been anxious throughout to avoid introducing legislation if you could?—That is the position.

F-3957. But suppose this suggestion were accepted, your association could not accept responsibility for those gardens which are not members of your association?—You have got to bear in mind that this suggestion means that we are not going to favour any alteration in the Act, or the rules or the executive orders, and that the Assam Labour Board must continue.

F-3958. It means that the local Governments will practically have no control at all, and the Assam Labour Board will be in the air. Suppose there is no such thing as illegal recruiting. It would be ineffective for the Assam Labour Board to attempt supervising?—I agree, but the Board can certainly represent such cases to Government and if Government consider that this privilege is being abused they could take executive action under section 3.

F-3959. That means re-introducing the old system?—Yes.

F-3960. There was a recent experiment when you opened recruitment in the province of Bombay; that was entirely free recruiting. The information we had in Bombay was that, to begin with at any rate, there were a number of unfortunate

incidents in connection with recruiting?—I think we have profited by that. Now we are recruiting through the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-3961. You cannot guarantee that if you had a system of free recruiting all the Assam employers would recruit through the Tea Districts Labour Association?—I cannot guarantee, but still we may meet with good success. When it is successful in the case of Dooars I do not see any reason why we should not meet with the same success here as well.

F-3962. We have heard a lot of complaints about the tremendous expense incurred for recruiting, and there are certainly legitimate grounds for complaint?—As I endeavoured to show this morning, a good deal of expense is due to the inoperative *sardar* which, according to my calculation, represents about 37; then the clothing expenses which we incur. I am not taking into account the first advance that we give to the *sardar* because that is prescribed by an agreement of our own. But the second advance and the third advance are given according to the option of the local agents. Clothing is not prescribed; it was prescribed at one time but was done away with—a step which we are strongly against.

F-3963. It can be prescribed under section 163?—It is not now prescribed.

F-3964. But it can be?—Yes. Then we give a cash bonus of Rs. 5 to each of the new coolies at the depôt and another Rs. 5 at the estate; this could be done away with. We incur higher expenses in connection with the railway journey than the Dooars or Ceylon. We have got our commission to *sardars* which could possibly be reduced by agreement by ourselves. Another very important factor is the large number of local agencies we maintain; we have 42 agencies as against possibly 8 for Ceylon. When we recruit from the Indian States we have got to pay Rs. 15 for each *sardar's* license under the model rules and Rs. 5 for each coolie recruited. There is of course the commission to be paid to the Tea Districts Labour Association. If we had free recruiting, then the expenses in connection with some of these items at least could be reduced.

F-3965. Your Association has no control over the finances of the Tea Districts Labour Association?—No.

F-3966. Suppose an agency firm thinks that its overhead charges are excessive it would have no remedy except to start an organization of its own?—We have had the experience of starting an organization of our own at Bombay, and we found that it cost more than it would if we had recruited through the Tea Districts Labour Association. After all you have got to maintain your forwarding depots and various agencies.

F-3967. The only possible way in which most of the expense can be saved is by eliminating the *sardar*?—I have made a considerable study of that question and I still think that the *sardar* is the backbone of the system.

F-3968. If recruiting is done by any other method it ought to be considerably cheaper?—I agree with you that if you have more facilities in the matter of recruiting you would eliminate great expenditure. For instance, you can cut down by 20 per cent. the unsuccessful *sardars* which would considerably reduce the amount of expense.

F-3969. I think you suggested earlier that though you had the knowledge that some of the *sardars* would be unsuccessful yet you sent them because you wanted that they should maintain touch with their villages?—Yes. When I said that we could cut down by 20 per cent., I was answering a specific question for reducing the recruiting expense.

F-3970. But that expense will have to be borne under any other method of recruitment?—Yes.

F-3971. Do you think it worth-while to spend on *sardars* without any chance of getting recruits?—I do not know what the general opinion is, but personally I think it is a very good thing to do it. We practise it extensively.

F-3972. But the presumption is that if you did not derive any advantage you would not be sending unremunerative *sardars*?—Our main intention is that they should maintain touch with the villages.

Sir Alexander Murray: Under the present system the coolies can only be sent as *sardars*, and that is their difficulty.

F-3973. *The Chairman*: Would it not be better for you if you were free to send people on leave apart from making them *sardars*?—Yes. They do so in the Dooars. They are sent with what we call a leave chit so that the local agency depôt people can identify them and arrange for their return to the estate.

F-3974. *Mr. Clow*: Was not one cause of the abuses which occurred under the old system of recruitment, the fact that the professional recruiter was not subject to control?—That is so.

F-3975. What I want to suggest is this: If the recruiter were a man subject to the full control of the local authorities on the spot, and they could at any time put him out of action, suspending his license he would not be such a dangerous individual?—I think we had some experience of that in the Dooars; I am speaking for my firm. We got the local officers to vet the people before we gave license to them.

F-3976. *The Chairman*: With what result?—The results were excellent. We enquired from the police inspector and if his report were not satisfactory, no license was issued.

F-3977. *Mr. Clow*: Looking at it from the point of view of the local official he is more likely to feel a sense of security if the man engaged were living on the spot subject to his supervision, direction and control than he would with a *sardar* who may appear and disappear very frequently?—I see your point. That was the very system that we followed in this particular case.

F-3978. It has been suggested that Act VI is responsible for the difficulties in the way of recruiting. Supposing there was free recruiting, do you consider that the conditions is Assam are sufficiently attractive to attract labour voluntarily and that it will come without any machinery whatever?—(*Mr. Insch*) A certain number would come.

F-3979. Not a substantial number?—No, because all will not know what the conditions are.

F-3980. As regards wages, is there any advantage in the unit system?—Yes, because the coolie may work for a short time on the garden.

F-3981. Do you not think that in some cases that may be a disadvantage both from the point of view of the management and from the point of view of the labourer?—It may be from the point of view of the management but not from that of the labourer because he spends the rest of the time on his rice fields.

F-3982. You subscribed earlier to the suggestion that if you gave more wages the coolie would do less work?—Yes.

F-3983. If that is actually the case you can make him do more work by paying him a smaller wage and putting the balance into a provident fund?—I think that would be unfair.

F-3984. Why? It is to his own interest to put it into a provident fund which would provide giving him a holiday later?—(*Mr. Crawford*) The ordinary coolie will not understand an intricate system like that. Four or five years ago we engaged 1,500 Santhals with a promise that they would be given 10 as. a day for 7 hours work. They arrived on the garden and sat tight; they did 3 or 4 *nals* and claimed 10 as., and we had to repatriate the whole lot of them.

F-3985. Do you consider that the standard of living of the coolies has risen during the last few years?—(*Mr. Insch*) Yes, I think it has.

F-3986. Is not that in itself a refutation of your theory, because if the coolie had fixed a limit to his earnings which would provide him with all his necessities, it is impossible for the standard of living to have risen?—It is much easier to earn now than it was before.

F-3987. It was suggested to us by many garden managers that the coolie works till he earns a fixed amount and that if you raise his wages he will simply do less work and keep his earnings at that same level?—I think he will work a little better. (*Mr. Crawford*) There are certain castes who are particularly anxious to make as much money as possible, while other classes want as long a leave as possible.

F-3988. In other words, you do not agree with the statement?—It can be of application in some cases but it cannot be of general application.

F-3989. Would you see any objection in allowing pedestrians—not traffic—a statutory right of access to all places, at any time, where the coolies live?—(*Mr. Insch*) I do not see how you can protect your lines from thieves. The coolies would object to it strongly.

F-3990. I am rather struck by the very great apprehension shown by the managers and shared, I think, by officials and probably justifiable, that labour might be very easily disturbed by outside influences. I know of no industry in India where the same attitude is taken?—You have the example of the disturbance in the jute mills.

F-3991. But I do not think the management or the officials spend sleepless nights wondering whether any agitator is coming or not?—I think they did have a sleepless night.

F-3992. This extraordinary apprehension that the labour may be excited is not general throughout India?

Colonel Garbett: We had a bad experience in 1921-22.

The witness (*Mr. Crawford*): We have to take into consideration the isolated nature of the tea gardens as compared with the jute mills in Calcutta. If there was any trouble there they could within a very short time get the assistance of the police but the same is not the case in the tea gardens.

F-3993. You would not be prepared to agree to the suggestion that this apprehension points to the idea that conditions might not be altogether satisfactory?—No.

F-3994. *The Chairman*: Apart from the question of the ingress of private individuals on to private property, are you aware of any cases where the garden workers are prevented for leaving the estate to attend to the markets and fairs?—(*Mr. Insch*): No.

F-3995. So that they have the opportunity of mixing with their fellow-men or meeting any one who may wish to speak to them?—That is so.

F-3996. In your belief there is a full opportunity for those who live outside the tea gardens, should they please, to meet with any of their fellow citizens anywhere on the public roads or in any other public place, fairs or markets or otherwise?—That is so.

F-3997. *Mr. Cliff*: The Government say that in dealing with this problem we must take into account the joint family earnings. Is that the position taken up by your Association?—(*Mr. Insch*) We do so.

F-3998. Do you regard that as an economic necessity of the tea industry that children's earnings should be taken into account?—No, I do not think that children would make a great deal of difference.

F-3999. Many of the children earn as much as the women? They often help their parents.

F-4000. And they seem to be employed for a pretty long period. If there should be anything like the present standard of life, is it necessary that they should depend on the earnings of the children?—If the parents would care to work a few more hours, it would not be necessary.

F-4001. With regard to the wages, speaking generally, there is a fairly common level in the several districts?—That is so.

F-4002. You have said that the adjustment of wages is a question for the sub-district associations?—Yes.

F-4003. Is there any difficulty, taking these district associations as units of organization, to co-opt suitable representatives of labour, and possibly Government officials, and determine the minimum wage or the common standard for these districts?—It is worthy of consideration.

F-4004. Would you be prepared to consider the question of minimum wage in relation to your own organization and see whether minimum wages cannot be fixed for the districts?—I do not see any economic or practical difficulty in it. If you consider that, I would be glad.

F-4004a. If recruiting is fairly free, is it not possible for your Association to give the public of India satisfaction that the people are being properly treated on the gardens; and as a means of giving satisfaction would you be prepared to have a Board of Control here in Assam to control the labour conditions here?—That is also worthy of consideration.

F-4005. Will it be possible, Mr. Chairman, to have these matters considered by the Association so that we may have their views on them?—If you put up a scheme, we are prepared to consider it.

F-4006. Now take the general position. I understand that public opinion in India wants control with regard to recruiting. My present view is that the public opinion here is not satisfied with the control in Assam, and wants to be satisfied that the conditions here are good. Having regard to the demand for free recruiting, would not your Association consider as one of the means of gaining public confidence the establishment of a Board of Control here in Assam?—Is it following Mr. Chalmers' proposal?

F-4007. I am not following his proposal at the moment. I am thinking of the particular point of gaining the public confidence of India. They want some one apart from tea garden managers to assure them that there is control and regulation in Assam.—Do you mean an official?

F-4008. I think you will have to co-opt somebody representing public opinion. Would you try and consider as an Association whether such a principle could be worked out in the tea industry here?—I doubt if the Association would be prepared to work it out. If we had a scheme put before us, we would consider it.

F-4009. You want us to put up a scheme?—Yes.

F-4010. I am rather asking whether you would not consider the general principle and put up a scheme to us?

The Chairman: Mr. Cliff thinks that those who live in the industry know most about it and therefore most capable of preparing a scheme?—I could not promise that the association would put forward a scheme.

F-4011. *Mr. Cliff*: Would you give consideration to the question of gaining the confidence of the public in India by assuring them that apart from the tea planters themselves there are representatives of the public who can have some say in the regulation of wages and conditions of work in the tea industry? Would you give your consideration to that general proposition?—(*Mr. Crawford*) Have they no confidence in the Government of Assam?

Mr. Cliff: One might make many observations on that. I want the tea industry itself to inspire this confidence. I would be glad if you will consider it.

F-4012. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Cliff put a question to you indicating that the tea industry depended to a certain extent on the children's earnings to supplement the family earnings of the workers therein. I have taken out the figures which are given in Statement VII of the Emigration Report of the Province of Assam. It says that the total monthly average cash earnings (excluding allowances) based on September and March returns for the two divisions, the Assam Valley and the Cachar Valley, amounted to Rs. 47,67,895. The children's earnings shown against that are Rs. 4,31,608, or about 9 per cent. of the whole?—Yes.

F-4013. From the money point of view it would mean that 9 per cent. of the total wages are earned by the children?—Yes, with a free system of recruiting we could do without those children.

Mr. Cliff: Taking the report of Government and not counting annas, the children's earnings are in the relation of Rs. 7 to Rs. 24 to the family earnings.

Sir Alexander Murray: But there are more men and women than children working in the tea industry.

The Chairman: I think you view it from different standpoints. And both views seem to be correct.

F-4014. *Colonel Russell*: I think you have spent considerable sums of money estimated at several lakhs of rupees on the control of kala-azar with considerable success?—(*Mr. Insch*) Yes.

F-4015. You agree that unhealthy gardens are unpopular, and if properly controlled anti-malarial work were planned and carried out as energetically as you carried out the kala-azar campaign you would find less difficulty in recruiting labour and would have a greater labour force?—We are doing that now.

F-4016. But not to any large extent?—These anti-malarial schemes are still in an experimental stage.

F-4017. There seems to be very little relationship between the Assam Public Health Department and the tea areas. Are you in favour of closer co-operation between the two?—Yes, much closer co-operation.

F-4018. Would you favour the appointment of one or two expert malariologists, probably by Government, to advise medical officers and managers in connection with the control of malaria?—We are at present subscribing to the Tropical School of Medicine, Calcutta. Some others have made their own arrangements.

F-4019. Apparently some of the advice that you have had has not resulted in very much success?—No.

F-4020. So that would it not be better if an expert malariologist lived in Assam for a considerable period of time, thoroughly acquainted himself with the conditions here and then made specific recommendations?—It would be worthy of consideration. (Mr. Crawford) You are aware that the Tropical School of Medicine has an expert malarialogist on their staff. There has been a difference of opinion between

that expert and certain other experts in regard to anti-malarial work here. If you get a difference of opinion among experts, how can we proceed?

F-4021. That is why I suggest the appointment of an expert malariologist who would stay in Assam and study the conditions here thoroughly for some time and then make recommendations. He would be in a more favourable position to make recommendations than a man who comes here for a week or a month and makes certain recommendations which may or may not be carried out.—(*Mr. Insch*) That is a point which will go before the Assam Branch. It would come to us through that Branch. (*Mr. Crawford*) Malaria has been considerably reduced on many gardens. Any one who knows about Dr. Ramsay's work will agree that considerable progress has been made in this direction.

F-4022. My point is that this work should be general, because it would be to your ultimate benefit. Would not a scheme of the kind I have suggested be better?—(*Mr. Insch*) Yes.

F-4023. *The Chairman*: As representatives of the Indian Tea Association, I want to draw your attention to the use of certain terms which have a bad effect on your recruiting. I see that the word "absconding" is used in many places. We are not accustomed in other parts of the world and in other industries to call a man who leaves his work an "absconder." We quite understand there are two things: absence with leave and absence without leave. Would it be possible for you to get rid of the term?—I gather that it is a relic of old days?—Yes, we shall do so.

Mr. Cliff: The Government also use that expression.

F-4024. *The Chairman*: The Government also?—It is just as well to get rid of the terms which refer to a past period and which carry some unpleasant meaning along with them. They tend to make the people think that something still exists which may have passed away?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. T. C. CRAWFORD, Mr. J. A. MILLIGAN and Lieutenant-Colonel D. S. MACKAY, representatives of the Tea Districts Labour Association, Calcutta.

F-4025. *Mr. Clow*: How long has your Association been in operation?—(*Mr. Crawford*) It was started in 1892.

F-4026. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I think this must be put on record. In 1859 there was a tea planters' association for the purpose of recruiting. In 1861 the competition of the contractors necessitated an enquiry which resulted in the first Act to regulate recruiting.—These are the standing instructions of the Association and this gives an account of its origin. (Note put in.)

F-4027. *Mr. Clow*: It is more or less in recent years that the Association has attained a dominating position in respect of recruitment?—In my time, going back 12 years, there has been very little difference in membership.

F-4028. What percentage of recruitment do you control?—Ninety-three per cent. of Assam and 88 per cent. of the European interests in the Dooars. (*Mr. Milligan*) We do not know what percentage of the total labour force in the Dooars is sent by us, because we do not know the figures of what other people recruit.

F-4029. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Could you not give an estimate on the acreage basis? Will it be 93 per cent. of the acreage in Assam and 50 per cent. of the acreage in the Dooars?—(*Mr. Crawford*) We find it difficult to get the acreage figures.

F-4030. *Mr. Clow*: You are not concerned with the Darjeeling area?—No, we recruit for the Dooars and the Terai. The same type of labour is suitable for the gardens on the plains. But quite a different type of labour is needed for the hill gardens. They are worked by Nepalese labourers.

F-4031. Could you give some indication of the organization you maintain for the purpose of recruiting?—(*Mr. Milligan*) Under Act VI local agents must be appointed for every district not necessarily in every district; it depends on the orders of the Local Government. To all these local agents *sardars* are accredited. These local agents are in some places grouped together under Superintendents.

Colonel Mackay is the Superintendent of the Central Provinces Agencies other than Raipur and Bilaspur. Similarly, we have other Superintendents. I am the Superintendent of the Association who lives in Calcutta, and go on tour visiting the several places as required by the Committee. A separate control is exercised by the Secretaries of the Association, Messrs. Begg, Dunlop and Co., Ltd. Above the whole of this organisation there is the Committee of the Association.

F-4032. *The Chairman*: What is the status of these agents and Superintendents in terms of salary?—Colonel Mackay is the senior Local Agent. His salary is Rs. 1,800 a month. He is the Local Agent at Jubbulpur and the Superintendent of the other Local Agents in that circle. He has been 25 years in India, 8 years as a tea planter, and 17 years as a Local Agent of the Tea Districts Labour Association. He is at present Superintendent of the Upper Central Provinces Agencies, and Local Agent at Jubbulpur. He has held charge of the Agencies at Ranchi, Waltair, Bilaspur, Raipur, Cuttack, and Jubbulpore. Here is a note which will give an idea of the status of the various local agents (handing in note).

The Chairman: I wanted to satisfy myself that they were persons of responsibility and substance.

F-4033. *Mr. Clow*: How do you select the Local Agents?—The Local Agents are selected by the Committee. A list of applicants is maintained in the office of the Secretaries. When a vacancy occurs suitable applicants may be asked to visit the various members of the executive committee who record their opinion about the applicants. I am also asked to give my opinion about the prospective candidates. The appointment is made by the Committee after considering these opinions.

F-4034. How is the Committee appointed?—The Assam members of the general committee are elected by the votes of the garden managers. Up country managers are sent ballot papers in which they record their votes for their members. Calcutta members also are elected by vote. The General Committee then appoints the Executive Committee.

F-4035. Does the Committee control the financial side, or is that controlled by the Secretaries?—Sanction of the Committee has to be obtained for any extraordinary items of expenditure. There is a regular budget and within the budget the Secretaries have discretion to spend money.

F-4036. Is your Association run for profit, or not?—It is not run for profit.

F-4037. What do you do with profits if they accrue?—In the event of profit being made it is put in the reserve fund if the reserve fund should require that. It is also redistributed among the members in the form of concessions in the succeeding year.

F-4038. Are the Local Agents whole-time officers?—Absolutely whole-time officers.

F-4039. What about the Local Agents of other agencies?—You mean the three local agents in Ranchi?

F-4040. Yes?—All three are whole-time employees, but one has tea gardens to look after as well as the recruiting agency.

F-4041. The business of the Local Agents, I take it, is to supervise the work of the *sardars* and start the process of forwarding the coolies they recruit?—They have also to register the coolies under the Government rules. There are no official registering officers appointed under the Act. The Local Agent keeps an eye on the *sardar* and reports any offences committed by him. He also takes disciplinary action in the case of any misconduct on the part of the *sardar*. But he is not in a position to give assistance to the *sardar* in the operation of recruiting, even in the way of propaganda. He is allowed to finance him. Registering and forwarding the coolies is his principal business.

F-4042. How is he allowed to finance him?—Are there any rules of the Association in regard to this?—A sub-committee of the Indian Tea Association lays down a maximum for first advances. It has not met for some years. We are still acting on the last decision. First advances are regulated by consideration of the distance the *sardar* has to travel from the place of accommodation to the place where he is going to recruit. In the case of short distances, a small first advance is given, and the *sardar* returns in a week or two for a second advance, on which he is expected to bring in recruits. Such advances range from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10. When the distance to be travelled, and other difficulties, render it impossible for the *sardar* to return soon to the Local Agent, a larger advance is given so as to enable him to bring in recruits without having to return for more money first, and to cover

his subsistence for a period of some duration. For instance, in the case of *sardars* operating in Bastar State through the Raipur Agency (which is a very long journey and the *sardar* is not likely to return for a month) the first advance is up to Rs. 40.

F-4043. Could you very briefly describe the course of the *sardar* from the time he leaves the garden?—He takes a certificate from the garden manager and then goes to the District Magistrate. If the latter is satisfied that he is a fit and proper person to be a *sardar*, he countersigns the certificate. The *sardar* then proceeds to Gauhati. All he is supposed to get from his employer is his fare to the nearest place of accommodation of the Tea Districts Labour Association, which, in the case of Assam, is Gauhati. We take him over, and send him through our various agencies till he arrives at the place of the Local Agent who is going to supervise his operations. He is then registered in an official prescribed register No. 1. We have a card system under which a separate card is opened for every *sardar*, in which all the particulars about him are entered and the history of his operations while he is in the recruiting district, the payments made to him, the number of coolies he recruits, and so on. The completed card could be used as a bill of cost.

F-4044. Does he get any advance at that stage?—He gets nothing until he reaches his home district. His first advance is regulated according to the orders of the Committee. The subsequent advances depend on the success of his operations and the amount of money he requires for the purpose of bringing in prospective recruits. We have an arrangement for the payment of village debts. For example, here is a typical bill of the Tea Districts Labour Association with the various items. The cost of recruiting in this particular case is not very high; it works out to Rs. 40 a head.

F-4045. That depends on the number of coolies that the *sardar* brings?—Yes, the whole thing depends on the success of the *sardar*. The *sardar* reaches the local agency and then, taking the first advance the amount of which depends on the distance of his village from the local agency, goes to his home village and spends a few weeks there looking round for prospective recruits. He then goes back to the depôt and receives a second advance the amount of which depends on his prospects of recruiting as estimated by the Local Agent. After he receives the second advance he goes out again and either comes back with coolies or without any coolies as the case may be. If he brings any coolies they are entered on the back of his card and registered in Register No. II. The coolies are then fed and clothed and forwarded by a convenient train.

F-4046. If the *sardar* does not accompany the coolies and stays behind to do more recruiting who accompanies the coolies?—We have a staff of peons to escort the coolies from point to point.

F-4047. If the *sardar* brings any number of coolies is he given any bonus by the Local Agent?—No bonus is paid by us.

F-4048. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You give Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 when he goes out for the second time. That is all if he does not bring anybody; but if he brings 10 or 15 recruits you will increase that second advance?—We strictly insist upon the principle that the advance is not a reward for work done; it is a payment to enable him to do the work which we expect him to do. He does not get anything in the shape of commission till he returns to his employer.

F-4049. You vary the second advance sometimes Rs. 10 and sometimes Rs. 15?—Some Local Agents misunderstand the principle of the second advance. They think that it should be based on the success of the *sardar* with the first advance. This is against the principle of the Association on which they are supposed to work.

F-4050. *Mr. Clow*: Suppose a coolie reaches a garden and the manager finds him unfit or unsatisfactory. In such cases do you repatriate him?—It is not unusual for such coolies to be sent back at the expense of the Association. I used to tour in Assam and a number of cases were brought to my notice. I do not think such cases occur frequently. Whenever a case like that was brought to my notice, and I was satisfied that a mistake had been made. I strongly recommended that the Association should send the coolie back, and my recommendation has always been accepted.

F-4051. Do the Local Agents have a medical examination of the coolies in the recruiting areas?—Under Act VI medical examination is optional. A number of employers believe that the coolies are frightened by medical examination. Especially in the case of the jungly coolies it is so. When they have to go from a depôt to a hospital and wait the convenience of the Civil Surgeon there and if he sticks a needle into them they are frightened. But in the case of coolies who have once been to Assam there is no such apprehension.

F-4052. You have inoculation done always?—That is always done.

F-4053. Where is the medical examination conducted?—In agencies where we have our own doctors it is done in a special room in the depôt fitted up as a dispensary. Elsewhere we engage the Civil Surgeon or doctors of that rank, and in some places this involves going to the hospital.

F-4054. It has been suggested to us yesterday that the Local Agent in performing a dual function and being partly responsible to Government through the Assam Labour Board and partly responsible to you, is in an anomalous position. Is there no clash between the two duties?—The responsibility of the Local Agent to Government is not so much through the Assam Labour Board as direct to the District Magistrate in terms of the rules of Government. The Assam Labour Board has to see that the rules are carried out. The Local Agent does not communicate with Government through the Assam Labour Board. He reports to the District Magistrate direct and the function of the Labour Board is to see that that duty is always attended to. (*Col. Mackay*) There is no clash between the two, because the duties we discharge on behalf of the law, and on behalf of the tea gardens are identical. If I prevent a minor boy from proceeding to Assam I am acting on behalf of the law and the Act. I am also acting on behalf of the tea gardens, because although the tea garden may be hard up for labour they are not looking for run-away boys or people of that description. There is no clash in any way.

F-4055. Do you find your work hampered in any way by those to whose interest it is to retain the labour in the recruiting areas?—(*Mr. Milligan*) No doubt such a feeling widely exists. It is rather an illogical feeling when it expresses itself side by side with the feeling that conditions in Assam are such that no one would want to go there. There is a fear that if we got free recruiting there would be such an exodus of labour to Assam that the cost of labour in the recruiting areas would rise considerably. In some areas men are kept under a system which is not very different from bondage. This sort of thing is found not only in Indian States but in parts of British India as well. In Hazaribagh and Palamau they have the *Kamiauti* system. Similar systems exist in other places; as for example in South India, in the Agency tracts, the *Goti* system is somewhat similar. Generally speaking the Indian States in which we recruit are up-land countries with poor soil. Enforced labour is the only means by which the rulers of those States can get anything out of the poorest classes. The poor people could not pay money rent; they are therefore made to render free service. The right to that free labour has come to be exercised by all sorts of petty officers. It is nowadays a real burden on the people.

F-4056. Do you find that where the *Kamiauti* system or system of forced labour exists obstacles are put in the way of those who wish to emigrate?—Naturally the man who has a right to free labour is not going to help us to take away his labourer. The *Kamiauti* system goes even further than that; it is really a system of slavery and worse than the ordinary beggar systems.

F-4057. How do you propose to reduce the cost of recruitment?—The reduction will depend naturally on increasing the efficiency of the recruiting agencies. Some *sardars* bring 6 or 7 coolies whereas others do not bring even one each. Hence the average cost is very high. If you could eliminate those who are not successful and replace them by *sardars* who are likely to be successful the cost per head would automatically go down.

F-4058. Do you think these is much opening for recruiters other than *sardars*? —The experiment will have to be made very cautiously; because in most of the Provinces where we have been recruiting for a long time the class known as the *arkatti*, while it has been out of action possibly for 15 years, has not died out. We do not propose—I do not think the Indian Tea Association proposes—any wholesale and sudden revival of the old system. It would be more useful if *sardars* were assisted by local people who are in a position to help, such as the missionaries. We have conducted experiments in Bombay in using the professional recruiter. We had evidence to show that even in a place like Bombay which is strange to recruiting, we must be cautious in trying an experiment of this character. But if we want to revive this kind of recruiting in a Province like Bihar and Orissa we must be very cautious indeed.

F-4059. You would, I presume, experiment in that direction?—Exactly.

F-4060. Provided you get a satisfactory type of men there are distinct advantages in the professional recruiters in spite of their unsavoury reputation?—The best professional recruiter is a tea garden coolie who has finished his work in Assam and gone back to his village and sets up as a professional recruiter and sends up coolies. At present he would be an illegal person.

F-4061. If a system of repatriation at the end of 2 or 3 years became fairly general do you think that it would facilitate recruiting?—It will certainly facilitate recruiting in the case of a certain type of labour, namely single men and those who have no intention of settling in Assam. If by any chance the bulk of the labour on the tea gardens should become of that temporary character, I think, the system would be unworkable for we should be repatriating the whole force once in three years. How could we replace the whole labour force?

F-4062. *The Chairman*: Surely the assumption then would be that a substantial proportion of the people who came originally for 3 years would elect to stay. There would be a healthy competition amongst tea garden managers to have the largest possible proportion of people settling down. They would offer their labour sufficient inducements to stay and make their conditions such that after three years' experience the bulk of them would prefer to stay. It would be a matter of pride to a garden manager that his percentage was the highest in the district. —Yes, that is so. We find that the only coolies who are interested in such matters as repatriation, wages and so on are the people who are going up for a definite period and intending to go home again. But a man who goes to a garden with the intention of living on the garden for the rest of his life does not exhibit any interest when the local agent tells him of the conditions on the garden. He has already heard something about it from the *sardar* and he is not a bit interested in the description given by the Local Agent. If you give this right of repatriation in a way which, as far as I know, no other industry does (in the case of other industries such as those of Ceylon and Malaya, only disappointed men, and men whose health has broken down, are sent home within the first year of their emigration), if you give this right to strong able bodied men how can you deny it to people who are already in Assam and settled on the garden. When you send back a batch of people after their term is over, a lot of other coolies will come to you and ask to be repatriated. It would have a disturbing effect on the labour force.

F-4063. That would bear out the assumption that a larger number than we heard of were unhappy and desired to go home?—Not necessarily. Even if they are not unhappy the prospect of a free trip home is always tempting. (*Mr. Crawford*) In a certain garden we repatriated coolies who had engaged for 9 months, or short terms. Then a number of coolies who were engaged permanently and who had settled on the garden said: "Why do you send them home. We also want to go home. Send us also in the same way." There was no alternative for the garden but to send them also. That is one instance. Of course a good number of the coolies returned to the garden since. (*Colonel Mackay*) In considering this question of repatriation you have to divide the labour into two classes: one class goes up to make as much money as it can and as quickly as it can and then returns home. That class is very definitely interested in repatriation. They are what we call "short-termers" and can be called "migrants." The other class are "emigrants" that come up here for the same reason that the Britisher goes to Canada. He takes his family with him, and moves to Assam without any thought of going back. He hopes to have a full belly in Assam and he is content. We have to consider the two classes separately in the matter of repatriation. If the right of repatriation is given to the "emigrant" class I do not think it will be an attraction. But for the other class, the "migrants," there will be a definite attraction.

F-4064. I think it would surely remove a good deal of the general prejudice that exists in recruiting areas that when people once go to Assam—I am not now speaking of the definitely short term people—they are gone for ever.—I think that impression is dying out a good deal already.

F-4065. *Mr. Clow*: You do not suggest that this right of repatriation at the end of so long a fixed period as 3 years is not an attraction to the short-term man? You cannot call a 3 years' man a short-term man.

F-4066. *The Chairman*: If the 3 years' condition tend to gradually increase your recruits of that kind, then I take it you would less and less have to use the 6, 9, and 12 months method which you have only been driven to adopt by extreme scarcity of labour?—Quite true, but it is a matter of opinion whether the adoption of the 3 years' system would have that effect. I cannot recommend that as an immediate palliative.

F-4067. Of course you would have to continue your short-term recruitment in special cases until the other system had proved its success?—Yes.

F-4068. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is short-term dying out at the moment on account of the unprofitable state of the market some time since?—Yes. (*Mr. Milligan*) Yes. Short-term recruiting would provide a means of getting additional labour when required in special times.

F-4069. *Mr. Clow*: So far as it concerns those who have been described as "emigrants" by Colonel Mackay, if they had a right of repatriation at the end of 3 years, I take it that the right would almost be invariably exercised by them as an oppotunity of having a holiday in their own country?—(*Colonel Mackay*) The "emigrant" might exercise his right of going back on a holiday; but it is not certain he would go back to his country after he has finished his 3 years. He might settle on Government land.

F-4070. Are there many cases of persons having lands returning to their country?—Not when a man has been there 3 years.

F-4071. Is it your experience that the attitude of the subordinate magistrates in recruiting districts is hostile to your operations?—(*Mr. Milligan*) No. On the other hand, in the majority of cases magistrates are helpful and quite friendly. It is only in the Ranchi District that we have had opposition from the local magistrates recently. The reason for it I am not in a position to say. Magistrates, one after another have adopted an attitude of hostility.

F-4072. Is it due to historical causes?—It is only a recent development. There was no such hostility 5 or 6 years ago. (*Colonel Mackay*) The magistrates and the police officers, especially the senior officers were very friendly.

F-4073. *The Chairman*: It has been said that the present interpretation of Act VI is very strict and prohibits assisting by propaganda. Supposing those two blocks were removed have you any estimate how far it would increase the flow of recruits?—(*Mr. Milligan*) It is most dangerous to remove the word "assist" from the Act altogether because it would give rise to a class of assisted migrants who would be outside the Act and sent up to Assam by professional recruiters without registering them anywhere.

F-4074. Assist the *sardars*, I mean?—There is nothing illegal about assisting the *sardar* as the Act stands at present. The notification under section 3 could be altered as follows: "Government is pleased to prohibit all persons from recruiting otherwise than by means of garden *sardars*." If this were done the question of illegality in the matter of help given to a *sardar* will not in general arise. But at present it reads: "Government is pleased to prohibit all persons other than *sardars* from assisting or taking any part . . . "

F-4075. Supposing this obstacle and the obstacle regarding the use of propaganda be cleared away, would it greatly help recruiting?—In some places the effect would be considerable. But there are a great many places where there will no immediate effect. We should have substantial improvement in the Ranchi district.

F-4076. You cannot give an estimate of the possible increase?—No, I cannot. (*Colonel Mackay*) We have tried propaganda very heavily in years past. In 1914 every *sardar* from my Local Agency was given printed handbills in his own language which he took with him describing the beauties of life on a tea garden. But the obstacle was the great illiteracy. Nobody could read the handbills except the few people in the village, the money-lenders and so on who did not want the people to migrate. So we came to deadlock. (*Mr. Crawford*) We now propose to do propaganda with the help of the cinema. We have tried it in one district. (*Mr. Milligan*) I am very much in favour of propaganda particularly in districts in which Assam is not known or not well known. Unfortunately in these districts we have few recruiting connections. Without a relaxation of the Act in the matter of recruiting restrictions, propaganda cannot be of much use. If we could legally recruit through accredited agents with the help of properly conducted propaganda it would have a marked effect on recruiting.

F-4076a. I am assuming that you are allowed to use methods which are used by the Canadian Government in England in giving information and to a certain extent inducing people to migrate from England to Canada. Could you still not give an estimate of how far that would increase the numbers flowing to Assam?—(*Colonel Mackay*) It is a most difficult thing to estimate the immediate result of propaganda. It is not like newspaper advertising of, say, Lipton's Tea.

F-4077. In your view it would probably bring about a substantial increase?—It would probably increase it to some extent.

F-4078. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is there a different interpretation put on the word "assist" in different recruiting areas?—(*Mr. Milligan*) In the Ranchi district assistance given to a *sardar* is taken to be indirect assistance given to the emigrant and as such considered illegal. There is nothing in the Act to say that. We had a ruling of the Judicial Commissioner of Chota Nagpur to the effect that he found nothing in the Act to debar anyone from assisting a garden *sardar* in performing his legitimate function. That ruling was qualified by subsequent orders

to the extent that if assistance is in the direction of helping a man to emigrate it is deemed illegal as being indirect assistance to the emigrant himself.

F-4079. *Mr. Clow*: Is not the word "induce" rather an unfortunate one?—The word "induce" should be omitted altogether. But as I pointed out before we cannot omit the word "assist;" it will have to be qualified.

F-4080. All propaganda will come under the category of inducing?—Under section 164 it is an offence to induce any person, but in order to prove the offence the person who has been induced by the propaganda must be produced. We, however, have been told that general propaganda however conducted is illegal.

F-4081. *The Chairman*: With regard to the village debts which you have cleared off I have been looking at one or two *sardars'* sheets and I find that in one case it is Rs. 20 and in another Rs. 40. What would be the average debt of an emigrant which is paid off by you? I suppose it is paid at the gardens' expense?—Yes. It is difficult to state an average, as such payments are not made in every district or in the case of every emigrant.

F-4082. Is that in any way charged against the emigrant?—No, the emigrant starts life on a tea garden entirely free from all debts and with a bonus in hand of Rs. 10; also an outfit, household utensils, and so on. He gets Rs. 5 in the recruiting district and Rs. 5 on his arrival in the garden.

F-4083. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have said that Rs. 40 was the debt of a man which you cleared off. How did you ascertain that it was Rs. 40?—It was verified by the Local Agent, and paid to the man to whom the money was owed. When village debts are paid by a *sardar*, such payments are included in the advances to the *sardar*.

F-4084. *The Chairman*: Payment of debt also constitutes one of the items of the cost of recruitment?—Yes.

F-4085. It would be rather interesting to have over a period the amount of village debts that are paid off in this way?—As a matter of fact I tried to get out the figures, but the labour involved in collecting them was such that I could not get them in time. If the original programme of examining us in February had been adhered to, those figures would have been ready.

F-4086. Could you take it over 1,000 typical cases in one or two districts, and let us have a statement on this point?—Yes.

F-4087. *Miss Power*: I suppose these debts are those of long term recruits?—I know of no case of debt of a short-term coolie being paid off.

F-4088. What is the maximum amount that would be paid off by you?—It might go to the extent of Rs. 100 for a good family batch.

F-4089. Has such a thing ever happened in your experience in the case of single men?—I have never heard of it. (*Colonel Mackay*) I have found that, in agencies where it becomes a common practice to pay debts, creditors soon become the rule and not the exception.

F-4090. *Colonel Garbett*: Do you consider there is much more suitable labour available for Assam?—(*Colonel Mackay*) You have to divide the labour into two classes. I consider that there is still a very large supply of short-term labour available, but that we are approaching the limit, in some districts, of the supply of the suitable settler class of labour.

F-4091. Do you consider that, in view of your experience, you would be a more efficient registering officer than a magistrate or an officer specially engaged for the purpose?—In view of the fact that I have been a planter for eight years, I probably should be a more efficient registering officer. When I register a man I look at him from the point of view of fulfilling the Act, and also from the point of view of his suitability as a tea garden labourer. A fine strapping fellow would be passed by the magistrate, who is only concerned with fulfilling the requirements of the Act, but I might come to the conclusion that that fine strapping fellow was a Brahmin, or was otherwise quite useless for tea garden work and I would reject him where the magistrate would pass him.

F-4092. Do you keep a register of all labourers going to the Dooars?—(*Mr. Milligan*) Yes, very nearly as elaborate as the one kept by Government orders in the case of Assam emigrants. (*Colonel Mackay*) And a copy of this register is sent to the District Magistrate daily in some provinces and monthly in other provinces.

F-4093. *Mr. Clow*: For the Dooars?—No. (*Mr. Milligan*) I will hand in the different orders of the different Governments on the subject of sending in the registers and on the subject of the detention of single females (handing in document).

F-4094. *Colonel Garbett*: Have you any figures regarding your own Agency. Colonel Mackay, showing the amount of advances given?—(*Colonel Mackay*) In my Local Agency and in the other sub-agencies under me the advances averaged Rs. 17 last year per head. That includes 41 per cent. of unsuccessful *sardars*.

F-4095. *Mr. Clow*: Rupees 17 per head recruited or per head of *sardar*?—Per head recruited.

F-4096. What do you mean by "includes unsuccessful *sardars*?"—I mean that 2,053 *sardars* recruited 4,569 people, but of those 2,053 *sardars* 41 per cent. were unsuccessful.. Nevertheless the total advances, which includes those paid to the unsuccessful *sardars*, amounted to an average of Rs. 17.

F-4097. *The Chairman*: What you call unsuccessful *sardars* were those *sardars* who never intended to recruit?—Yes, a very large proportion.

F-4098. Those who came down on leave?—Yes.

F-4099. Would it not be very much better, if the law allowed it, to have a recognized system of leave on return pay, and not to pretend that they are *sardars* when they are not?—That practically operates now. The law does not forbid it. It is managers who must classify their *sardars*.

F-4100. They would not be able to come back again except through the *sardars*?—(*Mr. Milligan*) That restriction applies only to those who have severed their connection with the garden and who have not merely gone home on leave. The advice which this Association gives to managers is that any one who is going home on leave should be furnished with a recruiter's certificate in case any of his relatives or friends might want to return with him. (*Colonel Mackay*) To continue with my figures, the overhead costs in my agency were 12:9 rupees per head of the people who emigrated, so that advances and the whole cost of the Local Agency and staff amounted to less than Rs. 30 a head of persons recruited and sent to Assam.

F-4101. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would it not be better to have a registering officer who has nothing to do with the tea industry? Suppose there is a great demand for labour: if the registering officer is employed by the employers, obviously his orders would be to pass anybody and everybody irrespective of the fitness of the men?—*I* cannot conceive such a situation arising. Only people fit for tea garden work would be sent up. A registering officer who passed any one else would be doing a great disservice to the industry he was serving. A useless man on a garden is a dead loss. Apart from that, who would be gaining anything by sending up anybody and everybody?—I reject over 25 per cent. of the people who come before me.

F-4102. On what grounds do you reject them?—On grounds of physique or medical unfitness or on grounds of caste, or on grounds of domestic matters, and for a hundred and one other reasons.

F-4103. If you have to go recruiting in the famine stricken area, how does the question of physique come in?—I have never recruited in a famine stricken district, but I have been in a local agency alongside a famine stricken district, and the actual number of people who came in was 61,000, of which 16,000 were rejected. So that it is not a question of gobbling up everybody. (*Mr. Crawford*) Our total rejections for last year were 11:5 per cent. of our recruitment. (*Colonel Mackay*) In Jubbulpore it was 26 per cent. due to the proximity of a large city, and also of a famine stricken area.

F-4104. How can you suggest that any of the reasons which you have advanced would not equally weigh with an official who was appointed as a registering officer?—(*Colonel Mackay*) Because a magistrate would naturally be purely concerned with observing the conditions of the Act. He would not look at the recruits with a view to seeing their suitability as tea garden labourers. He would also not be concerned with the castes of the people.

F-4105. Why do you presume that the officer must necessarily be a magistrate?—I do not. You presumed that.

F-4106. Suppose the registering officer is an official?—If he had been a tea planter, or if he had some other experience of labour, I would not object to him in the least.

F-4107. In view of the fact that you have to go to all this heavy cost of recruiting, even to the extent of having to pay a man's debts, would it not be a cheaper method to so alter the conditions of work and wages here that

labour would be naturally attracted to your tea gardens?—(*Mr. Crawford*) I have already dealt with that point fairly fully during the course of the day.

F-4108. If the conditions of labour and of wages here were attractive, would not that bring more recruits and a better class of recruit?—(*Mr. Milligan*) It would certainly affect the recruitment of people coming up for a definite period for the purpose of making money, but it would not have any appreciable effect on the numbers of permanent emigrants coming to Assam, because it is economic pressure in their own country which is sending them away, and not the prospect of what they are going to get at the end of the journey; they would come irrespective of the conditions in Assam.

F-4109. Am I to take it that the reason why the conditions and wages are as they are on these tea plantations is because you get your particular class of recruit from that class which is being forced by temporary economic necessity to come up here?—No. The coolies we get from some of the Native States are in a permanent condition of economic difficulty. To them a wage of an anna a day is not at all abnormal. For example, in Koraput, if we pay three annas a day we will get all the labour we require for our building work there because all they get from the Public Works Department there is 1½ annas a day. Such people come to Assam, and can earn at a minimum 4 annas a day. Being first class coolies they actually earn much more than that. It is absolute wealth to them.

F-4110. I am looking at the class which is referred to in the memorandum of the Indian Tea Association, where it is complained that they are unable to get recruits from Sambhalpur because of Tatas' industry starting there and the railways opening up?—They can get an attractive wage without leaving home. At the present time in great Britain there are over one million unemployed, but they are not all migrating.

F-4111. *Mr. Cliff*: They are not all eligible?—Even though they may be available for employment at home they may not necessarily be available for employment overseas. There is an enormous supply of potential labour in the recruiting districts which is not available for Assam.

F-4112. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Are you quite satisfied that, even under the present system, there is no fraud or misrepresentation?—(*Colonel Mackay*) I am quite satisfied. It is practically impossible. (*Mr. Milligan*) I do not agree with Colonel Mackay. There is fraud and misrepresentation, but we have got such an efficient agency for detecting it that coolies do not come to Assam as victims of fraud and misrepresentation. (*Colonel Mackay*) I see what you mean. I agree with Mr. Milligan.

F-4113. If recruitment were absolutely free, as you want it to be, what checks, apart from your own local agencies would you suggest?—(*Mr. Milligan*) In the first place, this Association has not committed itself to the statement that it considers that recruitment should be free.

F-4114. It is a question of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?—No. It may be that a number of individuals on the committee of the Tea Districts Labour Association are also on the committee of the Indian Tea Association, but it does not follow that the policy of the two bodies is identical. The same gentlemen may be on the Assam Labour Board, but when they are there they have an entirely different policy.

F-4115. What is your policy?—We consider that restrictions should be removed from the methods of recruitment, but that there should be an efficient control. We are sufficiently conceited to believe that we are able to impose an adequate control ourselves on those who recruit through us, and on those who produce the coolies before us.

F-4116. What do you suggest?—I suggest that the model of the Ceylon Labour Commission would be suitable for the Tea Districts Labour Association. The Ceylon Labour Commission is an unofficial body appointed and paid by the Ceylon Planters Association. Prior to 1923 its position and function were exactly analogous to those of the Tea Districts Labour Association. In that year it was invested by the Government of India with the function of carrying out the provisions of the Rules framed under Act VII of 1922, the Ceylon Labour Commissioner being given the office of the Ceylon Emigration Commissioner, and his deputy being appointed Deputy Emigration Commissioner, while the various superior officers of the Commission were vested with the authority of Inspectors. The Ceylon Labour Commission, like the Tea Districts Labour

Association, does not include in its membership all estates, but it discharges the duties of selection, registration and forwarding in respect of the recruits of non-members. For members it does various other services, such as financing *kamganis*.

F-4117. Since you take that as an example, would you also be in favour of a minimum wage regulation in Assam?—That is outside my province altogether. If you are asking me whether the existence of a minimum wage would prove an attraction in recruiting, my answer is the same as in the previous case, namely, that anything of that kind would no doubt stimulate temporary recruiting, but would have no appreciable effect on the supply of permanent emigrants.

F-4118. *The Chairman*: Have we got in writing your views on the amendment of the law which you recommend?—A short synopsis was put in this morning which represents my views as well as those of others.

F-4119. We may take it that that carries your agreement?—Yes, with the proviso that the first of the two schemes put forward in that note is merely a makeshift. It is a means of getting substantial concessions under Act VII without the necessity of going to any legislative body. If we have to change a single word, the word "assist" or "induce," that means legislation, and legislation means a new Act. It is either a new Act or making the best of the existing Act without alteration. We further know that the difficulties in the way of getting new legislation of a suitable type are so great that not only is there likely to be a long delay, but there is no guarantee that the Act, when we get it, will improve our position materially. Therefore we would prefer to have an experiment tried under the existing Act. The draft Act which we have submitted to the Government of India leaves control to be exercised by the industry itself; it merely postulates the appointment of local agents. There was a preliminary draft which on consideration we decided not to send in, in which it was definitely proposed that local agents should have the official status of registering officers and in fact be on practically the same footing as the agents of the Ceylon Labour Commission; but it was felt that discussions had not gone far enough to justify the putting forward of such a definite proposal.

F-4120. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If you are in favour of the Ceylon system, you know that that is bound up with certain conditions laid down by the Government of India and agreed to by the Ceylon Government, one of those conditions being the Ceylon Ordinance?—Yes. Our Association is, however, not concerned in any way with the wages paid in Assam, except that we have to inform the prospective emigrant of the conditions to which he is going.

F-4121. What is your view on the question of minimum wages for Assam?—If I were to express an opinion on that point it would be a purely private view and not the view of the Tea Districts Labour Association which does not consider such questions.

F-4122. But if you are basing your plans on the Ceylon arrangements, would it not be advisable in order to help recruiting that better conditions should be obtained for the workers and that those better conditions should be made known in the recruiting areas?—It is our duty to make known the conditions existing in Assam as they are reported to us by the employers. I have not suggested that we should adopt the whole Ceylon system; I was merely referring to the control part of that system which is carried out by the Ceylon Labour Commission. The system of financing it, though a very attractive one, has grave practical difficulties with regard to Assam. We could never hope that our *sardars* would have the efficiency of the Ceylon *Kamganis* because the latter are operating in places where the economic conditions are unusually favourable to recruiting. Practically the whole of the Ceylon's almost unlimited labour recruitment is conducted in four districts. There are no four districts in Northern India which have anything like that amount of labour available. Those districts are comparatively close to Ceylon, and though it is a long journey going to Ceylon, owing to the detention at Mandapam, I am informed that on some estates in Ceylon, the returning emigrant can leave to-day and be at his home to-morrow. That makes a great difference in the minds of the people; the fact that there is such free movement backwards and forwards affords a great stimulus to recruitment. Practically all their work is done in four districts, while our work for Assam is scattered over four or five provinces each of which has many districts.

F-4123. *Mr. Cliff*: We have asked many *sardars* why they are not successful in recruiting but have not been able to get an intelligible reply.—Almost every conceivable scheme has been under consideration for increasing the efficiency of the recruiting agency.

F-4124. Have you ever suggested to the tea industry that if conditions were more attractive in Assam they would be likely to get more labourers?—I have made recommendations on that point.

F-4125. And have the Indian tea industry listened to you sympathetically?——Yes, they listened sympathetically.

F-4126. Have they translated that sympathy into practical action?—Yes, undoubtedly.

F-4127. Can you give me an example?—Giving a recruiting bonus to the immigrant himself. That proposal was originally made by Colonel Kennedy and was supported by me; it came from the recruiting side of the industry and was adopted by the Indian Tea Association on our recommendation. That started the coolie not only free from debt but with a little capital in hand.

F-4128. The other day we were at Hunwal Tea Estate, Mariani, just as a party of recruits arrived. We found they had taken 15 or 16 days to come from their homes though the actual train journey appeared to be 8 days. Are there stages at which they are delayed?—We consider it would not be fair to keep coolies, especially women and children, too long in third class carriages, especially during night journeys, so that the journey is broken at points along the line where the coolies get hot meal and a night's rest.

F-4129. *Sir Alexander Murray*: This party came from Jashpur?—(*Colonel Mackay*) I suppose the depôt was Ranchi. A man with women and children cannot get from Jashpur in less than 5 days. There are no railways and it probably has to be done on foot. If anyone in that party had been taken ill, that would cause delay.

F-4130. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there accommodation for them at these rest places?—(*Mr. Milligan*) Yes, we have sheds. Gauhati is one of the rest places; we have been re-modelling it for some time now and we hope to get it finished within the course of this year.

F-4131. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Under Mr. King's scheme first class registering officers are to be paid from Rs. 400 rising to Rs. 750, second class registering officers from Rs. 125 to Rs. 275. Do you consider that the type of man you could get for that pay could efficiently perform the duties which you are performing?—(*Colonel Mackay*) No. Where would they get their training? (*Mr. Milligan*) If they are to have the duty of examining emigrants and rejecting unsuitable recruits, we find that men of experience and good standing are essential for that because it is very responsible work.

F-4132. In the statement you have handed in as to the possibility of withdrawing the notification under section 3, you do not touch on the definition of "labourer?"—If you touch on that the whole of Act VI is meaningless, because a labourer is defined as being either a person bound by a labour contract, which no longer exists, or a person registered as such under section 69. As there is no registration under section 69, there is no such thing as a labourer.

F-4133. *The Chairman*: The real question is whether you are now working a corpse which everybody fancies is alive?—I have not the slightest hesitation in saying it is a corpse, and it has only to go to the High Court once to be immediately buried. We have never appealed a case to the High Court; if we had I am quite sure the hopelessness of the legal position would have been pointed out.

F-4134. *Mr. Cliff*: Apart from your organization, how many agencies are recruiting for the Dooars?—There is one big one, the Dooars Tea Company, and there are various representatives of isolated Indian gardens at Lohardaga. How many there are I could not say; they change from year to year. A number of gardens will send down a man to get coolies.

F-4135. Supposing your scheme for the withdrawal of notifications were given effect to, could individual employers recruit?—If the notifications were withdrawn, section 92 would legalize even the action of individual employers. It is only suggested as an experiment to give the tea industry an opportunity to make good its claim that it is able to recruit freely without bringing itself into discredit.

F-4136. But if these notifications regarding area and types of *sardar* that have been issued under section 3 were withdrawn, then I assume anybody could recruit in any way?—Anybody could recruit in any way they pleased, but they would be under the obligation of bringing all their coolies to an appointed place, and that is where there would be a check on them. The question was raised as to whether it would be legal to prescribe registration under the rules other than the registration of sction 69. The Bengal Government have actually done so in their latest rules, so that we may take it it would be legal to prescribe registration at these places of accommodation. If you have registration you have an opportunity of a full investigation into the recruiting of the coolie; the remedy for improper recruitment is rejection.

F-4137. There would still be organization?—Yes, the local organization of the Tea Districts Labour Association would remain as it is.

F-4138. Would the individual employer going down to recruit need to have a local agent?—No, not under section 92; local agents are only required under the existing notifications for the supervision of garden *sardars*.

F-4139. Therefore he could go down and send anybody or bring anybody with him to assist him to recruit?—Yes, legally he could.

F-4140. But you think provision could be made under the other sections or under the rules under the sections to have them brought to certain centres for registration?—Yes, that is the only possible check, to see that they all passed through one channel to Assam, and that in the process they are all registered and inspected.

F-4141. Must it be one channel?—(*Colonel Mackay*) Government lays it down in their manual that there shall be only one registering officer in a district at a time. (*Mr. Milligan*) It would have to be prescribed by rules of the local Government under section 163. If the local Government decided that they did not want a multiplicity of registering officers, and the Tea Districts Labour Association should be entrusted with that function, they would all have to produce their coolies before our local agent, who would register them, and presumably our organization would forward them to Assam. If some employers wanted an independent organization of their own they could be permitted to have it, but they would find that the game was not worth the candle, because they would have to provide depôts and conform to all the requirements of the rules. The expense would be prohibitive.

F-4142. You would have no control over the amounts paid as advances?—We would not be interested in it.

F-4143. Apparently agencies may be inspected by a Magistrate, the Superintendent of Emigration, the Civil Surgeon, the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, Supervisors of the Tea Districts Labour Association and Supervisors of the Assam Labour Board?—(*Colonel Mackay*) Yes, and even any policeman above the rank of Sub-Inspector, which is a great grievance of mine; the local Thana Inspector can walk in, examine me and my books and my depôt. (*Mr. Milligan*) I also have the right of inspection. I submit reports to the Committee. The Supervisors of the Board report to the Chairman of the Board and he sends extracts from their tour notes to us.

F-4144. All that would still go on under this new scheme?—Presumably: it is prescribed by rules of Government and the Assam Labour Board would remain undisturbed by the scheme. Our idea is that there would be no violent departure from the present system, and we would have freedom under the proposed regime to work out a better system gradually. Act VI gives us no chance of experiment at all and that has been our main grievance.

F-4145. *The Chairman*: Do you not think you had better abolish Act VI and all its appendages and try a new Act for India?—If you could give us any guarantee that we would have a new Act of a suitable kind within the next 3 or 4 years, I would gladly agree with your suggestion; but that is the trouble. It is a question of politics.

F-4146. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many agencies have you in the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Forty-two agencies.

F-4147. I see that in some cases as far as women are concerned there is a right of detention from 3 to 7 days?—(*Colonel Mackay*) That is the standing order of the Association; whether it is a legal order or not, we detain all single women for three days; that means detaining the whole batch, as the men naturally do not wish to go on without their women. (*Mr. Milligan*) It would

be difficult to detain single women and send them up alone after all their friends had gone. (*Colonel Mackay*) The delay affords an opportunity for making enquiries on the part of the local agent or for their relatives to come in and claim them.

F-4148. When the recruits are passed by a doctor, at whose expense is the medical inspection done?—(*Mr. Milligan*) At the expense of the Tea Districts Labour Association or the tea industry. A fee of 8 annas per head is charged.

F-4149. *The Chairman.* What enquiries are made in the case of single women?—(*Colonel Mackay*) We send out peons to the address which the woman herself gives. The peons goes out with a letter to the headman of the village, and he brings back a report as to whether the woman may go, or he comes back with an actual relative of the woman who says she is his wife or daughter who is running away with somebody. She is then taken back. During the last year in about 4,569 emigrants, 21 single women were brought in; after enquiry 9 of them were rejected, and 12 were allowed to go forward, reasons having been shown why they should go forward. That is about the average. Twenty-four minors were brought in, and after due enquiry they were all rejected and taken back to their villages, the receipt of the headman or the father being obtained for them.

F-4150. You feel that your examination of those cases of single women and minors is substantially effective?—It is very thorough not only by myself, but by any other local agents.

F-4151. You feel that applies generally?—Yes.

F-4152. We have had submitted to us a memorandum prepared by the Bishop of Ranchi?—I was local agent in Ranchi and I have read that memorandum.

F-4153. Would you like to say anything on that?—A great deal. The Bishop was not there in my time, but I know most of the other priests, one or two of them being personal friends of mine, though I am not a Roman Catholic. I think he has dished up a lot of ancient history, which is on record in various places in fable and song, and has no personal experience of the matter. I think he came from Patna, an entirely different district where there is no emigration, and he has listened to these wonderful stories. The very Mundari Grammar from which the Priests and others start learning one of the languages of the Ranchi district contains stories in the form of exercises describing the wickedness of coolie recruiters, which keep the old stories alive.

F-4154. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Who was it that rejected this large proportion of women and minors?—The Jubbulpore local agency is under me directly and I have three sub-agencies. Every *sardar* who comes from the garden and every coolie who goes up passes before me personally.

F-4155. *Mr. Cliff*: Are there many Colonel Mackays in the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Quite a number.

F-4156. We have received a letter which appears to be signed "Gupta." Will you look at that and see if you recognize the signature (handing the letter to the witnesses)?—(*Mr. Milligan*) We have only one agent called Gupta, and he is B. N. Gupta. Unfortunately he appears in our books as "Dr. Gupta," no initials being given. When you come to Calcutta we shall be able to make a definite statement. Dr. Gupta is at Cuttack and if he sent out this letter he will be able to explain his reasons for doing so. He will at least tell you it is not authorized by the Association. Our instructions are all contained in our handbook.

F-4157. Do you concur in the advice given in that document?—I do not.

F-4158. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What would be the salary of this Dr. Gupta at Cuttack?—(*Mr. Milligan*) About Rs. 300 or 400 a month. (*Colonel Mackay*) Now that I have looked at the letter, I do not recognize the signature, but I do recognize other things, and I confess I think it is an effusion by a servant of the Tea Districts Labour Association; but it is quite unauthorized. I am ashamed of it. I have never seen such a thing before. (*Mr. Crawford*) The local agents have the right of corresponding direct with managers.

F-4159. *Mr. Cliff*: It appears to be a carbon copy and it may be that more than one manager has received similar advice?—We will go very thoroughly into it at Calcutta. (*Colonel Mackay*) That is one Indian gentleman writing to another. (*Mr. Milligan*) It is dated the 13th November 1928.

F-4160. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I have a note here which says that the local agent is really the agent for the employer of labour, that is the manager, and is bound to keep the manager in touch with everything concerning his *sardars*. Therefore the local agent has the right of direct correspondence with the manager?—(*Colonel Mackay*) Yes, it is a part of his duty to correspond.

F-4161. Then in writing that letter, if he is a local agent, he was acting quite within his rights?—Yes.

F-4162. *Mr. Cliff*: In connection with that you have a number of printed forms on which particulars are sent up to the garden manager with regard to the dependents of labourers who may be recruited and as to whether there is any possibility of further recruiting?—Yes, invariably.

F-4161a. You appear to have some standardized forms with regard to advice of that character?—Yes.

F-4162a. But apart from that standardized form of advice, is that kind of thing encouraged?—We encourage local agents to correspond with and advise managers in every way, but it should be done with discretion and a certain amount of sense.

F-4163. The Chairman said he could take it from the list you handed up that these local agents are people of substance and authority?—Yes.

F-4164. Is the writer of that letter one of the people of substance and authority?—This gentleman is an Indian doctor who has assumed the duties of a local agent. (*Mr. Milligan*) He is at Cuttack which used to be a very important centre. Colonel Mackay was there once and he sent up that large number of recruits which he mentioned. But Cuttack has now become unimportant from the point of view of recruiting. Dr. Gupta combines the functions of doctor and local agent.

F-4165. *The Chairman*: Then he is not whole-time?—Yes, he is our doctor.

F-4166. *Colonel Garbett*: When writing to garden managers do you not send copies of all your correspondence to the secretaries and to the Calcutta agents?—(*Colonel Mackay*) Not in all circumstances, but we send copies in a considerable number of instances.

(The Commission adjourned to Gauhati.)

ASSAM.

Fifty-seventh Meeting.

GAUHATI.

(Held at the Forwarding Agency for the recruitment of Assam Tea Garden labour at Gauhati.)

Sunday, 19th January 1930.

PRESENT:

MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER. } *Commissioners.*

REV. THENURAM SAIKIA.
LT.-COLONEL H. C. GARBETT, Superintendent, Kanjikoah Budla Beta Tea Co., Ltd. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

MRS. ATAUR RAHMAN, *Lady Assessor.*
MR. A. DIBDIN. *Joint Secretary.*

Statement by RASHID (Mussalman), coolie.

I have come from Bakpore in Doom Dooma. I have stayed there for six months, which was the period I agreed to stay. I have got my brother with me and he has two children with him; my brother's children are 2 and 4 years old. Their mother is dead. She died in her country. I am going to stay two months in my country and then I am going back to the tea gardens. I shall come back with any *sardar* who is ready to take me. I have got a brother in my country and if he is willing to come I will bring him. The manager told me to go away for two months. I have got cultivation at my home and my brother is looking after it. I am not going to stay in Ranchi because I cannot get enough to support me. My brother and I have saved Rs. 40, and that will be spent on our living in the next two months. My brother and I get Rs. 13 a month on the garden in Doom Dooma. We used to begin work at 8 o'clock and finish at 4 o'clock. We got no interval for food; we had a meal before we started and a meal after we came back. If we stayed away from work for a day 8 annas was deducted. If we stayed at work we got Rs. 13 a month. The women on the garden also get Rs. 13 a month. People who work in our country get 8 annas a day. I was brought here on false pretences. They told me I would get 10 to 12 annas a day. I do not intend to go back to that same garden; I intend to come back to another one. I shall get more money in another garden. I do not know the name of a garden in which I can get more money, but the *sardar* will tell me the garden at which I can get more money.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by SAPTI (Oorya), woman *sardar.*

I am going to Sambhalpur which is my country. I was at Ranjanganj tea garden. I have been 25 years on that garden and my relatives are there. I am taking my son-in-law back with me. I am going as a *sardar* to get coolies. I have been back as a *sardar* four times, including the present time. The first time I brought back four coolies; next time 2, the third time 4 adults and a small child. Once I brought no recruits. I am a widow; my husband died on the gardens. I have one son who was born at my home; he works on the gardens; he is married. I have left my son, my daughter-in-law and my grandchildren on the garden.

On the garden the women get Rs. 7, 8 and 9 per month. I do not now work on the garden. I live in the lines and my children are working on the garden. I get no pension. My son and my daughter-in-law work and I live on that. Some of the other women get a blanket or a cloth; I spoke to the manager about it but he has not given it to me. This year nobody ran away from the garden, but in previous years people have run away. How am I to know why they run away. If a man does not work how can he live and if he does not work will he not be beaten? They are beaten by the *sardars*. They are sometimes beaten with a stick and sometimes with the hands. About 3 or 4 years ago there was a manager who beat the women severely; but he is not there now. The manager who is there now does not do that. When I go away I have got to go and tell the *sardar* that I want leave to go recruiting. On the garden when I want to take one day's leave I do not have to ask permission. If the sahib lets me go the *chowkidar* will not stop me. Without the sahib's permission the *chowkidar* will not let me leave. There are six *chowkidars*.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by JALAON (Nagbansi), coolie.

I have come from Daflati tea garden in Jorhat; I have been there 13 years. I belong to Ranchi district. I have been to Ranchi twice before. I brought back two men the first time, but did not get anybody the second time. The second time all my things were stolen. My clothes and everything else were stolen in Surbuja in the Ranchi district. I will stay there this time for 6 or 7 months. On the tea garden we get 6 annas for the *hazira*. I get about Rs. 2-4 a week. Nobody beats anyone on the garden. I do not know what happens on other gardens. I have stayed on the same garden all the time. If we want to go out of the garden we get permission from the manager. I have not seen people going away without permission. I have left my wife and children in the garden. I have saved nothing. I have got one cow.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by BADLU (Chamar), coolie.

I come from Gonda district in Oudh and I am coming now from the Dakia tea garden in Jorhat district. I have been there 7 months. Moti *sardar* of my own district brought me here. He is now on the garden. I am going as a *sardar* now. My wife is on the garden. On the garden I got paid according to the amount of work, I did hoeing. I got from Rs. 1-14 to Rs. 2-4 a week. There are no lazy people on our garden; they all work hard. There may be lazy people in Suikata tea garden. The people in our garden are not beaten when they do not work. When we want to go out for one or two days we get permission from the manager. Nobody ever leaves our garden without getting his name taken off the register. We work at the tea garden by agreement from year to year. I have not taken an agreement for this year. If I took the agreement I should not be allowed to leave. If a man has taken a *girmit* and tries to leave before it has expired the *chowkidar* will try and keep him back, and if the *chowkidar* does not, the Sahib will try and stop him. Nobody runs away from our garden. The conditions are good on our garden. Many run away from the Suikata garden. I left my country because I could not get enough to live on there. The water is very bad on the Suikata garden and the people are in trouble. There is lot of illness on the Suikata garden, but not in our garden. Supposing there are 100 coolies and they want to run away 100 *chowkidars* would be needed to stop them all. In the day time the *chowkidars* are there to look out for them, but at night time the *chowkidar* is not there to look out for them so they run away at night.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by BACHAN (Luia), tea garden coolie.

I come from Bahraich district. I was 7 months on the tea garden. I went with Badlu and have been working on the same garden. I intend to come back, I am going to my own country to recruit and I may stay one year or a little more. My family is on the garden. Conditions are very good on our garden; the doctor is

a very good one and gives us good medicine. I get from about Rs. 1-8 to Rs. 1-14 a week. It is sufficient to keep us. There are just myself and my wife. There are two *chowkidars* in our line. The *chowkidars'* business is to get people out to work. If the men do not come out to work the *chowkidar* goes and reports it to the office. I do not know what happens in the office. I have saved nothing. I have only been 7 months there and I have not got any cattle. I have just had enough to live on. At Suikata the water is very bad and people do not get enough to eat. People cannot get enough to eat because they are ill very much and cannot work. They are not severely treated on the garden; it is only a question of sickness. Nobody leaves our garden without getting permission. If a man wants to go without permission the Sahib will say: "What are you going for. You have come to work on my garden." Nobody has ever run away from our garden.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by M. N. BALIAL, agent *baboo.*

On the 13th January I got a telegram from the Manager of the Woodbine Tea Estate to the following effect: "Titia taken child Ramdhona without leave please return from Gauhati." Titia was a woman who arrived here on the 13th January with two sons, Butan and Ramdhona. Butan was grown up while Ramdhona was about 7 years of age. Titia and Butan had *sardar's* licenses. On receipt of the telegram I asked them whether she would allow me to return Ramdhona to the garden. Titia and her son Butan said they would prefer returning to the garden all of them rather than proceeding without Ramdhona. I cannot say why they could not proceed without Ramdhona. When Titia and the others learnt that they were all to go back to the garden Butan and Titia said they would go to the recruiting district and allow Ramdhona to be sent back to the garden. Then I sent Ramdhona back in charge of a peon and the other two were forwarded to Luckeesarai. It is very rarely that I get instructions from the manager to stop people. I asked the woman and she said that she had other relatives on the garden.

F-4167. *Mr. Clow*: If people come here without certificates what do you do?—Sometimes relatives come with the *sardars* who hold certificates; sometimes that happens with the permission of the garden managers; sometimes a husband has got a recruiting license and he is taking his wife with him to the recruiting district with the permission of the garden manager.

F-4168. What happens if coolies come without the permission of the manager?—Then I refer it to the manager for instructions.

F-4169. *Colonel Garbett*: And what does the manager say?—He says: "That woman does not wish to go to the recruiting district leaving that boy; then return both of them to the garden." I told the woman this and she said: "You had better send that boy with a peon of your own to the garden and let me go to the recruiting district."

F-4170. *Mr. Clow*: That woman complained on Wednesday that that boy had been beaten on the garden?—No, she did not complain.

F-4171. Where is the boy's father?—I did not ask about that but the woman said that the boy had other relatives on the garden.

F-4172. She did not say where the father was?—No, I did not ask that. She agreed to go to Luckeesarai, the recruiting district, and allow me to send the boy back. I said "Are there other relatives there, and she said yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by SAMUJ (Chamar), coolie, going to Assam.

I have not been on a garden before. Moti Lal *sardar* recruited me. He is not here. A *chaprasi* brought me from my district. I come from Basti district. I am going for 6 months. I came here because I wanted to. My *sardar* told me I could earn from 8 annas to a rupee per day as I wished. I do not know the name of the garden to which I am going; I do not know what district it is in. The *sardar* was a Lunia. I have left my family behind in my village at Rampur. I do not intend to leave my country for good. I have a brother, a father and a

mother left behind to look after the fields. I have been told I shall get Rs. 10 when I reach the garden. I have got a *thali* (plate) and a *lota* (pot), two blankets, a *dhoti* and a loin cloth.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by PARBATI (Chamar), woman coolie and a number of other coolies.

I am going with my husband and three children to Barburwa tea garden in Dibrugarh. I have not been to the tea gardens before; none of us have been before. We left Panna State because conditions were bad. The fields are entirely dry and we have had three very bad years and so we have left. I do not know what I shall get on the gardens. We have been promised that we shall get 5 or 6 annas a day, and when there is no work we shall get an allowance. There are 44 of us here who have come from the same place. Lalli *sardar* has sent us and he is still in the country. This is the twelfth day we have been on the journey. We have not the least idea at what station we should get out. We seem to be all the time in trains and getting out of trains. We are going for a year; we shall not stay longer than a year. There are 9 adults and 9 children of us who are related. I was told there was lots of work and lots of money to be got on the tea garden; I was told that I would get 8 annas and upwards whatever the work. Whether I shall get it I do not know; I should be able to find out when I get there. I have been told I shall have to do hoeing and plucking leaves. I have been told that the plucking will be paid according to the weight of the leaves, but that we shall get daily money for that work, while we shall be paid a fixed rate for hoeing. At Jubbulpore we were all vaccinated and inoculated. The doctor examined us thoroughly.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned.)

DOOARS.

Fifty-eighth Meeting.

(Held at Baradighi Tea Estate).

Monday, 20th January 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
MR. JOHN CLIFF.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.
MR. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

BARSI, wife of Ledwa, coolie, ITWARI, wife of Lachman coolie and two other women coolies (Mr. Lall interpreted).

F-4173. *Miss Power*: How long have you been on the garden?—I was a little girl when I came to this garden.

F-4174. Where did you come from?—I do not know.

F-4175. Is your husband working on the garden?—Yes.

F-4176. How are you paid for your task?—I am paid Rs. 4 a month. (Another woman) I am paid Rs. 4-8 a month. That is for one *hazira* a day. I work every day except Sundays.

F-4177. How many hours does it take you to do a *hazira*?—The first *hazira* begins at about 8 and ends by 12.

F-4178. Do you all agree that it ends at 12?—About 12.

F-4179. How are you fetched out to work?—The bell rings at 8.

F-4180. Do you have to turn out when the bell rings?—Yes.

F-4181. Supposing you do not, what happens?—If we go late we are turned back.

F-4182. Does that mean you cannot do your *hazira* at all if you turn out late?—That means we lose our day's *hazira*.

F-4183. If you lose your day's *hazira*, cannot you do any *ticca* either?—We have got to do the *ticca* also; if we do not do the *ticca* we are not paid even for the *hazira*.

F-4184. How much *ticca* do you do?—We have got to prune 72 trees.

F-4185. Is that light pruning?—Yes.

F-4186. How much do you get for that?—Three annas a day.

F-4187. Do you earn that *ticca* every day, 6 days in the week?—Yes, unless I do *ticca* I shall not get paid for my *hazira*.

F-4188. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you go home at 12 and then come back?—They do not all come back. We come back.

F-4189. *Miss Power*: Does another bell go in the afternoon?—No.

F-4190. No bell goes for *ticca*?—No.

F-4191. Does that mean that you return when you like for the *ticca*?—Yes, we return when we like.

F-4192. I take it you have to do the *ticca* or you are not paid for the *hazira*, but you can go and do it when you like in the afternoon?—If we do *hazira* and do not follow it up with the *ticca* we are not paid anything.

F-4193. What about the *girmit* at the end of the year?—There is no *girmit*.

F-4194. Are you all living in the lines on the garden?—We live on the garden in the houses which have been built by the manager.

F-4195. Does the *sardar* treat you well; what does he do if he thinks your work is not good?—If we do not work well we are marked absent.

F-4196. Do you mean that if the *sardar* does not think your work is well done, he will not let you be paid for it?—The *sardar* reports us to the Sahib and we are marked absent.

F-4197. Do you all agree about that?—Yes.

F-4198. Have any of you ever done a day's *hazira* and not been paid for that because of a fault?—There are many who do not get paid for a *hazira*. Sometimes we get Rs. 2 a month instead of Rs. 4-8 because we have been cut the *hazira*.

F-4199. Is that because of bad work?—Either because of bad work or because we have not followed the *hazira* by *ticca*.

F-4200. Does the *sardar* ever strike you?—Never. (Another woman) No, we are not beaten on the garden.

F-4201. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you buy *dhan* and do you husk it?—We buy *dhan*, not rice.

F-4202. Do you husk it yourself?—Yes.

F-4203. How long does it take you to husk *dhan*?—We husk 12 seers at a time; and it takes us about three or four hours.

F-4204. Is it easy?—We invite you to come and try it. We use a heavy piece of wood.

F-4205. Do you get 12 seers for a week?—For a family, 12 seers lasts 2 or 3 days.

F-4206. What is the price at present?—It is 8 seers for the rupee now.

F-4207. Do you wear these silver ornaments always?—I wear them round my neck every day when I go to work.

F-4208. *Miss Power*: How many days in a month do you lose because the *sardar* says your work is not good?—We are cut for that, but we two during the last two months have not been cut because we have been consistently doing good work.

F-4209. Who decides that yau have not done good work?—The *sardar* reports.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BHIRSA, son of Mangra, boy coolie.

F-4210. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you working?—Yes.

F-4211. How old are you?—I do not know.

Mr. Lall: I should think he is between 10 and 12 years old.

F-4212. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you been working long?—I have been working three years.

F-4213. Will you prune that bush? (the boy pruned a bush).

F-4214. Is that bush finished?—Yes.

F-4215. How much do you get?—For 72 of these bushes I get three annas.

F-4216. How long do you work on 72 bushes?—Sometimes we start in the morning and go on till 12, 1 and 2 o'clock, and then we go.

F-4217. Do you then go home for some food?—Yes.

F-4218. Do you come back?—I finish about 1 and come back about 2.

F-4219. And then when do you finish?—At 5 o'clock.

F-4220. How much do you get then?—I get 3 annas in the morning and 3 annas in the afternoon, that is 6 annas a day.

F-4221. Do your mother and father send you to work?—Yes.

F-4222. Do you give your father and mother the money?—I give it to my mother.

F-4223. Have you ever been to school?—No.

F-4224. Is there a school in the garden?—Yes, but I do not go there.

F-4225. Do you understand what pictures mean?—I cannot read and I cannot follow any pictures.

F-4226. Do you want to try to learn?—I do not want to learn.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

SURAJMONI (Santhal caste), wife of Goolia, BARSI (Gorait caste), wife of Lakhan, two women coolies.

F-4227. *Miss Power*: Where do you come from?—I come from Chakradharpur.

F-4228. How long have you been working on the garden?—I have been many years on this garden.

F-4229. What time do you come in the morning?—We come very early in the morning.

F-4230. Do you come when the bell rings?—I come here in the morning before the bell rings; I work here and then go for my meal and then come back and work till it is dark.

F-4231. How much do you get for the *hazira*?—Three annas a day.

F-4232. How long does it take to do the *hazira*?—It takes till 12 o'clock or a little later, perhaps till 3 o'clock. Those who are good at the work finish the *hazira* at 12 o'clock and those who are not good at it finish the *hazira* at 3 o'clock.

F-4233. Do you have to do *ticca* as well?—We have to do *ticca* and if we do not do *ticca* we do not get our *hazira*. We earn 3 annas for *ticca* also. We get 6 annas a day if we do *hazira* and *ticca*.

F-4234. What does the *sardar* do if your work is not good?—If we do not do good work we do not get money for it.

F-4235. Are you beaten?—We are not beaten. If our work is not good we are not paid for either the *hazira* or the *ticca*.

F-4236. Who decides whether your work is good or not?—The man, whom you told to go away, (*sardar*) decides.

F-4237. Does he fetch the Sahib to see bad work?—He reports it to the Sahib, but the Sahib does not himself come to see it.

F-4238. Does that happen very often?—Two or three days in the month my *hazira* is cut.

F-4239. How much do you lose?—(The second woman) I was cut my *hazira* on four days.

F-4240. What happens when you do not feel well enough to come to work?—We get medicine but we get nothing else.

F-4241. If you are ill and go to the garden doctor do you get any pay?—We get medicine but no payment. Medicine is free.

F-4242. Have you got a child?—Yes. When a child is born we get Rs. 5 *bakshis* for each child.

F-4243. *Miss Power*: Were you paid when you were off work?—We only get Rs. 5 *bakshis*.

F-4244. Are you given special light work?—No, we do the same work.

F-4245. *Mr. Cliff*: Where do you go to buy your cloth?—We buy it from the *hat*.

F-4246. How much do you pay for that cloth?—The *sari* which I am wearing cost Rs. 2. I require 4 or 5 *saris* in a year.

F-4247. *Miss Power*: Are you all in your best clothes to-day?—We put on all our jewels when we come here because we dare not leave them in the house; they might be stolen. I myself cannot afford jewels, but others who can afford them wear them all the time.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

A party of men coolies returning from work at 11-7 o'clock (standard time).

F-4248. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you finished your work?—Yes.

F-4249. What time did you start?—6 o'clock.

F-4250. Before the bell?—Much before the bell.

F-4251. How much have you earned?—Four annas. We shall come back here.

F-4252. How long will you work then?—Till dark.

F-4253. How much will you get then?—We earn 8 annas a day; 4 annas in the morning and 4 annas in the afternoon. If we do not come in the afternoon and do our *ticca* we lose our *hazira*.

F-4254. Do you lose your pay if you do not do good work?—The *dafadar* cuts our wages if we do bad work.

F-4255. How many days do you have cut in a month?—I have not been cut yet. (Another coolie) I was cut three days for bad work in a month. (A third coolie) I did not work for the whole month. (A fourth coolie) I have not been cut. (A fifth coolie) I lost two days for bad work.

F-4256. Do you work every day?—We work 6 days every week.

F-4257. Do you work in the rains?—Yes.

F-4258. *Miss Power*: Are you paid if you do not go out when the bell rings?—We work in a gang, and the *sardar* is the man who sees that we come. If I do not work regularly the *sardar* will not be prepared to advance me money from time to time when I need it. The *sardar* advances money and if we do not work regularly the *sardar* stops making the advances.

F-4259. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you get your wages weekly?—The *hazira* is paid monthly, but the *ticca* is paid weekly.

F-4260. What do you want advances for?—We want it to buy our food, etc.

F-4261. Would it not be better if you were paid your *hazira* weekly and then you would not want advances?—If we got our *hazira* weekly we should not have to borrow, but if we fall ill we should still have to borrow.

F-4262. When you are ill and have to go to the doctor, do you not get any money from the Sahib?—No, we do not get anything.

F-4263. I suppose you men do not allow the *sardar* to hit you?—No, the *sardar* does not beat us, but those who deserve it get it.

F-4264. Do you mean that some men do get beaten by the *sardar*?—The *sardar* unless provoked never beats us.

F-4265. *Miss Power*: Do you mean that if you do not do good work he beats you?—When we are very guilty we are beaten.

F-4266. Do you mean guilty of bad work?—It is not for bad work but for abusing any worker or for bad behaviour.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

ABIRAM (Munda) of Chota Nagpur (Ranchi), coolie in the Baradighi Tea Estate.

F-4267. *Mr. Clow*: How long have you been working in this estate?—For the last three years.

F-4268. Who brought you here?—Linga, who is a *sardar*, working on this estate brought me here.

F-4269. Why did you leave Ranchi?—I could not get enough there.

F-4270. Have you any of your relations here?—I have my wife, and I paid Rs. 100 for the marriage.

F-4271. To whom did you pay that amount?—To the parents of the girl.

F-4272. Where did you get the amount from?—I had Rs. 80 of my own, and I borrowed the balance from the manager. The instalments are cut from my wages.

F-4273. How much do you still owe to the manager?—Rs. 15.

F-4274. When did you borrow the amount?—Two years ago.

F-4275. Have you any children?—No; I am expecting one.

F-4276. Does your wife also work?—Yes.

F-4277. What are you paid?—I am paid 4 annas for the *hazira*.

F-4278. How long have you to work to earn that?—Up to 1 o'clock.

F-4279. When do you come to work in the morning?—At 8. I do 115 *dings* by 1 o'clock. (*Ding* is the distance between one bush and the next.)

F-4280. Do you do any *doubli*?—Yes, if time permits. I go home at 1 o'clock and after taking my meals I come back to the garden to work. I work until the sun goes down.

F-4281. What did you do yesterday?—Yesterday was a holiday.

F-4282. On Saturday what did you do?—I did only one *hazira*.

F-4283. Did you do *ticca* on Saturday?—No. I did some *ticca* on Friday.

F-4284. Is the *ticca* paid weekly or monthly?—Weekly.

F-4285. How much is cut from your pay towards the loan?—One rupee a month.

F-4286. Do you intend going back to Ranchi?—Yes, when I have money.

F-4287. Had you ever been ill?—No.

(The witness withdrew.)

SULEMAN, (Munda) (from Ranchi), a coolie in the Baradighi Tea Estate.

F-4288. *Mr. Clow*: How long are you working here?—For the last 12 or 13 years.

F-4289. Have you your wife here?—Yes.

F-4290. Have you any children?—No.

F-4291. Have you any other relations living here?—No. I have a brother who is living in my village.

F-4292. Is your father living?—No.

F-4293. Why did you leave Ranchi?—I came here because of hunger; I was not getting enough at my place.

F-4294. What do you get here?—I get Rs. 6-12 a month, and Rs. 1-8 a week for the *doubli*.

F-4295. How much work have you done to-day?—I have finished one *hazira*, or 100 *dings*.

F-4296. Have you taken any advance?—I have borrowed Rs. 12 from the *sardar*.

F-4297. When did you borrow?—Two years ago.

F-4298. Do you pay any interest?—No.

F-4299. Why did you borrow?—For the purchase of *dhan*.

F-4300. Have you not returned the money?—No.

F-4301. Why not?—I have no money to pay. I am working for the *sardar*.

F-4302. Does your wife work?—Yes.

F-4303. What did she earn last month?—She earned Rs. 6-2.

(The witness withdrew.)

RAKIYA (of Pailkot, Ranchi), a coolie in the Baradighi Tea Estate.

F-4304. *Mr. Clow*: How long have you been here?—I have been here for many years; I came when the garden was opened.

F-4305. Did you work on any garden before you came here?—I came as a young boy to Baradighi and I have worked always on it.

F-4306. Have you ever gone to your village?—I used to go every year as *sardar*, but this year I have sent my boy.

F-4307. Did you go last year?—Yes.

F-4308. Did you bring any coolies?—I brought nine coolies.

F-4309. Did you get any reward for bringing them?—Three of them stayed on the garden, and I got a reward of Rs. 5 for each of them. The remaining six have gone back as *sardars* and when they return I shall get my reward.

F-4310. Who gave you the reward?—The manager.

F-4311. What is your pay?—Rs. 6 a month for one *hazira*.

F-4312. What do you get for the *doubli*?—I get 4 annas a day.

F-4313. Have you finished your first *hazira* to-day?—Yes, I have just finished it (11-30 a.m.). I am now going to get my *doubli*.

F-4314. When did you come this morning?—I came at 6 o'clock. Some mornings I come early and some mornings I do not. I came just after sunrise.

F-4315. When do you get your *doubli* paid?—I am paid weekly; I get Rs. 1-8 a week.

F-4316. Have you any fields?—I have half a *bigha*.

F-4317. Have you any cows?—No.

F-4318. Have you any bullocks?—No.

F-4319. How do you plough the land?—I get somebody else's plough.

F-4320. Have you saved any money?—I have about Rs. 4.

F-4321. Who pays your fare when you go to your country?—I pay it out of my own pocket, and when I get there it is refunded to me.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. G. L. HAIG, (Chairman), Mr. W. L. TRAVERS, C.I.E., O.B.E., M.L.C., and Dr. O. McCUTCHEON, M.B., (Secretary), representatives of the Dooars Planters' Association.

F-4322. *The Chairman*: Is the Dooars Planters' Association independent or is it a branch of the Indian Tea Association?—(*Mr. Travers*) It is independent.

F-4323. Are there Indian members?—A good many Indian planters are members and they are represented on the Committee.

F-4324. What area is covered by your organization; do you go as far as Darjeeling?—No, it is purely the Dooars. In the Jalpaiguri district there are one or two gardens outside the district.

F-4325. How many gardens are represented?—128 gardens are represented with an acreage of over 120,000.

F-4326. Is not the Dooars Planters' Association a member of the Indian Tea Association?—No. We work in co-operation but we are an independent body.

F-4327. In the memorandum you have submitted to us, you say you approved generally of the memorandum submitted by the Indian Tea Association, but you desire to make certain other points?—The memorandum of the Indian Tea Association consists to a large extent of figures and facts incidental to

the industry. It did not seem to me to give the Commission any idea of the general life of the coolie, so I wrote an account of the life of the labourer. The general body of the Dooars Planters' Association Committee agree with that memorandum, which I have submitted. (*Mr. Haig*) I submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner and that is incorporated in the memorandum of the Bengal Government.

F-4328. Mr. Travers, I understand you are Manager of the Baradighi Tea Estate where we now are?—(*Mr. Travers*) Yes. I am also Inspector of the Tea Gardens of Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co., covering 24 gardens. I was for 6 years Chairman of the Dooars Planters' Association, and for a good many years after that Vice-Chairman. I have also been for 11 years their representative on the Legislative Council.

F-4329. Dr. McCutcheon, I think you supervise the medical arrangements of a number of gardens under different agencies?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) Yes, 15 gardens, all in this immediate neighbourhood. There are 8 British medical officers in the Dooars and one Superior Indian medical officer, engaged by a group of Indian gardens. There are 8 medical circles. We are divided into 6 districts, more or less geographically by rivers and each medical officer has a group of gardens.

F-4330. Statistically how do you deal with still-births?—I generally direct that still births shall be kept separate, neither entered as births nor deaths. That is generally done, but I cannot say that the returns as to still births are accurate.

F-4331. Do the other medical officers follow the same practice?—I think they do more or less.

F-4332. Is there any instruction from Government on that point?—None at all. Under the Act I cannot find any instruction.

F-4333. What are your respective terms of experience of tea plantations?—(*Mr. Travers*) I have been out here for 30 years. (*Dr. McCutcheon*) My experience is 32 years. (*Mr. Haig*) I have been out 26 years.

F-4334. With regard to recruitment you are not affected by Acts VI and XIII?—(*Mr. Travers*) No. The labour emigration into this district has never been under any restrictions at all as far as Government is concerned and the labourers have been under no agreement. We ourselves have instituted a certain amount of supervision on our own behalf. For instance, years ago, we found that a number of married girls were coming up who were running away from their husbands. Now no married women are allowed to come up without their husbands and no unmarried women without the permission of their fathers and mothers. That is an entirely voluntary restriction which we have through the Tea Districts Labour Association.

F-4435. Have you agents?—The larger number of British gardens recruit through the Tea Districts Labour Association. In Chota Nagpur, which is the district from which the majority of our coolies come, we have a separate agent, but in the other districts they come through the same agents as recruits for Assam.

F-4436. As the Assam restrictions do not affect you, you appear to have a substantial advantage?—Yes.

F-4437. And the journey to some extent is shorter?—That is so.

F-4438. How many days does it take to bring up your workers?—By rail it would take 2½ to 3 days.

F-4439. How do you stand with regard to the supply of workers?—At the present time the majority of the gardens in the Dooars have a sufficient supply.

F-4440. Can you give us round figures as to the vacancies to be filled and your percentage of loss?—We have left it to the Indian Tea Association to deal with that. The migration varies, according to the conditions in Chota Nagpur in regard to the harvest and the pressure on the land.

F-4441. Is there any great difference between your conditions here and those in Assam as to the number of people who come as settlers?—Until the great influenza epidemic in 1919 the whole of the Dooars labour supply came from Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas, whereas Assam got their labour from a very much wider area. In 1919 Chota Nagpur was so severely affected by influenza that we could not obtain sufficient labour from there, and for a while we had to go further afield. We went to Madras, and we brought a number of Madrasis here, and a certain number from the Central Provinces. Since then the population of Chota Nagpur has enormously increased and

we are again getting the large majority of our coolies from Chota Nagpur and less and less from Madras and the Central Provinces. I should think that at present nineteen-twentieth of our coolies are coming from Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas.

F-4442. How much of your recruitment is done through the Tea Districts Labour Association and how much privately?—There is one considerable European Company, the Dooars Tea Company, with 8 gardens which recruits outside the Tea Districts Labour Association and I think the majority of the Indian gardens have their own recruiting organization. All the other European gardens are under the Tea District Labour Association.

F-4443. We find that last year 32,000 souls were recruited for the Dooars through the Tea Districts Labour Association, how many *sardars* were engaged in that recruiting?—A number of coolies take passes to permit them to recruit but do not recruit at all, so that in the Dooars there is very little relation between the number of recruiters and the number of coolies who come back. Any respectable coolie who asks for a pass gets it; that provides him with a free passage both ways.

F-4444. Why is there any need for a pass?—Because they want to come back at our expense. After they have returned to Chota Nagpur if they show the pass to the recruiting agent there he will send them back at the cost of the garden to which they are going.

F-4445. It is really a return ticket?—Yes. (*Mr. Haig*) We pay no commission to the Tea Districts Labour Association when these recruiters come back; we have to pay a commission on newly-recruited coolies.

F-4446. In the Dooars Planters' Association have you an agreement as to a standard rate of payment to your workers?—There is an understood agreement that we shall not go beyond a certain limit, but there is no formal agreement; the present understanding is that we shall not raise the rate of wages, but there is practically no limit as to the earnings that we may allow a coolie to make. There is a sort of basic understanding.

F-4447. Then the understanding is that 4 annas shall be paid for the *hazira*?—We pay 4 annas for the men's *hazira* and 3 annas for the women; that is the sort of rate. A garden may give 2, 3, 4 or 5 *haziras* to enable the coolies to earn what the management of the garden think fit.

F-4448. Is there any agreement with regard to enticement of labour from one garden to another?—The Dooars Planters' Labour rules provide this. If a garden labourer has absconded, from one garden to another, they provide for the return of any balances which such labourer may owe to the garden in respect of borrowings and they provide for compensation for the cost of recruitment of any new coolies within 18 months after their arrival in this district.

F-4449. Just now you used the word "abscond." What do you mean by that?—The chief reason for coolies in the Dooars leaving one garden and going to another is superstition. These people are animistic, and when there is illness they put it down to the work of an evil spirit, and leave one garden and go to another in order to get out of the range of that evil spirit. (*Mr. Haig*) "Absconding" is the word that is usually used when a coolie goes away from a garden. That is the word used in our labour rules.

F-4450. We found the same word used in Assam. If your labourers are absolutely free to come and go, "absconding" is a curious term?—(*Mr. Haig*) Possibly we have borrowed the term from Assam. The tea planter as a rule is not very highly educated. If we had known we were to be examined before a Royal Commission as to the use of that word, it is possible that we should have used a different word.

F-4451. Have you any indigenous population around your gardens who work in the gardens?—Many of our coolies have been so long in the district that they may be termed indigenous, having been here perhaps two or three generations. The only people who work on the tea gardens are the coolies and ex-coolies. The people of the district do not work at all. In fact the original inhabitants of the Dooars have disappeared as civilization has advanced. A few of them in the far east who are Christianised do occasionally work on the gardens but not as a general rule.

F-4452. In Assam it was suggested that they did not like being called coolies?—(*Mr. Travers*) I myself always speak of them as "labourers."

F-4453. You have told us that there is an understanding amongst the gardens in this district as to the rate of payment for the *hazira*?—Yes.

F-4454. When we were talking to your workers in the garden this morning, we were not quite sure as to the method in which payment is made for the *hazira* and in what cases payment can be withheld?—Payment is never withheld. The great majority of my people prefer that their first *hazira* should be paid to them once a month. Their second and third *hazira* and the women's extra pice which they get in the plucking season are paid to them once a week. They prefer that method of payment. Amongst these people the women keep the purse. The Munda and Santhal women run the household. She prefers this method of payment. The weekly payment is sufficient to keep them going in their weekly bazaar, for food, and so on. The monthly payment enables them to buy clothes and save if they want to save. They prefer that system; I have offered them weekly payment but they do not want it; the women say they do not want weekly payment because their husbands would spend too much money on drink. Drink is one of our great difficulties.

F-4455. On your garden do people work one *hazira* and no more?—Quite a number do. The amount of work they wish to do depends upon the time of year. At this time of year the men do not want to work in the afternoon. Two *haziras* is all they want to do. We should give them a third if they wanted it, but they do not want it. As a rule 80 to 90 per cent. of the men who do the first *hazira* do the second. Ten to 20 per cent. do their first *hazira* only, go to their houses or go off to *shikar*, and so on.

F-4456. If they wish is it open to them to do only one *hazira*?—Certainly; they can do exactly as they like. They can do one *hazira* or two *haziras* or any number they like.

F-4457. What is your method of discipline for bad work?—Language; that is all. About once a month I send one or two men home. They are men whom I have warned previously and who persist in doing bad work. I do that as an example. My assistants do not do that, it is only permitted to be done by myself.

F-4458. And then they do not get payment for that day?—No.

F-4459. That is really your method of discipline?—Yes. As a matter of fact we do our discipline by chaff, by persuasion, and so on.

F-4460. To maintain a sufficiently high standard of work in all undertakings it is necessary to have some method of discipline or inducement or whatever it is called?—Quite so.

F-4461. What method do you adopt?—Ordinarily if a man is doing bad work he is made to do it again; that is primarily the duty of the Indian staff. Then I myself or my assistants go through. If my assistants find a man doing bad work they bring him back and he again does that part of the work which is bad; that is all.

F-4462. Is the same method adopted with regard to the women doing pruning?—Yes, these people give very little trouble. It is not more than once a month that I have to find fault.

F-4463. And the punishment is that if really bad work is done, there is no payment for that day's work?—Yes, on the rare occasions on which it occurs; I do not think it happens more than once a month.

F-4464. Are schools available on all the gardens in the Dooars?—I think in the large majority of British gardens there are. In some gardens owing to the difficulties of getting a teacher and so on, the school is not continued for a time. Years ago when I was Chairman of the Association I was instrumental, through the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, in bringing this system of tea garden schools into operation.

F-4465. From the supplementary memorandum which you have submitted to us I gather that you had endeavoured by persuasion to get children to attend school?—Yes.

F-4466. But you are faced with the difficulty that they are to their parents potential earners of wages?—Yes.

F-4467. You have not tried any form of inducement to go to school other than the mere provision of school houses and teachers?—We are in a very difficult position, because we cannot go beyond what is happening in Chota Nagpur where the standard of education is very low and where there appears to be very little done with regard to extending education. If in Chota Nagpur they will go further we shall be glad to go further.

F-4468. Do you not think you might go just a little ahead?—We are now ahead in giving the means on every garden for education and in trying to persuade them to utilize it.

F-4469. Has your Association ever considered devising a different kind of medical education based on life in the tea garden?—We have considered those points, but we thought it was useless for us to bring in any larger scheme at present because the Primary Education Bill is now before the Legislative Council and has been to a Committee. That Bill will provide a District School Board. The tea gardens will have to pay a double cess, the landlord cess and the tenant cess. We cannot do much until that Bill has been dealt with by the Legislative Council.

F-4470. *Mr. Clow*: What are the rates of wages?—In 1929 the average monthly pay for the year amounts to the following: Men—Rs. 14-4-1, women—Rs. 10-5-8, children—Rs. 2-14-5. That includes all direct earnings, all cash earnings.

F-4471. How many recruiters did you send last year?—I should imagine about 51.

F-4472. How many recruits did they bring back?—About 153.

F-4473. Does that 51 recruiters include those who went with certificates but who had no express intention of bringing back recruits?—That includes the whole number. We sent 51 recruiters in the cold weather before that.

F-4474. So that that 51 represents all those who during the year re-visited Chota Nagpur?—Yes. Of course some of them went simply to see their own people.

F-4475. Have you here any labourers with experience of Assam?—Yes, I have a few labourers who earlier in life have been to Assam; but generally the labourer goes back to the same tea garden or where he is known and where his friends are. Owing to superstition there is of course a considerable movement of labour.

F-4476. There may be a number of coolies who go from one garden to another owing to causes more tangible than evil spirits?—Yes, they have quarrels in the lines.

F-4477. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do they ever associate the evil spirit with the manager?—No, fortunately not. Foolish superstitions as to the necessity of sacrificing somebody when a new building is erected are sometimes found among the coolies.

F-4478. *Mr. Clow*: What are the factors which make one garden attractive and another unattractive?—Position, price of paddy, grazing, *shikar*.

F-4479. Would healthiness or otherwise be a factor?—Yes. The character of the Sahib and a variety of other things may be factors.

F-4480. Are the conditions more or less uniform in respect of work?—Yes, competition ensures that. Here the hoeing is very light and very easy but 20 miles to the north there is the red clay soil where the coolie's task is about half of what the task is here, though even then on this soil the task is easier. (*Mr. Haig*) One of my gardens is on red soil and the task is only two-thirds what it is on the lighter soil. (*Mr. Travers*) If a garden gave tasks which were above the average and proportionately too hard, the labour would very speedily go.

F-4481. Do all the gardens have land which the labourers can cultivate?—No, not all of them by any means.

F-4482. What is your proportion here?—I have about 200 acres of *khet* here, the large proportion of which I bought during the last five years.

F-4483. How many acres have you under tea?—There are nearly 1,100 acres under tea. Of course the tea land cannot be used for *khet* because *khet* land must be low-lying and must have water.

F-4484. What system do you follow in allotting the *khet* land?—We give a piece of land to a householder or a *sardar* to help him with his family.

F-4485. How long normally would a new man have to wait before he got any *khet* land?—If a man works for four months regularly and is a respectable person and asks for *khet* land he would get it. I admit I have not enough *khet* land; I want another 100 acres; I am trying to buy more.

F-4486. On your garden what proportion does the daily attendance bear to the working strength?—The total population of Baradighi at the present

moment, men, women and children, is 2,957—2,094 are on the roll of workers. For October the average working strength was 1,285.

F-4487. Is that a typical month?—The number varies. In December it was 999. They are cutting paddy then. In November it was 1,216, October 1,285, September 1,340, August, when they are planting *dhan*, 1,182, July 1,250, June 1,082, April is one of the highest months of the year, that is 1,355.

F-4488. May we take that proportion as more or less typical for the Dooars? Yes.

F-4489. Is there always as much work as a man wishes to do?—Yes.

F-4490. At times are you compelled to refuse work to people who wish to work?—No; there is always enough. We can always find improvement work.

F-4491. *The Chairman*: Can a man turn out for work even if his *sardar* has not turned out?—Yes, it has nothing to do with that. The *haziras* are written up by the Bengali staff. In the Dooars the *sardar* is the headman who looks after the other coolies; they work under his name and he gets a commission on them. Otherwise he has nothing to do with them except that if they want their advances for a day or two before pay day they may come and borrow from him. The *sardar* in the Dooars is quite different from the *sardar* in Assam.

F-4492. Why does he get a commission on the extra work?—The *sardar* here is generally an oldish man; his coolies are in a sense his own people and consequently he looks after them.

F-4493. Does he get a commission from you?—Yes, from the garden; it has nothing to do with the coolies' pay.

F-4494. Therefore it is to his interest to get the maximum amount of work done?—It is.

F-4495. I suppose that is one of your ways of getting the amount of work done that you want?—Yes. This garden has never been short of labour. On a garden where they were short of labour and the coolies were not working well, the managers would enquire from the *sardar* why the coolies were not working and find out whether they had any grievance. If there is any grievance or sickness it is the duty of the *sardar* to tell the management.

F-4496. *Mr. Clow*: How many labourers are there under one *sardar*?—That depends upon the personality of the *sardar*. In this garden some *sardars* have 50 or 60 coolies, while some only have 10. A few *sardars* have as many as 100 coolies under them.

F-4497. You have a system of reducing the task for the second *hazira* and so on?—Yes.

F-4498. By what proportion is it reduced?—That varies according to the state of the soil, whether it is clean or not, and the difficulties of the work. At the present time I expect my people will be doing 15 *luggies* or *nals*, deep hoeing, for their first *hazira*. A *nal* is 12 ft. long.

F-4499. Is it a specified number of bushes?—They estimate it in that way, but it is all in relation to 12 ft.

F-4500. Some of the coolies who talked to us seemed to think it consisted of 7 bushes?—Yes, that would be about right (3 *luggies*). They get 16 for their first *hazira* and 14 for their second *hazira*. When they are doing light hoeing in the rainy season they get perhaps 28 or 30 *nals* for their first *hazira*, 25 for the second, and 22 for the third.

F-4501. Is the second task, which they call *doubli*, normally of the same character as the first?—Exactly the same, deep hoeing to start with.

F-4502. *Miss Power*: When we were questioning some of the women this morning in two separate groups so that one group could not overhear what the other group had said, we were given certain statements about the method of payment which seemed to vary from what you were saying just now. We gathered from both those groups that the women came on to the field in the morning for their *hazira* more or less when the bell rang. They implied that when it was desired that *ticca* should be done they had to do it or they did not get paid for the *hazira*?—That is due to the fact that they did not understand your questions. You must remember that Hindustani is a foreign language to these people. The women prefer to do their first *hazira* and then go home. They go out again at 2 o'clock and do 2½ hours of the second *hazira*. They can do one or two *haziras* exactly as they like. The women have their work to do in the house and with the exception of the single women they do not work with the same regularity as the men.

F-4503. They were asked what happened if they did bad work, and they said if they did bad work they would not get paid for the *hazira*?—That is right. As I say, perhaps once a month I go round and find bad work. I have done it once since the pruning started on the day after Christmas; I once went out and sent some women home. That is the only fine that has taken place since the pruning began.

F-4504. We asked them who decided whether the work was good or bad for which no payment would be given: was it the *sardar* or the sahib?—There is no question of giving no payment. The ordinary thing is that if they are doing bad work they are brought back and they repair it. If there is a great deal of bad work going on which, as I say, very rarely happens, then I send three or four of them home.

F-4505. We asked them as to who decided that it was bad work, whether the *sardar* or the sahib, and they said that it was the *sardar* who decided it?—Of course, it is all a chain. My assistants are responsible to me; the head *sardar* is responsible to them and the *dafadar* is responsible to the headman.

F-4506. Does the *sardar* get commission of any description?—Yes; he gets a pice per day per worker.

F-4507. Is the *sardar* who gets a pice per worker per day the same *sardar* who sends a person home for bad work?—He does not send anybody home; he has no power to do that; all he can do is to bring it to the notice of my assistants or myself; he has no power to cut anybody's pay.

F-4508. Does the *sardar* get a pice per worker or for the amount of work done?—He gets a pice for each *hazira*.

F-4509. If that is so, is it not possible that he will put every form of persuasion upon a worker to do more than one *hazira*?—He might. I think the intention of giving the commission was to induce the workers to work more and thus earn more. On an average the men work only for 17 days in a month and so there is ample room for the *sardar's* persuasion without being hard on them.

F-4510. With regard to maternity benefits, does your Association have any fixed policy, or does custom vary with the different gardens?—We generally pay not more than Rs. 15 in actual cash.

F-4511. I want to distinguish between the cash bonus paid at the time of the birth of the child or at certain intervals after the birth and the amount paid to the woman in the shape of wages when she is no longer at work both before and after pregnancy?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*): This is what the resolution says: "It is decided that a maximum amount of Rs. 15 should be allowed under this head (that is under the head maternity allowances), the amount to be distributed according to the manager's discretion. Over and above this sum, a sum not exceeding Rs. 10 may be paid as allowance for an infant up to one year of age." (*Mr. Travers*): As a rule, I pay the women bonus for a month before confinement; they go on to the maternity bonus pay list. If they are not fit to take up heavy work before that period they are given light work. I have a squadron of women engaged on sweeping the leaves; they work for a few hours in the mornings. That is done really because it is one of the few methods that we have of seeing that those women are looked after.

F-4512. In the case of women who are not fit for work at all have you got a system of paying them some portion of their wages?—All sick people are paid.

F-4513. *Colonel Russell*: That is people who go to the hospital?—No. The difficulty is that we cannot get them to the hospital. Anybody who is sick is immediately put on the sick list and he is paid until he is found fit for work.

F-4514. *Miss Power*: Can you tell us how many of the gardens who are members of your Association have schools? Have you got a record of the number of schools and the number of attendances?—(*Mr. Haig*): We have no record of the number of attendances. (*Mr. Travers*): You can get the information from the education department. I think almost all the British gardens have got a school; there are some which have not got schools because they cannot get the teachers.

F-4515. It is said that the parents are against sending children to school because they would thereby lose the earnings of their children. Has your Association offered to pay the children's wages, if they attended the school, as an inducement to the parents to send their children to school?—No. The tea industry pays a good deal of taxes; we pay the ordinary taxation and we also pay a special taxation. As it is we get very little from Government towards education, and we think it is as much the business of Government to provide for the education of our children as it is of anybody in the garden. Of course, we are prepared

to help the Government in every way that we can, but we consider that Government also should assist us by providing funds.

F-4516. Is there not an age-limit at which children are allowed to work on the gardens? Is that left to the discretion of the parents?—Occasionally I have to drive away tiny little children who come to work; otherwise they are allowed to come and work.

F-4517. The children are entered in the wages book separately, is it not?—That is so.

F-4518. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you not fix any age-limit, say, 8, 9 or 10?—(*Mr. Haig*): We go more by the size of the children. (*Mr. Travers*): As a matter of fact, you find some very small boys doing the man's work, especially hoeing.

F-4519. *Miss Power*: Could the Association be said to have an educational policy, or is it their policy to leave it to Government to take the first step towards the compulsory education of these children?—Even if the Government of Bengal were to enact a compulsory education Act we cannot compel these people to send their children to school. We can do our best to help it, but how can we compel them? Compulsory education not only on the gardens but all over is a thing that will bear fruit only gradually. The Act may be enacted but the actual carrying out of the Act will take years; it is bound to with an uneducated lot of people. But we shall do everything we can to help it.

F-4520. Have you any system of adult education on any of the tea gardens of your association?—I have a young Bengali as master here. The school works in the evening, which is the best time for getting the children together especially in the hot weather. Now I have got a certain number of boys—they are very few I am sorry to say—who are keen on education; there are three or four of them who cannot only read and write Bengali but can also read and write English. These better boys are taught English in the afternoons.

F-4521. What happens to these boys when they cease to be students?—We give them work.

F-4522. In what capacity?—One of them, for instance, has got his job in the factory; he stencils all the tea boxes and attends to the weighment. He is quite a success in the line and there is no reason why he should not in time to come be in charge of the factory.

F-4523. Are all the students in those evening classes boys? Are there no adult workers?—No.

F-4524. Is there any attempt being made to educate the adults through the eye? For instance, have you got any cinemas?—I think there is only one estate that has got a cinema, of its own. There are many of us who want to get them, and I hope we shall when things are better.

F-4525. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Mr. Travers, I seem to have read before the memorandum that you have submitted to us, did it appear anywhere?—Half of it I sent to the European Association's Review of India, and it was copied into several other things.

F-4526. In your opinion, is the present method of recruitment for your tea plantations generally acceptable?—I think so. We get our men mostly from Bihar and Orissa, and the Government of Bihar and Orissa have never during all these years raised any objection. At one time they asked us in regard to the amount of supervision that we put on. Our present system of recruitment was partly brought up by their initiative and partly by our own.

F-4527. There was one sentence in your original article from which you have cut out the first portion. The sentence was: "Though the recruiting method in force is unpopular the tea industry itself desires a measure of supervision of recruiting," while the sentence in your present memorandum only reads "But the tea industry itself desires a measure of supervision of recruiting." You have cut out the first half of the sentence. What do you exactly mean by that, and why has it been omitted?

Sir Alexander Murray: It means that it is unpopular with the tea managers.

F-4528. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I am only quoting the sentence that appears in the European Association's Review of India. I am asking whether it is unpopular with the managers, with the public or with the Government?—I have no recollection of using that phrase, but if I have used it I must have used it in reference to Assam; I believe that the Assam people wish to change their methods. Our system of recruitment is not at all unpopular; on the other hand, it is quite the reverse.

F-4529. Did I understand you to say that on an average the workers work 17 days in a month out of 26 days?—Yes.

F-4530. What is the number of *haziras* during those 17 days, on an average, that a man and a woman would put in? Would I be correct in saying that on an average it would be 2 *haziras*?—More than that.

F-4531. But that would be the average?—I cannot definitely say unless I actually calculate.

F-4532. Will you let us know the individual earnings, say, for the last month? —Yes, I will show my books later on. (*Mr. Haig*): It is a bad month; it is not anything like a standard. (*Mr. Travers*): The average earnings for the year were Rs. 14-4 for a man and Rs. 10-5 for a woman, while in December it was Rs. 11-8 and Rs. 8-11, respectively. (*Mr. Haig*): If you divide that by 4 as. you will get the number of *haziras* done.

F-4533. We can get it in another way. You said that you pay a commission of one pice to the *sardar* for each *hazira*. Therefore some record has got to be kept in regard to the work done by the workers?—We will show you our books later on.

F-4534. The point that I want to bring out is this that if Rs. 14 is the average that you work out for a man who must put in two *haziras*, then obviously an average worker on your estate must work for a period of more than 26 days in a month in order to make up that?—(*Mr. Travers*): In the rainy season he earns much more; he puts in three *haziras*. Then the plucking should also be considered. It is a light task and a good working young man will earn Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4 a day, and a woman from 12 as. to 14 as. besides the first *hazira*.

F-4535. In answering one of the questions put to you by the Chairman you spoke about an informal agreement that you had amongst yourselves not to increase the rates of wages. Could you give me some information as to when you last increased the rate?—Are you talking about the increase in the rate of wages or the amount of earnings?

F-4536. I am not concerned with the amount of earnings; I am referring to the increase in the rate of wages. For instance, what was the rate before for one *hazira* for deep hoeing and what is the rate to-day?—When I first came here the cost of living was very much cheaper and we were giving 4 as. and 3 as. for the *hazira*; the extra that they got was all called *doubli*. The second *hazira* was nothing like what it is now. Then after the war when the cost of living went up and that amount was not sufficient for the labourer to live on in comfort, we did not increase the rate of wages but we decreased the task and started the system of the second and the third *hazira*, or what we call the unit system. It is worked in a variety of ways so as to allow him to earn far more money. We never have increased the rate of wages. If we had increased the rate from, say, 4 as. to 8 as. the coolie would not have the incentive to work more. We want him to work and we want him to earn. It is to our advantage to have the coolie well-off so that he can feed himself properly and keep healthy.

F-4537. I understand that. What I was driving at was this. When was the task decreased?—Just at the end of the war.

F-4538. What year would it be?—Some time in 1918 or 1919, at the time of the famine and the influenza epidemic when the cost of living went up.

F-4539. Could you give some definite particulars as to the exact date on which you decreased the task last time?—No, because I am speaking now for the industry in the Dooars as a whole, and the conditions vary from garden to garden.

F-4540. Take your own garden?—We started about that time and slowly it has reached the present state.

F-4541. When was it stabilized to the present state?—Perhaps two years ago; there has been no increase for the last two years.

F-4542. What was the actual decrease two years ago?—I cannot give details; it has been so gradual.

F-4543. Could you give for 1918 and 1919?—No, not without investigation.

F-4544. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can you give us an approximate idea of the cost of cultivation in reference to wages?—In 1928 we spent Rs. 79,500 on cultivation.

F-4545. That figure does not help us much because you have been increasing your garden?—(*Mr. Haig*): The records of one large company in the Dooars which has added nothing to its acreage show that the amount of money spent on cultivation has risen from Rs. 3,65,000 in 1913 to Rs. 8,20,000 in 1928.

F-4546. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Since 1918-19 there may be minor changes but there has not been an increase in the rate of wages?—(*Mr. Travers*): Previous to 1918-19 the rise had already begun, but from that year onwards we adopted a definite policy to allow our labourers to earn considerably more than they were earning before; we initiated also a general scheme of maternity benefits and sick pay and so on about that time. Since then there has been a gradual increase, but not a considerable increase.

F-4547. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Obviously there has been an increase, but is that increase due to an increased application on the part of the worker, or is it due to the reduced task which enables him to earn more money?—We have decreased the task.

F-4548. *The Chairman*: If we could have any record showing the variation made in the task since the war, it will be helpful?—The old records are not easily to be found. We can give you the total amount spent on each garden.

Sir Alexander Murray: That will not help us for the reason that you have been extending your gardens.

F-4549. *Mr. Clow*: You can find what the *hazira* was?—I will see what I can do.

The Chairman: We have figures, I think, of actual earnings of the workers for the last ten years?

Sir Alexander Murray: We have figures for Assam but not for the Dooars.

F-4550. *The Chairman*: It will be very interesting if you can give us the average earnings of men, women and children for a period of years, say, for the last ten years?—We will try to collect them for you.

F-4551. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: With regard to the informal agreement that you have in respect of wages, what is the effect of that on the mobility of labour?—The effect is that if there was any garden in the district that gave below the average earnings to his coolies those coolies would gradually leave that garden and go to another where there was a higher rate.

F-4552. *Per contra* no garden can increase the wages, and no garden will, simply because that garden will be bound by your agreement?—No garden can increase the rate of wages, but on the other hand if a garden is short of labour, the manager will naturally do everything that he can to persuade his coolies to work to the limit of their capability.

F-4553. The point is does not this informal agreement prevent free movement of workers from one garden to another if they are convinced that they will get better wages in another garden?—It is not only the earnings by any means which attract the labour from one garden to another and affects the mobility of the labour, but the conditions under which labour live have a great influence on their stability.

F-4554. Leaving the conditions on one side would the practical effect not be what I am suggesting? Perhaps I might strengthen my argument by referring you to what the Government of Bengal themselves say. They say "the large amount of money spent on importation tended in the past to restrict forced freedom of movement in the labour market." Then again: "Labour rules make it exceedingly difficult for the labourers to find employment on any garden other than that which imported them."?—That is not true of the Dooars. There is nothing to prevent any labourer going from one garden to another garden in the Dooars so far as I am aware.

F-4555. Suppose garden A said "I will give 6 as. for a *hazira*" whereas garden B gives 4 as. You enter into an agreement and say "We shall not give 6 as. but we shall stick to the present rate which prevails, namely, 4 as." Does it or does it not, in practice, restrict the movement of the labourer from one garden to another?—I do not think so. Any alteration in the rate of wages would, I think, be very undesirable from the point of view of the labourers.

F-4556. I am not asking you whether it is desirable or not. I am asking you whether, in practice, it does not restrict the movement of labour?—I do not agree that it does.

F-4557. I shall leave it at that because it is a matter of argument. You say in your memorandum "A man, hoeing, finishes his tasks in six hours." What do you refer to there?—I refer to the two *haziras* that a man does. You saw men this morning leaving their first *hazira* and going to the second at 20 minutes past 11. They started at about 8; that is about 3¼ hours for the first *hazira*, and about 2¼ hours for the second *hazira*. On an average they take 6 hours.

F-4558. Let me take the case of a woman whom Col. Russell and myself timed this morning. She was pruning the tea plants. We watched for 5¼ minutes and within that time she had not finished that particular plant. She told us that for a *hazira* she had to do 60 of those plants?—That is no criterion at all. You have got to remember that it is an enormous event in the lives of these people to see persons like you coming and watching them at work. They are full of interest to see you and cannot devote complete attention to their work. The women in the morning do work for about 4 to 4½ hours; they work from 8 to 12 in the morning and from 2 to about 4-15 in the afternoon.

F-4559. What do you pay for the children?—The bigger children get Rs. 2-8 and the smaller ones get Rs. 2.

F-4560. Do you pay for the *hazira* or on the monthly rate?—We pay on the monthly rate. In the rains when they go to pluck, which is a very easy work, they make a lot of money then.

F-4561. Are these children employed on pruning?—No, they are too small. Grown up children are employed and they get the women's wage.

F-4562. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Under what category do you show the children who are employed on pruning work and earn the woman's wage?—They are all entered as women.

F-4563. *Colonel Russell*: Dr. McCutcheon, how many gardens are you in charge of?—*(Dr. McCutcheon)*: 15.

F-4564. And how many companies?—About six different companies.

F-4565. What is the total population that you are responsible for?—The total number of coolie inhabitants of this district is somewhere about 22,000 to 23,000.

F-4566. Have you got a hospital on each garden or have you got any central hospital?—We have no central hospital; we have a small hospital in each garden. We have a civil hospital at Jalpaiguri to which we send serious operation cases.

F-4567. We may take it that the average hospital is something like the one that we saw this morning?—Some of them are better and some are not.

F-4568. Would it be an advantage to have, for a group of gardens such as you are in charge of, a well-equipped and well-staffed central hospital?—It might be. They have one such hospital in Chanpara, Eastern Dooars.

F-4569. Does it work satisfactorily?—I have not actually seen it.

F-4570. Do you anticipate that there would be any difficulty in running a hospital of this nature if, say, six different companies are responsible for its up-keep?—I do not think so. *(Mr. Travers)*: There will be difficulty in persuading coolies to enter it.

F-4571. So far as the question of finance is concerned you think that there would be no difficulty?—*(Dr. McCutcheon)*: No.

F-4572. Do you think there would be difficulty in getting the coolies to come to such a hospital?—Probably.

F-4573. What distance do you think should be the maximum between a central hospital and an outlying garden?—This place, Baradighi, is practically an outlying garden. I should say that except two gardens in my district all are practically within a four mile radius. *(Mr. Travers)*: This area is peculiarly compact.

F-4574. There are other areas where there are gardens that are more scattered?—*(Mr. Haig)*: That is so in my district. *(Mr. Travers)*. If you go to the far east in the Dooars you will find that eight gardens are spread over an area of 20 miles. *(Mr. Haig)*: In the far west we have three large rivers between the gardens which are impassable during rains by any wheeled traffic. The gardens are all isolated.

F-4575. Would it be possible to connect the gardens, by means of tramways such as they have in Java?—A great many of the gardens use motor lorries now.

F-4576. But you say they are cut off during the rains?—Only some of the gardens are. *(Dr. McCutcheon)* In my own "parish," the gardens are accessible in any part of the year, as there are no large rivers, but in the "parish" in which Mr. Haig lives one cannot use wheeled traffic all the year round.

F-4577. That would be a matter of providing bridges, etc.?—Yes; we have been asking for this from a very long time, with no success. *(Mr. Travers)*: If we can get better and more roads we will bless your name.

F-4578. Do you do any child welfare work on any of your estates?—*(Dr. McCutcheon)*: As a general rule, we give maternity allowances. In many

gardens the babies are shown to me once a month in the presence of the manager of the garden or the senior assistant and they are given a monthly allowance; they are taken to task if the children are dirty or ill cared for.

F-4579. I suppose you have got a garden doctor on each estate?—Yes.

F-4580. Has that garden doctor got instructions in the matter of looking after all non-working children?—Yes; all are supposed to be looked after.

F-4581. In what way?—If they are ill he treats them.

F-4582. But is there any general supervision?—(*Mr. Travers*): I have two compounders and a garden doctor who go to the lines every day to see whether there are any sick persons.

F-4583. Miss Power and I went round the lines this morning for a considerable time and it seemed to us that there was considerable sickness among the children on this estate?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) Spleen index is probably high in this area.

F-4584. You mean generally for the Dooars?—Yes.

F-4585. What would you estimate that to be?—I have not taken an estimate lately, but I should say that it is over 70 per cent. in most of the gardens.

F-4586. If that is so, then about 100 per cent. are infected?—Very likely. In 1899-1900, I think, when Drs. Stephens and Christophers visited the Dooars, a number of blood slides of children were taken and it was discovered that there was a high percentage of parasitic infection.

F-4587. We may take it that at present about 100 per cent. of the children here are infected with malaria?—Yes.

F-4588. We also made a considerable number of enquiries as to the number of deaths of children that have taken place in recent years and we found that the majority of the children who died were less than one, two or three years of age. I take it that is due to malaria?—I believe so, in many cases.

F-4589. Those children are being lost as part of your potential labour force?—Yes.

F-4590. These lives could be saved if further measures were taken?—Yes.

F-4591. Have you or your Association had in mind any definite scheme for saving this large loss of life?—Anti-malarial work is being done on a fair number of individual gardens now. (*Mr. Travers*) We are getting very favourable results from that work; malaria this year was considerably less than the year before.

F-4592. I do not know how you estimate that there has been a considerable reduction when there is now 100 per cent. infection?—There is a considerable reduction in the death rate and in the number of cases treated. We are beginning to get hold of it; we have only had one year. (*Dr. McCutcheon*) Two gardens that are within very close range of my bungalow have done a lot of anti-malarial work, draining and spraying and so on, and the actual number of cases treated is much below the average; in fact, it is about one-third of the average.

F-4593. Are you satisfied that the garden doctors on the individual gardens are properly trained and able to conduct proper preventive measures on an estate? I should think they could under supervision. (*Mr. Travers*) Many of our progressive planters consider that the "parishes" of our British doctors are too large; we want them to be reduced and more supervision of the garden doctors.

F-4594. How often do you manage to supervise the activities of the individual garden doctors?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) I make routine visits once a fortnight; my visits sometimes get a little irregular in the cold weather. When I am called in urgently I go to the individual gardens.

F-4595. Probably you will agree that you are rather overburdened with general practitioner's work and do not have sufficient time to do general supervision?—Very often I have more consultation than administration to do.

F-4596. So that you do miss the services of a man doing whole-time preventive work?—Yes. As a matter of fact, the anti-malarial work is so largely a matter of common sense that any manager or senior assistant can supervise that.

F-4597. Perhaps there are differences of opinion as to that?—(*Mr. Travers*) I myself see that this garden is properly sprayed.

F-4598. But you may be spraying in the wrong places?—We spray along the borders of streams; in fact, if we do anything wrong, it is in excess; we spray all round the houses.

F-4599. Would it not be better for each parish or group of estates to have an officer with public health training, well trained in anti-malarial work, say a malariologist, resident in the area, able to advise different doctors and managers?—Yes, I should think it would be very helpful, but he would want to have some backing. (*Mr. Haig*) As a matter of fact, I tried to get that in our group of gardens; I approached Duncans and Finlays and they were very sympathetic. Dr. Bentley has an experimental station near and he has lent his men to supervise my work. I have spent Rs. 5,000 this year on it.

F-4600. What is the percentage of deaths which must be registered before a garden is called unhealthy?—(*Mr. Travers*) In the Dooars we are not categorized in that way.

F-4601. Is that because all the gardens in the Dooars are healthy?—(*Mr. Haig*) The death rate in the Dooars is low.

F-4602. The death rate in this garden last year was 32·28?—(*Mr. Travers*) Yes, that is very high.

F-4603. In addition to the child welfare work, have you ever considered the possibility of employing trained *dais* or midwives in the garden?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) I have; but I do not know that there are any; they are very difficult to get. (*Mr. Travers*) The District Board is training a number of Santhal women, but the women of other races will not employ them.

F-4604. Is it impossible to get women whom they will employ?—We can try, but of course it is going to take a good many years' persuasion.

F-4605. But I take it that if they were available they would be of great use?—Yes, if we could only get the people to employ them I would appoint them to-morrow.

F-4606. Is the midwifery work on the estate at present done by the ordinary barber midwives?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) Most of them are not attended at all except by their own relations; sometimes I am called in in very difficult cases.

F-4607. Have you any system of giving sick pay to out-patients?—The garden manager does that.

F-4608. That does not appear in the hospital expenditure?—No, I do not think so; the hospital expenditure includes in-patients and sometimes out-patients who go to hospital and are fed. That expenditure is put to general expenditure I think.

F-4609. Do you give any pay to an attendant relative who cares to come to the hospital?—(*Mr. Travers*) The husband or wife of a sick Munda or other woman or man who comes to hospital is paid; if they are ill in their houses and we cannot get them to come to hospital, we pay an attendant at the house.

F-4610. This morning we saw a woman coming back from the hospital; she was looking after a child which had lost its mother. The woman had a small quantity of milk in her brass pot. We asked about it and she said that was the quantity of milk which was being supplied by the management from the hospital for the child. What quantity of milk is supposed to be given to such children?—I could not tell you, but the woman would also be paid for looking after the child.

F-4611. But is there a definite policy of issuing milk?—We support all our children who are left orphans.

F-4612. This child was about 18 months old and was obviously in a bad state of health?—They can get two bottlefulls of milk a day; that is the issue to children like that.

F-4613. The milk we saw was not more than half a pint, and the woman said that was all she got for the child each day?—I will enquire into that; they get two bottles a day for a child.

F-4614. What is the policy with regard to water supply?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) The policy is to improve the water supply as we go along. I remember when there were nothing but very indifferent wells, some of them having no lining but being just holes in the ground. Now there are very few of those left, if any. At present the wells all have properly bricked or concrete linings, and pipe supplies are being made more and more. Some of them are gravity supplies, water being tapped from sources in the hills. (*Mr. Travers*)Here we shall have to have a tube-well and pump the water into a tank.

F-4615. Do you find that endless chain pumps go into disrepair very quickly?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) They are quite good pumps but I think they are easily

damaged. (*Mr. Haig*) I do not think so. (*Mr. Travers*) Ours have worked for several years without any trouble; we have a special man going round.

F-4616. Are the coolies capable of using them?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) Yes, but they use them rather roughly.

F-4617. Do you use large numbers of tube-wells?—(*Mr. Travers*) That is more an experiment. We have various kinds of water-supply here. Some are piped from a supply in the hills and some pumped from a well. At present there are very few tube-wells.

F-4618. Are there any gardens in your group which suffer largely from bowel diseases due to the water-supply?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) I do not think so; bowel diseases do not bulk so largely as they did 20 years ago.

F-4619. Is that due to improvement of the water-supply?—Very largely I should think.

F-4620. There are no latrines on this estate?—Mr. Travers put in several latrines but I think they were found to be ignored.

F-4621. Of what type were they?—The ordinary pit. Mr. Haig put in a very elaborate septic tank latrine but it was not used. (*Mr. Travers*) They laugh at them and will not use them. (*Mr. Haig*) It cost me Rs. 2,000 to put in these latrines for one set of lines and they were never used.

F-4622. *The Chairman*: What proportion of your coolies own cows?—(*Mr. Travers*) The large majority own cows or goats.

F-4623. Do they use the milk themselves?—Yes. My milk supply for the hospital comes from outside the garden. All the milk on the gardens is consumed by the coolies themselves; I have an arrangement with people in the *busti* area. (*Dr. McCutcheon*) The coolies near a big bazaar prefer to sell it rather than use it themselves.

F-4624. Have they land for the cultivation of vegetables?—Nearly every house has a little patch near it.

F-4625. *Col. Russell*: Are you satisfied that the diet is a physiological one with regard to milk, vegetables and so on?—I think so. A good many of the Santhals are meat-eaters.

F-4626. Mr. Travers has said that five estates are quite sufficient for the supervision of a British doctor. Do you agree with that?—(*Mr. Travers*) 5 gardens of 1,000 acres are quite enough.

F-4627. If Dr. McCutcheon remained in charge of 15 gardens and had a whole-time officer doing preventive work, would that come to the same thing?—(*Mr. Travers*) Not quite. I want a board of health really to do research and to help with schemes of health for the garden. Besides that, I want the parishes of the doctors to be cut down.

F-4628. But for research work you must have a whole-time man?—Yes, a board of health.

F-4629. But the board of health would not do the research work?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) We did suggest establishing something like a branch of the Tropical School in the district, but nobody would hear of it.

F-4630. Mr. Travers says each tea district of 50 gardens should have a board of health; do you not think that is too large an area?—It has not been tried; you cannot say until you try it. (*Mr. Travers*) That is the beginning. I would start with a board of health for 50 gardens with one highly qualified good man. If he finds he wants two more men to help him, by all means let him have them. His work would be to go round the estate and map out the general preventive methods. The doctor of the 5 gardens is to carry out those preventive methods.

F-4631. But the managers surely usually do the work themselves?—The manager does; we do an enormous amount of health work; but at the same time the other part of the manager's work is very considerable; he is a jack of all trades.

F-4632. I do not mean that he would do it himself, but would generally supervise?—We supervise our garden doctors, but we want more technical assistance; we want more preventive work on the garden.

F-4633. For the women and children would it be possible to make use of the services of a well trained European or Indian lady medical officer?—It may be in the future.

F-4634. You do not see any objection to it?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) It is possible. (*Mr. Travers*) It will be rather difficult in a lonely district like this. Are you going

to put a lady doctor, a single woman, into a house by herself?—It introduces all sorts of difficulties.

F-4635. My solution of that problem is to have a central hospital with the chief medical officer resident in the compound, and the lady medical officer in another bungalow. Do you see any difficulty in that?—No. It is a new idea. (*Dr. McCutcheon*) It could be done all right.

F-4636. *Mr. Cliff*: Would this board of health be established by the Dooars Tea Association?—No, it must be done by Government with legal powers.

F-4637. *Col. Russell*: There was a Bill called the Bengal Tea Gardens Act of 1923?—(*Mr. Travers*) Yes; I drafted it to a large extent. In the second period of the Reforms the Swarajists had practically a majority on the Bengal Council and the Government, without consulting me, withdrew it. Even if there were a complete Swarajist majority I would guarantee to get a Board of Health Bill through.

F-4638. *Mr. Clow*: Was there any opposition to the Bill?—Government thought that, being a Government measure, the Swarajist members would oppose it.

F-4639. But was there actually any opposition?—No; the Bill was never put to the Council at all.

F-4640. *Col. Russell*: As far as I can make out, the tea garden area mentioned in this Bill simply refers to the tea gardens?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) That was not intended; it was meant to include also waste land, *bustis*, forests and the railways. (*Mr. Travers*) The area would have to be decided upon by a committee of experts. (*Dr. McCutcheon*) The board of health would be a district board in this district so far as health matters were concerned. (*Mr. Travers*) The district board did oppose it on that ground; they were not certain of their position in the matter; but I think that opposition could be overcome.

F-4641. It is also suggested that the board should consist of 15 members. Do you not think such a board would be a little large?—We have to incorporate diverse interests; the districts, the Indian planters and Government would have to be represented.

F-4642. But you have 10 elected from the managers of tea estates?—My idea is to have an executive committee.

F-4643. That is for smaller areas?—For a larger scheme there would be the full board which would only meet at comparatively long intervals; there would be a small executive committeee to do the real work.

F-4644. When you suggested that three members should be appointed by the local Government, what members had you in mind?—The Civil Surgeon, the District Health Officer of the District Board and the Deputy Commissioner.

F-4645. *The Chairman*: Do you think that such a board for a tea area where the population is mainly tea garden population, could be extended to cover general questions of welfare as well as simple questions of health?—That would be very difficult. I think it would be preferable to leave this welfare question to our own Association. We wish to increase welfare work more and more as finance permits. The next thing many of us want to introduce is the cinema; we think we can do a great deal with regard to health by that means.

F-4646. *Col. Russell*: But under the constitution of the board that you have mentioned your Tea Association would have an absolute majority all the time?—The cess would be very largely raised from us. Government, we hope, would pay a small amount for the adjoining area. Nine-tenths of the cess would be paid by the tea gardens.

F-4647. It is suggested that the board of health would divide the tea garden area into districts; what sort of districts do you suggest?—There should be one board of health in the Dooars with branches, another for the Terai, which is in a separate district altogether, and a third for Darjeeling if they require it.

F-4648. It is suggested that the district committee should consist of not less than three persons. Which members would that be?—I do not remember that.

F-4649. *Mr. Cliff*: Has anything been done since that date to get a similar measure introduced?—The last Deputy Commissioner investigated this matter again and asked me and Mr. Haig whether we approved of progress in this matter; we said: "Yes, speaking for the local planters, we did." I have also spoken to the Governor on the matter and he is keen on starting this.

F-4650. Is the Dooars Tea Association in membership with the Indian Tea Association?—Many gardens here are members of both organizations. It is not a

branch. We have many Indian members of the Dooars Planters' Association who are not members of the Indian Tea Association.

F-4651. Are you appointed doctor for the six agencies or is there a contract between each agency and you?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) It is done as a group.

F-4652. Is a separate agency maintained for recruitment from Chota Nagpur distinct from the Tea Districts Labour Association?—(*Mr. Travers*) The majority of us recruit through the Tea Districts Labour Association in Chota Nagpur, but we have a separate agent in the district from whence most of our coolies come. The accounts are kept entirely separate.

F-4653. We have a figure of 32,000 recruits?—That is the Tea Districts Labour Association figure. In certain places we have our own buildings and our own agents.

F-4654. Can I take it the number recruited for the Dooars last year was 30,000 as stated in this return?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*): The coolies recruited during 1927-28 through the Tea Districts Labour Association were 29,871 souls and 26,038½ adults.

F-4655. Can you give an approximate idea of the number recruited through the other agencies?—No. (*Mr. Travers*): It would not be very considerable.

F-4656. Would it be a thousand?—I should think it will probably be 1/10 of the whole total.

F-4657. Can you tell me the number of houses that are on this garden?—I am afraid I could not at the moment; recently we have had an influx of new people.

F-4658. Have you any record of the number of houses?—We are building new houses now, and a record is being made at the present time.

F-4659. You have no record up-to-date?—I can find that out for you.

F-4660. You can send it later on please. Is it possible to tell us the number of recruits that you recruited last year? Do I understand the figure was 91? Is that the total recruitment?—During the whole of last year we got 153 recruits.

F-4661. Have you got the number of people who left your garden last year?—The total during the whole of the year, that is, of those going to their country, to other gardens and so on, was 177. The total number of people who came into the garden last year was 363, a surplus of 186.

F-4662. How many people do you estimate you require to employ per acre?—·9; that is the working average.

F-4663. Does ·9 per acre refer to adult labour?—No; all round, including children.

F-4664. Is your ·9 per acre based on absenteeism?—No. It is based actually on those who are not absent; our absenteeism is very large.

F-4665. Does that apply to this garden only?—For the whole of the last year the average for my garden worked out at one coolie per acre at work.

F-4666. Do you require any more labour or not?—I have about the right amount.

F-4667. Would you suggest that that figure is fairly typical of the whole of the Dooars?—A coolie per acre is sufficient not only for the ordinary upkeep but also for renovation work. The average number of children at work in my garden is practically 1/10, that is, if I have 1,200 people I have 120 children.

F-4668. I understand that you have no agreement with regard to the rates of wages between gardens but you have an understanding?—That is so. We have certain rules to prevent enticement.

F-4669. Would you mind handing in a copy of the rules to the Commission?—I will send it later on.

F-4670. I notice the Indian Tea Association saying that work is so arranged that a minimum wage is obtainable for a matter of three hours' work per day. Applying that to your own garden, what is the minimum that a person obtains? Take, first of all, a woman who works for three hours a day?—She will only receive 3 annas but that, of course, is not the minimum. On every Dooars garden that I am acquainted with the minimum is two *haziras*, that is to say, 8 annas for a man and 6 annas for a woman.

F-4671. That is for more than 3 hours of work?—Yes. If a woman puts in two *haziras* in pruning work she will take about 4½ to 4½ hours.

F-4672. I just wanted to test the Indian Tea Association's statement with regard to three hours work?—Three annas would be rather an under-estimate for

pruning at any rate. At certain times of the year they can do hoeing and they will get 4 annas.

F-4673. That would be the minimum wage to which the Indian Tea Association refers, I take it?—Yes.

F-4674. Have you any control over the advances which the *sardars* make to the workers?—The system here in regard to advances is this: A labourer requires an advance for a marriage or to buy a cow or for any of the thousand things for which he wants to borrow. The *sardar* comes with that labourer to me and the advance is issued on their joint responsibility. We pay them all individually, and the advance is entered in the book. The *sardar* comes merely to guarantee the respectability of the labourer; of course, we also know that.

F-4675. Do any of your *sardars* make any advance of their own to work-people? —They do for day-to-day requirements.

F-4676. Day-to-day requirements include food, I take it?—If some people for some reason or other did not work for 4 or 5 days and then come to work they ask the *sardar* to give them an advance of Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 for purchasing their household requirements, with a promise to return it back when they get their pay the next week. That is the sort of advance that the *sardar* makes. The coolies are not largely indebted to their *sardars*.

F-4677. In answer to a question I think you said that the weekly payment which you make is sufficient for the ordinary purchase of the bazaar. Can you tell me what is the ordinary weekly payment?—You mean what does a coolie get?

F-4678. Yes?—At this time of the year a man can earn Rs. 1-8 a week for the second *hazira*, but very few of them get that amount.

F-4679. Some of your people said that they take advances from the *sardar* in order to buy food at the bazaar?—Very rarely. Three days a week we are giving a third *hazira*; if a coolie wishes he can earn Rs. 2-4.

F-4680. As far as you yourself are concerned you would have no objection to weekly payment?—Not a bit; as I said, I offered it to my people but they did not want it.

F-4681. Have you got any idea with regard to the average household budget of your people?—I estimate that a hard working family will spend one-third of their money on food.

F-4682. I want to know whether you have got any objection to tea garden workers on your estate forming a combination of workers, a labour union?—To tell you the truth, I should be glad in the future when it does happen, but at the present moment I do not consider that these people are sufficiently educationally advanced for forming a labour union. It will simply provide an opportunity for the agitator to harm them. They can certainly have labour unions when they have more education and when they themselves can control the unions. At present if they have a labour union it cannot be controlled by them at all. That is the trouble. As it is, I consider that the present paternal system is better for them.

F-4683. Do you feel that the combination should only come after education?— I am not talking about literary education, I am talking about the general education. That will come to them by larger ideas about things that surround them. This is gradually spreading, and I should imagine that a labour union here might come into being in about 10 or 15 years' time; I should not say before that.

F-4684. You have said, in answer to a question, that these people are fairly shrewd with regard to their terms of employment, and one notices that when going and talking to them. Is not that shrewdness which they manifest a proof of their fitness to form a union?—You forget that these people are drawn from different races and they have their different customs, and there is the greatest difficulty to pool them together. They do not like combination.

F-4685. Then it is not their ignorance, it is a difference in customs and races? Yes, but they have no training in the proper use of a union.

F-4686. Who is going to educate them, are you?—We have a sort of garden *panchayat*. I get all my headmen together and talk to them on several things. It is the beginning of the movement; in time they will have that *panchayat* run by themselves.

F-4687. Have you experimented with the *panchayat* in allowing them to deal with the wage question or with other conditions of labour?—No. We have not encouraged them at all in the garden in regard to that.

F-4688. Do you think it is possible that it might be encouraged?—I do not think so; they are not far enough advanced for that.

F-4689. If they are not sufficiently advanced would you object to there being a minimum wage board on which the public and the planters were represented for dealing with the question of wages?—To tell you the truth, we have here a tea industry where there has been up to the present a very small amount of trouble between the employer and the employed. My opinion is that any Govrnment interference or the wage board interference is going to begin the trouble. I think it is very much better to leave an institution like ours as it is unless there is discontent amongst the labourers. There is no discontent now. You have seen that yourself; it is obvious that our labour is contented. If you introduce anything like a wage board or things of that sort in the present state of educational development, I think you will be introducing a good deal of trouble and difficulty which does not at present exist. Such a thing will not be to their advantage.

F-4690. Take the question of the advancement of these people; how do you propose that it should be begun?—Extension of education. One of our difficulties has been how to make these people save money. They get a very considerable surplus of earnings above their ordinary necessities. What I want to do is to direct that surplus into a useful channel. As it is, quite a number of them go back to their country and buy land, but we have got, in the future, to frame a policy which would direct that surplus into a useful direction.

F-4691. Shall I put this to you as the Chairman put it a few moments ago? Suppose there are a number of well-disposed persons who want to make a beginning, and they were constituted into a committee officially recognized. Would you oppose such a committee?—You mean a committee of our own people?

F-4692. Your own people and other well-disposed people. I cannot leave you out of such a committee?—At present, in the internal management of the tea gardens, we do not want outsiders.

F-4693. You do not want outsiders to interfere with your business or the discipline and direction of labour, but with regard to making a beginning for uplifting the people, would you have any objection? Would you not rather welcome such a committee?—Are you referring to my garden.

F-4694. Take the whole of the tea industry if you like?—It is a new idea to me, and requires consideration.

F-4695. I will not put it any further than this that the Commission would welcome if you could consider whether such a committee dealing with questions of the welfare of labour would not be of great advantage to the industry?—(*Mr. Haig*): Who would you put on the committee? (*Mr. Travers*): Do you mean an advisory committee or a committee with powers?

F-4696. An advisory committee might be of some use, but what I want to know from you, who have great experience on this subject, is whether it is practicable to have a representative committee consisting of the representatives of the Dooars Association and public-spirited people which would make a beginning with regard to raising the outlook and the standard of these people?—I myself and a large majority of the planters here are intensely interested in these people and are desirous of doing anything that will help them. If we can have concrete proposals from you, we can consider them and do our best to adopt them if possible.

F-4697. Before waiting for any definite recommendation from the Commission as a whole, if you could consider whether any advancement could be made along this line and send a note to the Commission we would be very much obliged to you. Take this particular garden. What is the capital cost that has been expended on hospital accommodation?—Our buildings here have cost us Rs. 6,000 but the hospital which you saw this morning is only a temporary one; we are going to put up a much bigger and a more ambitious building.

F-4698. What is the cost of maintenance of your medical work on this estate? We spent last year Rs. 13,500 and the year before last, on hospital medicines, a sum of Rs. 11,721.

F-4699. Can you give me an approximate idea of the area of *khet* land you have on this estate?—I think we have nearly 200 acres, distributed amongst 400 to 500 families. Generally each family has one-third of an acre; some have more; it depends upon the size of the family.

F-4700. *The Chairman*: You had to buy this land?—I have spent Rs. 50,000 in the purchase of *khet* land.

F-4701. From Government, is it?—We bought land from the *bustis*. We are allowed to do it. There are special rules in the matter. In buying this land we have to give an undertaking to Government that it is not for the plantation of

tea but it is for *khet* land for the coolies. Each application for purchase is investigated by the District Magistrate to see that the land is bought at a fair rate from the owners and utilized for the purpose for which it was bought.

F-4702. *Mr. Ahmed*: The tenants do not get any right to that land, is it not?—That is so. We do not come under the Bengal Tenancy Act.

F-4703. Nor does the tenant come under the law of prescriptive possession even after 20 or 30 years, is it not?—I give the land on a year's tenancy. So long as he continues to work reasonably satisfactorily he gets it year after year. He plants one year's crop, and when he has planted it, legally he can cut it.

F-4704. So he has got no right to the land?—No. I charge no rent.

F-4705. But he has to clear the ground and cut the jungle, is it not?—No. It is all *khet* land that we have purchased and developed; the land is all clear.

F-4706. Is the land situated within the garden area?—Some of it is outside the actual garden ground, but it is not jungle.

F-4707. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How do you escape the Bengal Tenancy Act?—Because tea gardens do not come under the Act.

F-4708. But that is not tea garden, it is *khet* land for cultivation?—Yes, but it comes under the tea garden lease.

F-4709. *Mr. Ahmed*: Am I right in saying that the land that you get from Government for tea plantation is given on lease?—Yes.

F-4710. And that you have a regular printed form of the lease?—Yes.

F-4711. Will you please tender a copy of that form of lease to the Commission?—We have no copy here. You can get it from our office in Calcutta. They are all 30 years' lease.

F-4712. *The Chairman*: Are they in a standard Government form?—I expect they are. I think the Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, will be able to supply you a copy of the form.

The Chairman: I think we better get it from the Government at Calcutta.

F-4713. *Mr. Ahmed*: In that form of lease it is stated that the roads within the gardens are open to the public?—Perhaps that may be so in some of the leases, but what is generally stated is that there is to be one road from North to South and one road from East to West open to the public.

F-4714. I take it that the public have a right to walk on those roads?—Yes.

F-4715. That is generally the case with regard to all leases of *khasmahal* land?—I cannot tell you.

F-4716. Will the Primary Education Bill which is now before the Bengal Legislative Council, if passed into law, operate in your area?—Yes; most certainly it will operate in Jalpaiguri district.

F-4717. Of course it will apply to the Jalpaiguri district, but will that apply to the tea gardens?—It remains to be seen whether we can come under special arrangement under the Act itself or under the District School Board.

F-4718. Will you explain briefly the idea underlying the present Bill?—The idea is that the school board of each district should be primarily the people to decide when compulsion should come in. There is also to be a central committee to act in co-operation with the Minister, and that committee can, if they think that a district is fit for compulsion and the local committee is against it, bring any methods to make the board to introduce compulsion as quickly as possible. But here in North Bengal, generally outside the tea garden, education is very backward.

F-4719. Suppose the Minister were to say that education will be made compulsory in Jalpaiguri district and that the Government will pay a portion of the cost while the remaining portion is to be defrayed from the pockets of the tea garden proprietors, will you be in favour of that?—There is to be a cess. So much of the cess is going to be paid by the landlord and so much by the tenant. In the case of the tea gardens we should pay the whole lot. That money is to go to the district fund and the district committee will decide on the subject of compulsion.

F-4720 You are in favour of payment of that money, is it not?—If the representatives of Bengal in the Council are prepared to tax themselves for the purpose of primary education, we would whole-heartedly contribute our share. That is the attitude that my party has taken up in regard to this Bill.

F-4721.. You quote the opinion expressed by the Linlithgow Commission that "restrictions upon tea garden recruiting in the movement of labour should be done away with altogether," and you say that the people are free to come and go. If that is so, will you be in favour of establishment of a public bureau for recruitment of labour instead of getting the recruitment done through *sardars or recruiters*?—No, for this reason that our people who go to recruit bring back their own men or relations. We have groups of relations in our lines now and they are far more happy than they would have been if they had been separated and distributed by the bureau.

F-4722. Will you not be contented so long as you get your supply of labour irrespective of the means by which it is obtained?—I think our own organization is practical.

F-4723. But you know there are lots of abuses under the present system. Some of those who go as *sardars* do not turn up at all?—You propose, in the present state of the finances of this country, to introduce a new organization which is going to cost the taxpayer a lot of money whereas at the present moment the tea garden industry is paying for that organization.

F-4724. If by having a public bureau you can get your supply of labour at a cheaper cost, why should you not be in favour of the bureau?—I think that would lead to the dispersion of the present strength of our labour force. For instance, I have Mundas here; they go to their country and bring their own people here, and they are very happy now. But if you have a public bureau they cannot come to one and the same place for work, and they will be unhappy.

F-4725. But what does it matter to you so long as you get your supply?—You should know that a great deal depends upon the happiness and contentment of our workers.

F-4726. *The Chairman*: You wish to maintain the family system in the Dooars?—That is our intention.

F-4727. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say in your memorandum: "What is required is a board with representatives of each Government concerned, to sit with the nominees of the industry, and thus to manage this great recruiting organization of a great industry"?—That is my personal opinion.

F-4728. If such a board is formed will you take on it the workers' representatives?—The workers' representatives here are we ourselves, while in their country the workers' representatives are the officers of Government.

F-4729. I think you know that only ten months ago we passed a Bill called the Trade Disputes Bill?—Yes, an excellent Bill too. I have no objection to the workers' representatives being on that board when these people get to that stage of development. For instance, I am perfectly willing to have a few representatives of the Mundas when they are sufficiently educated.

F-4730. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: But why not anybody who represents labour movement in this particular area?—These aboriginals at present do not come under the ordinary labour category; they are quite a separate class of people; they have their own racial customs. Therefore any representation must be from amongst themselves.

F-4731. That is true, but what objection could there be for labour representatives from this province?—The representative should be one who knows actually these people. If you have such an educated man, then I say he is welcome to represent the people.

F-4732. *Mr. Ahmed*: *You say*: "What the industry does not desire is the inclusion of politicians or outsiders, who know nothing or little of the industry, and who would interfere in what is entirely a willing and voluntary movement of free labour, too poor to pay for transport to a distant field of work." I know the type of politicians that you are afraid of, because you know that the Swarajists have given or will give trouble. I am not a swarajist. Will you be in favour of taking me on the board?—I am a politician myself. My point is—let me repeat it once more—that these aboriginal people have their own racial customs, their own religion and so on; they are a primitive set of people. There is a great deal to admire in what you may call their culture. I do not want any alterations to be made in that except by the express will of the people themselves.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Mr. Travers says he has no objection to any representative of labour provided he knows the people in the recruiting area.

F-4733. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What do you give to the recruiting *sardar* who brings back 7 or 8 coolies?—He gets a bonus of Rs. 5 for each and 3 months' full pay.

F-4734. I notice that your birth rate is high?—Yes.

F-4735. A high birth rate usually carries with it a high death rate; in 1927-28 your death rate went up from 30 to 35?—(*Dr. McCutcheon*) 1928 was an unhealthy year. I have some figures taken over a fair number of the gardens of this district; in 1927 of infants the births were 799, deaths 122, representing an infantile mortality of 152·7 per thousand. In 1928 the average death rate was 165 per thousand and in 1929 it went down to 150.

F-4736. Why was it high?—(*Mr. Travers*) It is due to the malaria here; in gardens where they have no malaria the death rate is half that.

F-4737. You said your houses had not been repaired?—They are under repair now.

F-4738. Who does the repairing?—A contractor.

F-4739. At whose expense?—At the garden's expense.

F-4740. Who erects the house first of all?—The estate erects them.

F-4741. I see some gardens give material and money to the people to enable them to erect their own houses?—I used to do that here; we used to give them the material and pay them for building the houses; but some of these people, the Mundas, in their own country make houses out of sun-dried brick and make a very poor house of thatch, so I found the contractor made them better.

F-4742. You told us that the tea gardens have an agreement regulating the rate of wages?—It is hardly that; we have an understanding that the actual rate of wages shall not be increased.

F-4743. Do you attempt to regulate the size of the task in any way?—No, it is impossible because from garden to garden the soil differs to such an extent.

F-4744. Have you ever had complaints from a neighbouring garden that you have taken some of their coolies and they want you to return them?—Sometimes coolies from another garden will come here. If they owe any money to the garden they have left, they will bring a bill. Those labourers then come up before me and I investigate the matter I ask them if they owe money to the garden from which they have come and tell them I propose to pay that amount. I ask the coolie if he is agreeable, and he says, yes, if he wants to stay here. Those are the rules for the whole district. If the coolie says he owes the money but refuses to pay it, then we send him back to the garden he has come from to make an arrangement with the manager there about it; we would not employ him.

F-4745. Assuming you pay the money for him and he comes into your service, do you then deduct from him what he owes?—Yes; of course it is deducted from his pay very slowly. We would deduct about As. 12 from Rs. 15 monthly pay. It depends, of course, on the amount of his debt.

F-4746 At present what is the total indebtedness of your workers to you and what is the total monthly wage bill?—The amount of advances to coolies on December 31st last, when it was pretty low, was Rs. 1,364; in the middle of the year it was Rs. 2,400. We pay about Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 a month in wages.

F-4747. *The Chairman*: Have your workers other debts apart from their indebtedness to you?—No, very little. I have a Marwari shopkeeper here; he has been here during the whole of my period. I have never had a single complaint by a labourer against him; they cannot be very much indebted to him.

F-4748. He is under your control?—Yes. He does a very good business here on what is more or less a cash basis. I have no doubt at *pooja* time when there is a big festival he may allow a coolie to take away a new *sari* cloth for his wife on credit. If the coolies complained about him he would have to leave; he is under a yearly tenancy. We encourage the labourers to come to us for advances.

F-4749. Therefore you think that your people are not, as in some parts of India, really in the hands of money lenders?—No, I am sure they are not. That is one of the few holds we have over them. If a coolie is a respectable man we want to give him an advance if he requires one, because that is an incentive to work; he then turns out and works his full period.

F-4750. Do you keep a separate book for these advances?—Yes.

F-4751. Although you maintain a shop for the convenience of the workers on your estate, there is no tie that they must make their purchases there?—No;

there is a weekly bazaar on the gardens to which many shopkeepers come, and a great many coolies go up to one of the big centres where there are large bazaars. They are not tied to this shopkeeper at all.

F-4752. Is there short-term recruitment to this district or to this estate?—Not to this estate; those gardens that are short of labour bring up the short-timers.

F-4753. There are some in the Dooars?—Yes.

F-4754. Recruited for 6, 9 and 12 months?—Yes. (*Mr. Haig*) I have some experience of that. They usually come up without their wives; a few of them bring their wives. I only employ them for 6 months during the busy season. I have been taking them for 6 months for 5 years. At the end of their period I send them home; they all wish to go home. This last year that has just finished I had 40 per cent. who had been with me for a period before. During this coming year I expect I shall have possibly 60 per cent. who have been before.

F-4755. Does that mean they have liked the life?—They have liked the money; they come up and earn the money in 6 months and they go back. We guarantee them three *haziras* a day, As. 12 a day. I waited this year until May and I got them for May until October.

F-4756. Are those all from one district?—Yes, Santhal Parganas.

F-4757. Do you find any cases amongst them of people who afterwards bring up their families and become settlers?—I have not found any of them; they may do so in time.

F-4758. So far you treat them as a class apart?—Yes.

F-4759. They are not expected to be potential settlers?—No, I have not found that. They are so useful in regulating my supply of labour that I do not try to encourage them to settle. If we settle coolies we have got to pay them for 12 months and find them work for 12 months. These coolies come up when I want them and I need not keep such a large permanent staff.

F-4760. Then you consider from your experience that short-term labour is really a business proposition?—A certain amount of it.

F-4761. Treated as a balance of labour to increase your force when your needs are greatest?—Yes. I had 150 in 1929. My average daily muster will possibly be 1,200; it is about 10 per cent.

F-4762. About 10 per cent. of added short-term workers during your busy period, May to November?—Yes.

F-4763. *Mr. Cliff*: What do they cost you per head to recruit?—They cost me the return railway fare; when they finish their complete work they get Rs. 5 bonus and the *sardar* who brings them up gets Rs. 5 bonus; that is Rs. 20, and the Tea Districts Labour Association commission I think amounts to Rs. 3 per head.

F-4764. Does one *sardar* bring 120?—No, I have half a dozen *sardars* or 8 *sardars;* I allow them to bring so many each. I was very short of labour when I went to this garden 7 years ago and I have had as many as 500 short term coolies on the garden, but I have now reduced it to 150 and possibly this year I may not require so many. I can get a *sardar* to bring me back as many as I went. One of my *sardars* whom I gave to another garden took up 500 short-term coolies.

F-4765. That of course reduces the expenses of recruitment?—No, we pay the same commission to the *sardar* for recruiting.

F-4766. *The Chairman*: I suppose the conditions are stated in their engagement paper?—There is no engagement paper; they know what they are coming to.

F-4767. Is there not a question paper?—Not in connection with those. When I want them I just wire down to the agent and tell him the number I allow each *sardar* of mine who is down in his country to bring up, and they are brought up. There is no agreement, nothing of that sort.

F-4768. Then how do they know that their earnings will be As. 12 a day?—My *sardars* tell them.

F-4769. Your *sardars* are authorized to state the terms?—Yes.

F-4770. That As. 12 a day is guaranteed?—Yes, if they care to work for it.

F-4771. If they work the three *haziras*?—Yes.

F-4772. How many hours does that mean?—In the rains they turn out very early in the morning and they can generally finish their two *haziras* in 6 hours. They are all good big men; I do not take weeds. In the afternoon they will do another *hazira* in about the same time, or possibly 2½ hours; I give them a little less for the third *hazira*.

F-4773. How many hours a day do they have to work for the As. 12?—8 to 8½. It boils down to As. 1½ an hour.

F-4774. Have you found any social difficulties at all in having these single men for a period of 6 months?—No, I have not. They live together in large parties. I have never had any case of trouble.

F-4775. *Miss Power*: How do they live; do they feed together?—I provide a cook for 25 and their food is prepared for them; I pay the cook.

F-4776. Do you employ casual labour over and above that?—I have no casual labour; I cannot get it.

F-4777. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you provide the food as well?—They pay for it but I buy the food.

F-4778. What does it cost per head?—I think about As. 4 per head a day. They do themselves very well; they work hard and they need a lot of food. The ordinary garden coolie does not eat as much.

F-4779. *Miss Power*: Are they sending money back regularly to their homes or do they bring it back in a lump sum?—Some deposit money with me and then take it back. Some of them get my clerks to make out money orders and send it back.

F-4780. How much do you reckon they save?—It costs them As. 4 a day to live and they can save about As. 8 a day. They can save about Rs. 12 a month on that.

F-4781. *Mr. Clow*: How much do they save?—They save practically all of it.

F-4782. How much do they deposit with you?—They very often send it down and some is deposited with me; it varies; they also keep it themselves. There are occasional cases when they lose their money.

(The witnesses withdrew. The Commission adjourned to Banarhat.)

DOOARS.

Fifty-ninth Meeting.

(Held at Debpara Tea Estate.)

Tuesday, 21st January, 1930.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, KT., C.B.E.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
MR. JOHN CLIFF.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.
MR. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. JOGES C. GHOSE, Vice-Chairman, Indian Tea Planters' Association, Mr. NALINI RANJAN GHOSE, M.A., B.L., Mr. JOY GOVINDA GUHA, Secretary, Indian Planters' Medical Board.

F-4783. *The Chairman*: What area does the Indian Tea Planters' Association cover?—Practically all the Indian planters in Assam, in the Dooars and in Terai are in the Association.

F-4784. How long has your Association been in existence?—About 14 years.

F-4785. How many gardens are covered by the membership?—Thirty-three gardens.

F-4786. What acreage of tea do they represent?—Roughly 25,000 acres.

F-4787. Does your Association maintain any relations with the Dooars Planters' Association or the Indian Tea Association?—We are not affiliated with them, but we all act conjointly in matters of importance.

F-4788. I take it that the purpose of your Association is to watch the general interests of the tea industry, particularly with regard to Indian owned gardens?—Yes.

F-4789. In connection with the recruitment of labour for the tea gardens, do you work independently or in conjunction with the Indian Tea Association and the Tea Districts Labour Association?—We generally work independently. One or two gardens may be members of the Tea Districts Labour Association, but generally our Association has nothing to do with the Tea Districts Labour Association. Each garden (sometimes two or three gardens joining together) sends its own recruiters and recruiting agents.

F-4790. What is your position in regard to the supply of labour?—There are four varieties of coolies: those who come to settle permanently, those who come for one year, those who come for six months and those who come for nine months.

F-4791. Do the coolies who come on short-term engagements return home at the expense of the gardens?—Yes, if they stay the full period of the engagement.

F-4792. In connection with the engagement of short-term labour, is there any guarantee given with regard to the *hazira* or the earnings?—No.

F-4793. Are not your agents in the recruiting areas instructed as to what statement they should make to the labourers in regard to what they will earn when they come here?—As a matter of fact the coolies know all about it.

F-4794. The *sardars* simply talk about the existing conditions on the garden; there is no statement made as to earnings of As. 8 or As. 12 a day?—No. (*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) Some of the short-term coolies have worked before in the garden and know all about it.

F-4795. Do you recruit, in the main, from the same districts year after year? —(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) Yes.

F-4796. Is there much interchange of coolies between garden and garden?—Very little, but there is a tendency amongst the coolies to migrate from garden to garden.

F-4797. Is that because they hear the conditions are better on one garden, or is it because they have friends there?—It is difficult to say. When a new garden is opened the coolies always like to go there because they can earn much more money.

F-4798. I gather the members of your Association have an understanding amongst themselves with regard to a more or less uniform rate of remuneration? —Yes. In the Dooars the fixed rate for a *hazira* is As. 4 for a man, As. 3 for a woman and 1 anna for a child. One man can do 2, 3 and even 4 *haziras*.

F-4799. Is there anything done on the gardens within your Association in the matter of education?—There are primary schools on some gardens.

F-4800. Do you find a reluctance to attend school in the absence of compulsion?—The boys do not like to attend school. If they are asked to attend school they say: "Are you going to pay us *hazira* for doing so?" On one occasion I saw a fire raging on the Estate. I went out to investigate and I saw all the coolies standing in front of the fire. I said: "Help to put out this fire," and they immediately said "Will you give us *hazira* for doing so?" They want to be paid for everything they do.

F-4801. *Colonel Russell*: In your memorandum you mention the Indian Planters' Medical Board. What is the constitution of that Board?—(*Mr. Govinda Guha*) Ten Directors of the Companies are members of the Board. There are no other members. The Directors of the tea companies select their representatives to be on the Board. There is also a President and Secretary.

F-4802. What was the object with which this Board was formed?—To realize contributions from tea gardens. The medical officers are under the Board and not under any particular company. A number of gardens are under one each of the medical officers. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) It was started for the proper supervision of all the medical and sanitary arrangements on all the gardens.

F-4803. So as to include your whole area under the supervision of a single body?—Yes.

F-4804. Do you raise a cess for the payment of the whole of the expenditure of this Medical Board, including the Secretary and the medical officers?—Yes.

F-4805. The whole group pays into the central fund, from which fund the whole of your medical staff is paid?—Yes.

F-4806. Do you divide the whole area into groups of gardens?—Yes, three groups.

F-4807. There are three medical officers looking after how many gardens?—Twenty-five out of the 33 gardens comprised in the Association. Some of the gardens became members of the organization, but afterwards left.

F-4808. Why did they leave?—It was on rather a personal question.

F-4809. Will you supply the Commission with figures showing the amount of cess that is collected for this purpose and the way in which it is spent? Will you also send a copy of the expenditure for 1929?—Yes, we will do so.

F-4810. There is no definite Board of Health for the Dooars tea gardens area, is there?—(*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) No.

F-4811. Would you be in favour of the formation of a Board of Health somewhat on the lines which were promulgated by Mr. Banerjee in his Bill of 1923?—No. We discussed that and we were not agreeable to the constitution which would make our representation on that Board very small. We have had bitter experience in regard to questions which have arisen between Indian and European gardens—not in regard to health matters but in regard to other matters. We

found that whenever there was any dispute between an Indian and a European garden the Indian garden never got any support from any European garden.

F-4812. Would you agree to the principle of having a Board of Health for the Dooars district?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) We think it is unnecessary. It would be very costly and we think no adequate return or advantage would be obtained.

F-4813. There are some gardens in the Dooars district with 100 per cent. malarial infection. Do you not think a properly constituted Board of Health with a proper staff could do something to improve that state of affairs?—We would welcome all preventive malarial measures, but there has been a huge expenditure in the past and nothing has been done to eradicate malaria.

F-4814. If you had a properly constituted Board of Health, with an experienced staff of malarialogists, public health officers, and so on, would not a great deal more be able to be done than is being done now?—I am of the opinion that it would be better for each individual garden itself to try to eradicate the disease. I think that would be a success, and that conjoint action would be a failure.

F-4815. Are there individual hospitals maintained on your individual gardens? —Yes.

F-4816. There is no combination of any group of gardens in respect of a central hospital?—No.

F-4817. Do you think it would be an advantage to have a central hospital for a group of, say, 5 to 7 gardens?—No, I do not. We only have one or two serious cases during a year and we can send those to Jalpaiguri. The labourers have to be educated up to come to the hospital. They have a reluctance to come. If they are ill and we want them to come to the hospital they want *hazira*.

F-4818. Supposing a Board of Health was formed for a tea garden area such as the Dooars: do you anticipate there would be any difficulty between the District Board as such and the Board of Health for the tea garden area?—We would prefer that any possible Board of Health should be a sub-committee of the present District Board, containing some outsiders.

F-4819. If that arrangement were come to, would you withdraw your objections to the formation of a Board of Health?—I think so, but there are many minor points to consider.

F-4820. Are the gardens in your area still inspected by the Civil Surgeon?— Yes.

F-4821. What relation has the tea garden area with the Public Health Department of Bengal?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Whenever any requisition is made by any of the gardens for any help or assistance, the District Health Officer visits that garden, and the sanitary staff of the Board helps them. All statistics are kept by the Health Officer.

F-4822. He comes only on requisition?—Yes.

F-4823. The District Health Officer has no power of entering a garden for the purposes of inspection and public health work?—It cannot be said that he has no power, but in order to avoid any misunderstanding he generally does not come unless he is invited by the individual garden. He has the power.

F-4824. The figures for 1928 show that the Civil Surgeon only inspected 10 gardens during that year. The Civil Surgeon has many other duties to perform, and he is not qualified in public health work. Would it not be better to have your gardens inspected by a public health officer?—(*Mr. Govinda Guha*) If the gardens do not object, the Health Officer of the District Board may, on his usual rounds, visit the gardens.

F-4825. Do any of the owners of Indian tea gardens do any child welfare work on their estates? Do any of the gardens employ trained midwives or trained *dais*?—It is difficult to get *dais* here. The District Board started training *dais*, the Government paying for their training, but our attempts were not very successful.

F-4826. If trained women were available you would have no objection to employing them?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Certainly not. We would welcome it.

F-4827. Supposing there was a central hospital for each group of gardens with wards for maternity cases, and with a child welfare centre, would it help the physician to have in that centre a residence for either a lady medical officer or for a lady health visitor for each particular group of gardens?—(*Mr. Joges*

Ghose) I do not think it would be of much use, because the coolies have no confidence in either trained or untrained European midwives.

F-4828. I was not thinking about European midwives?—They have absolutely no confidence either in Indian or European lady doctors.

F-4829. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you not think the coolies could be educated up to the visits of trained *dais*, health visitors and lady doctors?—(*Mr. Govinda Guha*) I think it would take a long time. (*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) I think if they saw that with trained *dais* the number of miscarriages was less, and so on, they would gradually get educated up to trained *dais;* but if we were to ask the coolies to go to a central hospital they would not go. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) They would rather bolt. (*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Yes, they would. We experienced that difficulty in connection with vaccination and inoculation. The people are now seeing that cholera is being stopped by inoculation, and they are gradually coming up to take it, but at first we had great difficulty.

F-4830. Would you anticipate the same gradual improvement in regard to the use of trained *dais* and lady doctors?—Yes.

F-4831. *Colonel Russell*: You give the infantile mortality rate as "roughly" 80 per thousand. That is extremely low. Are you sure of that figure? What does "roughly" mean?—It may mean 81 or 82.

F-4832. Are you certain that all your births are being registered?—(*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) The guarantee of accuracy of that figure in the gardens is much more than outside the gardens. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) The garden doctor visits all the coolie lines and collects these figures and they are necessarily accurate.

F-4833. I notice you put down the death rate as 22·4. In the report of the Jalpaiguri Labour Board of this garden the death rate among *Paradhis* is given as 58·63. What proportion of *Paradhis* have you got on this estate?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) A very small proportion.

F-4834. I see it is 300 out of 1,100, so you will admit that a death rate of 58·63 in a group of 300 people is high?—If the whole district is taken that figure may be correct, but locally it is not correct.

F-4835. Is there any supervision of the health of non-working children here, children, say, from the age of 2 to 6 or 7?—(*Mr. Joges Ghosh*) Children aged 4 or 5 are all working children. (*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) The whole family is under the supervision of the garden doctor.

F-4836. Nothing special is being done for non-working children?—No. (*Mr. Jages Ghose*) The doctors have to visit coolie lines every day. If there is any case of illness they are at once informed by the lines *chowkidars* and they at once visit the case.

F-4837. What is the form of maternity benefit which you give in your group of gardens?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Rs. 5 ten days before the birth and Rs. 5 fifteen days after the birth. If the woman is ill for more than 15 days for any reason whatsoever she is given an extra allowance.

F-4838. Does the garden doctor issue any orders with regard to pregnant women ceasing work?—I do not think there are any special orders.

F-4839. So that a woman may work up to the day of the birth of the child?—That is extremely rare.

F-4840. Have you got protected water supplies on your estates?—Yes.

F-4841. What form do they take?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) In some gardens the water comes from the hills or the streams. *Chowkidars* look after the streams. In other gardens there are deep tube wells. In one garden there are three 10" tube wells going to a depth of 110 ft. More and more deep tube wells are being sunk every year in the tea gardens.

F-4842. How do you deal with the registration of still-births?—(*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) They are recorded as deaths.

F-4843. But not as births?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) They are recorded as births and deaths simultaneously. (*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) The record shows that it is a still-birth.

F-4844. Do you include still-births in your birth register and also in your death register?—(*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) I cannot say.

F-4845. Will it be possible to find out?—Yes, the doctor can tell us.

F-4846. *Mr. Ahmed:* With regard to the education of children on tea garden estates, you said just now that the boys do not like to go to school. You also mentioned the incident of a fire when the coolies asked if you would pay them

hazira if they helped to put it out?—(*Mr. Joy Govinda Guha*) There was a case when one of the coolies' own house was on fire. He was playing the fiddle when it was on fire. The manager went to him and said: "Your house is on fire; why are not you doing anything to put it out." The coolie answered: "You will give me another place to live in."

F-4847. Do you not think compulsory education would bring about a solution of these difficulties?—Do you mean only for the tea gardens or for the whole of India?

F-4848. The municipalities of certain districts are starting a system of compulsory education?—There is a vast difference between people who live within municipalities and tea garden coolies.

F-4849. In Assam and in other districts and Provinces systems of compulsory education have been started. Why should not some system of compulsory primary education be started in the tea garden area?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) The coolies would run away if such a drastic measure were introduced.

F-4850. Then what do you suggest in order to alleviate their difficulties?—They do not experience any difficulties. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) We can only establish schools and see if the coolies go to them. If they do we will pursue the matter further, but it would not be advisable to compel them to attend school.

F-4851. Would it not be advisable that children of a certain age, say, from 6 to 11, should be educated before they went to work?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Certainly not.

F-4852. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Why not?—Because if you resorted to any force or compulsion they would run away.

F-4853. If there is an epidemic of cholera do you not take compulsory measures in order to overcome the epidemic?—Certainly.

F-4854. Then similarly if it is a good thing that children should be educated, why should not you use compulsion?—The coolies do not appreciate education. An epidemic they can understand, but the benefit of education is not apparent to their minds.

F-4855. You mean the parents will fear the loss of earnings on the part of their children by their children going to school, but would not that difficulty be overcome if you pay to the parents the equivalent of the earnings which they would lose by their children going to school?—They would not be satisfied even then, because they look upon going to school as some sort of sacrifice on their part.

F-4856. *Mr. Ahmed*: How would you remove that difficulty?—By gradual education, but not compulsory education.

F-4857. How will you start?—Primary schools are already in existence, and the number is increasing.

F-4858. Would not you like to expedite the solution by giving them more facilities to go to school?—Certainly.

F-4859. Why not make it compulsory for children from 6 to 11 years of age to go to the primary school?—Because the word "compulsory" would be distasteful to them.

F-4860. Is it not a fact that the parents, of themselves, cannot earn enough wages for their own needs and thus cannot afford to send their children to school?—That is not the reason.

F-4861. *Mr. Cliff*: Has your Association any measures for dealing with the enticement of labour as between garden and garden?—Yes.

F-4862. What are those measures?—The Labour rules framed in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner and the Chairman of the Association.

F-4863. I see that your Association has fixed certain rules for its own protection. Have you any objection to the Indian Trade Union Congress sending representatives to organize the tea garden workers into trade unions so that they also can fix rules?—Yes, we have great objection to that, because if outsiders came into tea gardens and tried to organize the labour we would be nowhere.

F-4864. You have formed an Indian Tea Planters' Association. Why should not there be an Indian tea garden workers' association?—From the point of view of principle we cannot object, but in reality much mischief is done by those who come in the name of trade unions with a view to organizing the labour but who actually bring disaster.

F-4865. But if the All-India Trade Union Congress sent their representatives, who were not concerned with other matters, might not they be allowed to organize the tea garden workers?—The difficulty is that they do not know the local conditions and methods. They come with some abstract ideas and no one can have anything to say against them; but in reality difficulties arise.

F-4866. I can see that people who pursue abstract principles and ideas may get into difficulties, but surely you cannot object to people coming to study and learn local habits in order to obtain a combination of the workers?—We believe that a thing which grows naturally by itself is a benefit, but if labourers who actually have no grievances are taught to consider that they have grievances, which never before were considered by them to be grievances, complications arise.

F-4867. Would you oppose any organization of tea garden workers?—Yes, because we have found by past experience that when outsiders have come there has been discontent amongst our labour.

F-4868. What is the adult labour force that you require per acre on tea garden cultivation?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) One to 1½.

F-4869. Are your labourers called to work in the morning?—They come voluntarily.

F-4870. At what hour do they come?—Those who do hoeing come earlier than the others.

F-4871. At what hour?—At this season they come about 7 or 7-30. In the other part of the year they come between 5 and 6 and they finish by 9 or 10.

F-4872. If a man starts between 5 and 6, how soon does he finish his first *hazira* of deep hoeing?—Within 2 to 3 hours. It is about 3 hours for the first *hazira*.

F-4873. If a man comes out between 5 and 6 does he do, 2, 3 and 4 *haziras* during the day?—He works until the midday meal, then he stops, and then he goes on again in the afternoon.

F-4874. What time does he finish in the afternoon?—He begins between 2 and 3 o'clock and finishes at 5.

F-4875. Can it be said that the local labour you recruit is about 10 per cent. of your labour force?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) The *busti* labourers are not settlers on the estate. When they have no work at home they come on the garden.

F-4876. Do the local settlers work regularly on the garden?—Very few. When they are sowing or reaping paddy they do not come.

F-4877. With regard to the figure of 70 to 75 per cent. of permanent dwellers on the estate, does that apply to all your gardens?—Yes.

F-4878. Is there much *khet* land in this area?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) All the gardens are now purchasing land which is freely given to the coolies. The gardens have spent Rs. 60,000 on that head.

F-4879. Can you supply the number of individual holders of *khet* land on these gardens?—We will get that.

F-4880. Is it your policy to provide *khet* land for your garden labourers?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) Yes. We have found that that satisfies the coolies more than anything else. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) The coolies will not remain on a garden which has no *khet* land. Some of the gardens are in great difficulty by not being able to purchase *khet* land for the coolies. If there were no restrictions placed upon them by Government they would purchase much more in order to satisfy the coolies. (*Mr. Govinda Guha*) More land is not only required for *khet* but for grazing purposes. (*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) That is an important matter for the coolies. They must have cattle and they must have grazing land.

F-4881. *Miss Power*: Do you try to apportion the amount of land evenly between the workers? Is there a maximum amount that any one family may hold?—Yes.

F-4882. Is it more general for the members of your Association to pay wages weekly or monthly?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) Monthly; and we have to pay them advances every week.

F-4883. If you have to pay them advances every week why do you not pay the wages weekly?—They prefer monthly payments. That is the system here, and they prefer it.

F-4884. If they have to borrow weekly why do they prefer monthly payments?—(*Mr. Govinda Guha*) If they were paid their wages weekly they would immediately spend them.

F-4885. Taking the short-term labour, how much does a short-term labourer send home?—A hardworking coolie can take home five or six hundred rupees after two or three years.

F-4886. Are you referring to a short-term labourer?—No; I cannot say as to the short-term labourer. Some of our former coolies have now become big landowners with an annual income of from Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000. I know one who has three elephants and Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000. He sells paddy to the extent of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 every year.

F-4887. *The Chairman*: What is the name of that man?—Chirisburra. There is another man who has about 400 acres of land.

F-4888. He came here first as a coolie?—Yes.

F-4889. *Miss Power*: Has your Association any policy as to the minimum age at which children on your gardens should be allowed to begin work?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) We have no special rule about that.

F-4890. You referred just now to children beginning work at the age of 4 or 5. What sort of work do they do?—They catch flies, mosquitoes and caterpillars and apply sulphur to the pruned bushes.

F-4891. Are the earnings of those children entered separately in the wage book or do their earnings go in with those of their parents?—Every one has a separate account.

F-4892. *Miss Power*: What is your scale of remuneration for children of 4 or 5 years of age?

Sir Alexander Murray: You do not employ children of 4 or 5 years of age, do you?—No, we do not employ them. They start generally from about 6 years of age.

F-4893. *Miss Power*: You said earlier that they started work at 4 or 5?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) He did not mean that. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) I meant when they are really young.

F-4894. *Miss Power*: What is the usual scale of remuneration for the young children who do this work?—They generally earn one-sixth for the *hazira*, and when killing mosquitoes they get one pice for every one or two mosquitoes.

F-4895. At what age do they do pruning?—Only adults do pruning as that requires strength.

F-4896. I have seen numbers of small children doing pruning?—There are two sorts of pruning, light pruning and heavy pruning. Young children cannot do light pruning properly.

F-4897. You have no children on light pruning here?—No.

F-4898. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In your opinion has the present system of education, as it prevails to-day in and around the tea gardens, failed?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) There is no special system in the tea gardens. As it prevails in the district I do not think it is a failure.

F-4899. What is the percentage of children on the tea gardens which you represent that goes to school?—It varies on the different gardens, but the number is small.

F-4900. The official report says that there are 1,400 and odd children who go to 76 schools in the Jalpaiguri district. From the point of view of an educationist who desires education to be spread among the people that is not a very satisfactory figure, is it?—No.

F-4901. You suggest that the coolies prefer certain things. What method have you of finding out what the coolies prefer and what they do not prefer?—They express what they feel. If they feel a tendency to go to school they will tell you so.

F-4902. When did you last ask them whether the method of payment in vogue here is preferable or not preferable to them?—It was practically demanded by them.

F-4903. When and how?—If another garden is paying higher wages than the garden on which they are, there is a tendency for the coolies to go to that other garden. You learn these things instinctively.

F-4904. Do you not think it would be preferable if the workers could make a representation to you and let you know what their needs and demands are?—I would welcome it if they were more educated.

F-4905. Leave the question of education on one side. Would it not be preferable if you could get the workers to make representations to you in regard to their conditions of work?—Yes, if it was left to themselves to do it.

F-4906. You say you instinctively get to know about these things. Would it not be better if a regular method were adopted by which you could get to know these things?—As matters stand at present there cannot be any regular method because it would be artificial.

F-4907. The cultivation of tea is artificial. The whole of our civilized life is artificial. Is it preferable that the workers should be in a position to make representations to you?—As things stand at present I consider it not to be preferable. (*Mr. Joges Ghose*) They can always go and speak their minds to the manager. They can say: "In the neighbouring garden the rate is so and so. Here it is only so and so. We will not work here." Practically they demand that their wages should go up.

F-4908. So that the method generally is the threat of a strike?—No.

F-4909. When you state that they say "We will not work here," what else does it mean but the threat of a strike?—The threat is that they will go away to somebody else's garden.

F-4910. Do you not think it will be better to avoid the possibility of their decamping by having some regular method of communication with them whereby you could get to know what exactly they wanted and what they did not want?—(*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Ghose*) We have that method.

F-4911. With regard to your *hazira*, did not your members enter into some agreement between yourselves that there should be no increase in the rates?—It was an implied understanding

F-4912. When did the Indian Planters' Association give an increase in the rate of the *hazira*, last?—(*Mr. Joges Ghose*) The previous rate was As. 3-6 in 1918. Now the rate is As. 4.

F-4913. I notice that you say nothing in your memorandum with regard to profits, prices and cost of living. You also state that "wages have no relation to profits." What do you mean by that?—We understand that if there is more profit we are not naturally bound to give more wages. Although there has been a definite increase in the wages we are now giving them much more agricultural land than they used to have. The rate of work has also decreased.

F-4914 When was the rate of work decreased?—In 1921 or 1922.

F-4915. *The Chairman*: I understand that on this garden the payment of wages is made by the manager to the *sardar*, and the *sardar* makes the payments to the individual labourers. Is that the general practice throughout your Association?—Yes.

F-4916. Is there any possibility of a deduction being made by the *sardar*?—No, because every coolie knows the amount due to him and it is also done in the presence of an officer of the garden.

F-4917. There is no possibility of any deduction or commission being taken from the labourer?—No.

F-4918. The *sardar* distributes the amount earned by each worker in the presence of somebody representing the Company?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by PHALINI, a woman coolie.

"I have been on this garden for six years. I have been here before. I went home to see my country. My husband is working here, also my sister. I have lost my father. My mother is in Ranchi. I first came here from Ranchi 3 years ago. I can earn more here than in my own country where I have only my land. I have no land here. I do not send any money home. My brother looks after the land at home. There is no bell to ring me to work in the morning. I go to work very early in the morning. Some of us do two *haziras* and others one *hazira*. I get As. 3 for each *hazira*, As. 6 a day when I can do two *haziras*. If I cannot do two *haziras* I do one. I did one *hazira* this morning. My husband went to work this morning."

(GONDURA, the husband of the above woman was then called and examined. He gave evidence as follows):

"I did not go to work to-day because I was pitching tents for the Commission's visit. As a rule I do two *haziras* a day for which I get As. 8. Sometimes I do 3 and even 4 *haziras*. I am never fetched for work if I do not turn out. When I do 4 *haziras* I get Re. 1 a day. I cannot do 4 *haziras* in the cold weather but only in the rains. If I have land to cultivate in my own home in Ranchi I would prefer my home; if I have not land, I prefer the garden. I save nothing. I only earn enough to eat. I have not been ill, but my wife was climbing a tree and fell down and was laid up for a few days. I have two children. None have died. There is a school on the garden. The *sardar* does not treat me badly. I stayed here two years previously, then went home for 2 years and came back last June. I shall go back home again whenever I can in order to see my brother and mother and see to my land."

Statement by BUDHU CHIK (man coolie).

"I have just come here from Ranchi this month. I have not been here or in any other garden before. My brother brought me here. I have come here with my family. I have 2 children. I have come here permanently. I do not intend to return. I came here in order to get enough to live on. I have no land in Ranchi. I have no land here yet. I do 2 *haziras* a day and I get 8 annas. Sometimes I do 3 *haziras*. I never do one. I like the work here. Nobody told me that the Commission was coming. The manager made my house for me. I have no garden. I had no debts in Ranchi. I cannot say whether I shall be able to save anything here. Some men on the Estate here have *khet* land. I am a new man and have not any. The bell rings in the shed in the morning for us to go out to work. Now-a-days we do not work on market days. In the rainy season we do our work and then go to the market. My child is a girl and she is too young to go to school."

Statement by DANDU RAM (KBHIRWAR), from Ranchi.

"I have been here 18 years. I have not been back home since I came. I have my family here. I have no cultivation. I work entirely for the garden. The *sardars* have land to cultivate, but we have not. The manager pays the *sardar* and the *sardar* pays me. I want some land. How can we get it forcibly? The management gives it to the *sardars* and we cannot take it from them forcibly. My *sardar* has not got any, but the clerks, the *chaprasis* and the other *sardars* have got it. My *sardar* has about 9 or 10 men under him. My wife is ill now. She has a pain in her stomach. The garden doctor used to go about the line, but now-a-days he does not do it. He gives medicine when it is required. She had some medicine, but I am not going for it now. She did not get better for the medicine. We have had four children who have died. Two died in this garden and two died in the Tundu garden. We stayed about 12 years in the Tundu garden. We left Tundu garden when this garden was being opened and came here. We were quite comfortable in Tundu, but a great crowd came from Tundu here and we came with them. There was no land in Tundu, but I understand that now there is. The *sardars* do not beat anyone here. They abuse us if we do not work well. My wife has not worked for 2½ months and has not received any payment."

F-4919. (To the man's wife) Does the manager give you any food when you are not working?—How am I going to get anything when I do not do any work for it?

The undermentioned members of the Commission examined the accounts books of the Debpara Tea Estate:—

1. Sir Alexander Murray.
2. Mr. Cliff.
3. Diwan Chaman Lall.
4. Mr. Kabirudin Ahmed.

Mr. Dibdin, Joint Secretary, was also present. The following is the account of that examination.

The attendance register for the month of December 1929 was first produced. The first name on the first page is that of Noya *sardar* who gives employment to

20 persons whose names are written under his name. Of these 20 adult males 2 did not work at all in the month of December and one worked only on 2 days. One of the *sardar's* men Sudhua worked on 24 out of 25 working days. He was absent only on the 20th. He worked on 9 days one *hazira* only, on other 9 days he worked 2 *haziras*; on 5 successive days in one week he worked 3 *haziras;* on the first days of the next week he worked 4 *haziras* and then took a holiday doing 3 *haziras* on each of the suceeding days after the holiday.

Another worker Budhua worked on all the 27 working days and received 1½ *haziras* each day he being a water-carrier who brought the water on to the particular area where Noya *sardar's* men were working. Another worker also received many 1½ *haziras* and it is explained that he is also a water *daffadar.*

The *sardari* muster roll was shown in which was entered the total number of men, women and children employed under Noya *sardar* and also the total number of *haziras* done by the men, women and children. The males entered under the name of Noya *sardar* performed 614 *haziras* in the month of December which at As. 4 is equal to Rs. 153-8. The adult females performed 832½ *haziras* which at As. 3 works out to Rs. 156. The children working under Noya *sardar* performed 39 *haziras* which at 1½ annas is equal to Rs. 3-11, making a grand total of Rs. 313-4, which is recorded in the *sardar's* monthly pay sheet book as having been paid to Noya *sardar.*

It was noted that Sudhua, coolie, with 51 *haziras* at As. 4, earned Rs. 12-12-0 for the month of December having been absent for one day.

Under the head of Noya *sardar* in the *hazira* book for December also appeared the names of 33 women of whom four did no work on any day in the month of December while 2 worked 5 days only and another 8 days only and another for 7 days only. One of the women Munka worked on 26 out of 27 working days and has shown against her name 5 days on which she worked one *hazira* only and 21 days on which she earned 2 *haziras.* Under the head of Noya *sardar* in the *hazira* book for the month of December also appeared the names of 5 children 2 of whom were absent on every day. The other 3 were also absent on every day until the 13th after which one of them worked 14 days of a single *hazira* each. One of the children worked for 13 days one *hazira* per day and another for 12 days with one *hazira* each day and another for 12 days with one *hazira* for each day except one day on which 2 *haziras* were done. It was noted that Munka (woman) earned 47 *haziras* equal to Rs. 8-13-0. One woman worked 5 days at the rate of 3 *haziras;* another woman worked 6 days in which she did 3 *haziras* each day. Another woman, Rubin who worked all 24 days earned 12 *haziras* on 12 separate days, 1½ *haziras* on another day, 2 *haziras* on 5 days 3 *haziras* on 2 days 3½ *haziras* on one day and 4 *haziras* on 3 days making 55 *haziras* at As. 3 each equal to Rs. 10-5-0 for the month of December.

Another book called the Daily Report Book was produced showing the work on which the coolies are engaged from day to day under Noya *sardar* and every other *sardar.*

Of Noya *sardar's* coolies 6 during the month of December on odd days performed extra cash payment work over and above the *hazira* and *doubli* work to which reference has been made. One of them Luiya who had worked on 24 days in December earned 2 *haziras* every day with the exception of one day when he put in one *hazira* only and also did cash payment work on the 24th, 26th, 27th and 30th for which he got 2 *haziras* each day; and on the 28th and 31st received one *hazira* each day making a total of 10 extra cash payment *haziras.* All this is mentioned in the extra light pruning work book dated 24th December 1929 on which day extra light pruning work was started. The other 4 men of Noya *sardar's* men on work similar to Luiya's put in during the same days 8, 10, 6 and 8 *haziras,* respectively, on the extra light pruning cash payment basis. The cash book in Bengali language was produced showing the cash payment on the 24th for 14 *haziras* at As. 4 each equal to Rs. 3-8-0 which included the 7 *haziras* appearing in the names of Noya *sardar* above referred to. In the Sardar Monthly Paysheet book which was produced appeared the name of various *sardars* having entered in detail against the names of (1) coolies' pay, (2) *Sardar's* Commission, (3) total sum due to *sardar,* (4) *Karcha,* (5) *peski* (advance to the sardar), leaving the balance still due to that *sardar* in respect of the coolies' pay and his own commission. In the case of Noya *sardar* the amount shown as coolies' pay in the *Sardari* Monthly Paysheet book for December is Rs. 313-4-0 which as above noted agrees with the *sardari* muster roll. The *sardar's* own commission calculated at 1 pice per task done by his coolies is shown as amounting to Rs. 23-3-3 making the total due to him Rs. 336-7-3. Under the head of *Karcha* appears a sum of Rs. 160

which it was explained was the amount of advance made by the garden to Noya *sardar* to enable him to make advances to his coolies. Under the head of *peski* or advances appears a sum of Rs. 10 that has been advanced which may have been on any account either for himself or for the coolies. These two advances in the month of December amount to Rs. 170 which taken from Rs. 336-7-3 leaves a balance of Rs. 166-7-3 due to Noya *sardar*. We find that the clean cash book has been written up only till 8th January and therefore the payment to Noya *sardar* and other *sardars* for the month of December are not posted in the cash book as actual payments for December were only made on the 15th January. The payments are usually made on the *hat* day of the 2nd or 3rd week of the month following that for which the payments fall due. On referring to the clean cash book for the month of December which has been written up there appears under date 11th December 1929 a payment of Rs. 3,670-7-3 which is the total of the coolies' pay and commission for the month of November as appearing in the *sardars'* monthly pay sheet book. On the opposite side appears credit for *peski* or advances made in November and also credit for amounts advanced to coolies during the month of November amounting to Rs. 1,936-13-0. The actual amount appearing in the *sardar's* monthly pay sheet for such karcha was Rs. 1,869-9-0 and it was explained that the difference was due to recovery of amounts advanced to labourers on the permanent establishment over and above the coolies working under *hazira* and *ticca*.

There was also a *kharcha* book from 16th May 1928 in which for the month of December there is shown in detail advances amounting to Rs. 160 paid to Noya *sardar*. These advances were paid on the following days: Rs. 20 on the 11th December, Rs. 30 on the 18th December, Rs. 40 on the 25th December, Rs. 35 on the 1st January, and Rs. 35 on the 8th January. It was explained that these advances were made on the *hat* days to enable Noya to make advances to his labourers.

The December *hazira* and *doubli* accounts were adjusted on the 25th January, but we could not see the actual accounts owing to the books not having been written up beyond the 8th January. Nor could we see any receipt for the payment of the balance of Rs. 166-7-3. It was explained that the receipts for corresponding amounts for November and earlier months had gone to the head office. Noya *sardar* produced slips for the past four months September to December showing the balance due to him corresponding with the figures in the company's books. Noya *sardar* produced his account book kept in pencil showing the total *haziras* done by each of his workers during December and the money due in respect of these *haziras* to the individual workers. His book also showed advances recovered and the balance due or fresh advances made when settling with his coolies on the 15th January.

The *peski* or advance book of *sardars* and others containing advances made to *sardars* and others was produced. That showed that Noya *sardar* had in July a debit balance of Rs. 621-8-0, in August Rs. 606-8-0, in September Rs. 521-8-9, in October Rs. 511-8-9, in December Rs. 506-8-9 and at the end of December Rs. 438-14-9 due by Noya *sardar* to the company.

Mr. J. J. C. WATSON, Manager, Gandrapara Tea Estate and Dr. M. KERMAKAR, L.M.F.

F-4920. *Colonel Russell*: How long have you been on this garden, Dr. Kermakar?—For 4 years.

F-4921. What other experience have you?—After completing my studies I was House Surgeon in the Campbell Medical School. I am also a Medalist.

F-4922. How many in-patients did you have in this hospital last year?—42.

F-4923. What is your total population here?—(*Mr. Watson*) 1,879 plains people and 233 hills people.

F-4924. What was the total number of births during 1929?—8 hill infants and 65 plains infants.

F-4925. And the number of deaths?—9 hills people and 28 plains people.

F-4926. So that your death rate is about 17·60 and your birth rate is about 34·72?—Yes.

F-4927. What maternity benefit do you give to your women?—Rs. 25 in the year.

F-4928. How is it divided up?—Rupees 5 one month before the birth of the child, two lots of Rs. 5 for the two months afterwards and Re. 1 for 10 months after that. That is conditional on their bringing their babies to show that they are well cared for. The babies must be brought here twice monthly, and the benefit is paid out into their hands by a European.

F-4929. Do you give the babies anything?—Yes, they get bottles of Mellin's Food, Glaxo, Horlicks and anything that they require on the doctor's orders.

F-4930. Are there any milk supplies available for the babies?—Yes, we have a milk depôt. We issue milk here to any child who is sick.

F-4931. What is the total quantity of milk which you use?—Anything from 2 seers to 6 seers a day. This last month 49 seers of milk were distributed; the month before, 72, then 58, 38, 42, 46, and so on.

F-4932. That milk is given to babies certified by the medical officer as requiring it?—Yes.

F-4933. Do you have to purchase that milk?—Yes.

F-4934. Do the coolies on the estate have cows from which they can get their own milk?—Yes.

F-4935. Do they use it or sell it?—They sell it to us here and we give it back to them. They will not use their own milk.

F-4936. What was your infantile mortality for last year?—It was 7 out of 73.

F-4937. Do you have very much malaria on this estate?—Very little.

F-4938. Can you explain why that is so?—I think it is because we are not cut up by rivers or ravines. The holes in the lines are filled up periodically and the drains are kept running. Also our water-supply is full of iron. It seems to act as a tonic.

F-4939. Do you distribute quinine?—Yes. In the rains it is distributed in the evenings twice a week—5-grain pills.

F-4940. Is there any difficulty in getting the people to take them?—Yes, when we first started giving the pills we found that the coolies went into the factory sucked off the sugar coating and then spat away the rest, with the result that we found our tea was being tainted.

F-4941. I understand you also treat all the lepers on the estate?—Yes.

F-4942. Have you been trained in anti-leprosy work, Dr. Kermakar?—(*Dr. Kermakar*) Yes.

F-4943. How many lepers have you got here?—13 under treatment.

F-4944. Do you pay them to be treated?—Yes, As. 4 a day.

F-4945. *The Chairman*: Were they suffering from leprosy when they came here?—(*Mr. Watson*) Yes.

F-4946. Why was the disease not detected before they were recruited? Are your recruits medically examined at the other end?—Yes, and inoculated.

F-4947. Nevertheless some cases slip through?—Yes, it is very difficult to examine the women.

F-4948. *Colonel Russell*: Do you get much hookworm?—Not so much as we used to do. There are cases.

F-4949. Do you give Chenapodium or carbon tetrachloride every year?—Yes, we give it to the carriers, to the men who are infected.

F-4950. Does a European medical officer visit the gardens once a week?—Yes.

F-4951. How many gardens has he to visit?—13 European gardens.

F-4952. What is the average period of time that he spends on a garden?—If there are any cases there he might spend an hour or two.

F-4953. I mean in visiting the lines and in seeing that every thing is clean?—You mean the average per week? Not more than half an hour a day.

F-4954. Your garden doctor does it regularly under the Medical Officer's direction?—Yes. We also have *chowkidars* in each line to tell us who is ill in the lines.

F-4955. Can you give us your total hospital and medical bill for last year?—I will supply it to you.

F-4956. *The Chairman*: How do you deal with still-births?—(*Dr. Kermakar*) They are entered separately.

F-4957. You do not enter them in the birth register?—Yes.

F-4958. But as a separate item as well?—Yes.

F-4959. Will you show me the register? (The register was handed to Col. Russell)—(*Mr. Watson*) This is the police regulation as regards all the gardens.

F-4960. When we made enquiry elsewhere we were told that they were treated separately and not counted?—(*Dr. Kermakar*) This is a police regulation which states that a still-birth must be entered under deaths.

F-4961. Is there no other regulation which says that it must be entered under births?—No.

F-4962. Every still-birth is put in the deaths and is not included in the births?—We put it in our daily register book as a still-birth.

F-4963. But you do not put it in your birth register?—No.

F-4964. Which register do you put the still-births into?—Into my own record.

F-4965. Not in the Police records?—No, here is a register of births.

F-4966. You do not have any still-births in there?—No. (*Mr. Watson*) Still-births are not shown in there at all.

F-4967. *Col. Russell*: How many still-births did you have last year?—Four.

F-4968. These are shown in the deaths and not in the births?—Yes.

F-4969. *The Chairman*: Are you sure that your system of maternity benefit makes you aware of all cases of still-births?—Yes.

F-4970. There is no hiding of a still-birth?—No, I do not think so.

F-4971. You have not drawn the attention either of the Government or of the Police to this curious defect in the method of dealing with still-births?—No. (*Dr. Kermakar*) The Police do not know what still-births are. Here is a remark entered by them: "cannot understand what is meant by this."

F-4972. That regulation is a district one?—Yes, it is Bengal form No. 2990. That is a register of births form. The register of deaths form is No. 2998. (*Mr. Watson*) During the rains when mothers are put out of work we set up a crèche here so that the women can go out to work without having to take the children with them.

F-4973. Who looks after the children?—An old woman.

F-4974. *Miss Power*: Do you find any difficulty on account of caste distinctions?—Not with regard to the children.

F-4975. The women do not mind leaving their children?—Not at all. (*Dr. Kermakar*) There is no caste distinction before marriage.

F-4976. *The Chairman*: Mr. Watson, what is the total population and acreage on your garden?—The acreage is about 2,500. The area under tea is 1,136. The total population on the garden is 2,100. The average working labour force is from 650 to 700. That is including shopkeepers, chinamen, clerks and everybody on the garden.

F-4977. Do you send sardars out to recruit?—Yes. We have sent about 70 altogether this year. Last year was a bad year for recruiting here. We had an average of 1½, that is about 18 new people. We can do with a very great many more. We can employ a thousand coolies a day here.

F-4978. Have you experimented with short-term labour?—No.

F-4979. Do you object to it?—I think it has an unsettling effect upon my permanent labour force. Also new recruits get bigger concessions in the way of clothing which other people do not get.

F-4980. Do your recruits come from one district only?—They come from Nagpur, Santhal Parganas and Madras.

F-4981. Is that run through the Tea Districts Labour Association?—Yes.

F-4982. You do not find that all the benefits which you give here put you in any specially favourable position?—No, I think it is the other way round. When I urge them to go into a hospital when they are ill they simply leave the garden. I am worse off here than some of the gardens who do not spend money on welfare work.

F-4983. *Mr. Clow*: Have you the usual system of paying one *hazira* at the end of the month and the rest weekly?—Yes. All the second and third and fourth tasks are paid weekly and the *hazira* in certain cases is paid monthly except in regard to those people who stipulate that they want to be paid weekly. In those cases the wages are paid weekly.

F-4984. Some do ask to be paid weekly?—Yes.

F-4985. How many?—They vary from 70 up to about 120 It is mostly among the Christian coolies.

F-4986. Suppose you wanted to pay everybody weekly: would there be any objection?—Yes, they would object.

F-4987. On what grounds?—The *sardar* says that if a coolie gets a small amount each week he will spend it, but if he is paid at the end of the month he will be able to settle up his account and will have a little money left for himself.

F-4988. You are satisfied that the coolies themselves object and not merely the *sardars*?—I think it is the coolies themselves. I tried clearing everything after each week but they asked me to go back to the old system. That request came from the coolies themselves and not from the *sardars*.

F-4989. Have you any *khet* land here?—Yes, about 800 to 1,000 acres, parcelled off in one acre and half acre plots. It is not all given out. We give the coolies a license to cultivate for nine months; then we give them a license for three months for which we charge As. 6 rent so that they cannot have conversion of rights. A family consisting of a husband and wife will get half an acre. If they had one or two children we might give up to one acre.

F-4990. Do they own many cattle?—The last census of cattle astonished me. One *sardar*, who has been here 30 years, has over 300 head of cattle.

F-4991. What is the proportion of the people having *khet* land?—Everybody who wants *khet* land can get it.

F-4992. Are there some who do not want it?—Quite a lot. Some of them can make more money by working on the garden. The *khet* land is 2 miles out. It is fenced in. I do not encourage them to go and live in the *khet* land because it is not so sanitary and you cannot look after their health conditions so well.

F-4993. Do you find that a large proportion return at intervals to their own country for a holiday?—It is a very small proportion that go. The proportion of recruiters is 70 out of a population of 2,000 odd.

F-4994. *The Chairman*: Does that figure of recruiters include all those who wish to pay a visit to their home?—No. Those who go on leave with permission get a special concession from the railway in regard to the fares.

F-4995. There is an arrangement between the Railway Company and the Planters' Association?—Yes. We give for a return of Rs. 13-7-0 only Rs. 7-13-0, that is a single fare.

F-4996. *Mr. Clow*: I was thinking of those who went home for a short holiday and wanted to come back again?—We do not charge the fare up against them. We actually charge the fare in advance account till the end of the year. If they are here at the end of the year we allow them the railway fare which they have paid.

F-4997. Do you pay them through the *sardars* or directly?—All the Madrasis (natives of Madras) and some of the Bilaspuris (natives of Bilaspur in Central Provinces) are paid individually. Some of the Santhals are paid individually, but the majority are paid through *sardars*.

F-4998. Why the distinction?—The Madras coolies are sent up in ones and two's and three's and I have not a headman here who can look after them. Some of the Santhals cannot look after themselves.

F-4999. *The Chairman*: Do you mean that they cannot count their money?—They cannot trust the *sardar*.

F-5000. *Mr. Clow*: Do you prefer to pay through the *sardar*?—I will pay in any way they want me to pay.

F-5001. Why do you not pay them all individually?—Because they prefer to be paid in family groups or relations. They seem to be quite content to be paid through the *sardar*.

F-5002. Is the land distributed through the *sardars*?—No, that is distributed direct. Each man holds his own quota of land for which we take his signature.

F-5003. Do you advance money to your labourers?—Any coolies who wants an advance can get it.

F-5004. What sort of sums are advanced?—We advance from Rs. 50 to Rs. 70 for a wedding and Rs. 10 for death.

F-5005. How is it recovered?—Monthly, without interest. A very small recovery takes place. There are a few cases where we take deposits from the coolies and give them interest.

F-5006. Do many do that?—Very few. I had one girl who deposited Rs. 60 and another one who deposited Rs. 100 in anticipation of leaving for her country. I give a good interest in order to encourage them to deposit money with me.

F-5007. *Miss Power:* You said you had 600 people working but that you had work enough for 1,000. How do you encourage the workers to do more than one *hazira*?—We give them a second and third task. They can complete these three tasks quite easily from 8 o'clock in the morning until half past two in the afternoon and earn As. 12.

F-5008. Do the majority do 2 *haziras*?—Yes. A large proportion do 3 and some do 4.

F-5009. What is the *hazira* rate for men, women and children?—It is As. 4 for men, with As. 4 for each extra *hazira*, and one pice commission to the *sardar*. It is As. 3 for women and As. 1½ for children.

F-5010. At what age do the children begin to earn?—In the plucking season if a child brings in its quota of leaf, 10 lbs., it gets an equivalent of one woman *hazira*, namely As. 3.

F-5011. What is the youngest age at which children are allowed to work?—As soon as they can walk about they start carrying manure and plucking leaf with their mothers.

F-5012. There is no age limit?—No.

F-5013. At what age do they begin?—On plucking at 3 or 4 years old.

F-5014. Do any of the young children go into the factory?—Not very young children. Children of 8, 9 or 10 years of age start work in the factory.

F-5015. Have you any school on the garden?—Yes, with a school master.

F-5016. How many children attend there?—54 out of a child population of 600 odd.

F-5017. What encouragement do you give the children to attend school?—No encouragement at all.

F-5018. Do you carry on any sort of propaganda in order to persuade the parents to send their children to school?—No.

F-5019. You do not pay the children to go to school?—No.

F-5020. What makes the parents of the 54 children send their children to school?—These children are the sons and daughters of people who have received a little education themselves.

F-5021. They are not your ordinary recruited garden workers from Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas?—No.

F-5022. Are they the children of the clerks?—No, they are the *sardars'* children or the *daffadars'* children or the children of people who can themselves read and write and who themselves see the benefit of a little education. Then we have a night school for the men. The men are paid two annas. A man recognizes that if he can read and write he can get as much money as by doing manual labour.

F-5023. *The Chairman:* Those are not the ordinary recruited workers, are they?—Some of them are—the brighter ones, not the really jungle coolies.

F-5024. *Miss Power:* Are you anxious for the children of the ordinary coolies to go to school?—I think it will be a very slow task.

F-5025. Would you be prepared to envolve some scheme such as paying a child at the rate of one *hazira* for attending one half-day at school?—I would.

F-5026. Supposing the parents were told that the child would not be allowed to do one *hazira* of work unless it had done one *hazira* at school?—Then we would have to abolish all children's work in the garden. Our garden would certainly lose all the children's work.

F-5027. Do you encourage any form of adult education?—We have night classes. Some of the people there are reading up to second English.

F-5028. What encouragement has been given to those labourers to attend the night school after their day's work?—It is such a small day's work that they do not need any encouragement.

F-5029. Are those attending the night school sending their children to the day school?—Some of them are.

F-5030. They are the ones who understand the value of education?—Yes.

F-5031. Are you doing anything in the way of education through cinema exhibitions?—Yes, we show things connected with malaria.

F-5032. How do the people respond?—The coolies are interested to begin with, but after they see it once they do not patronize it again. It is all given free by the Company.

F-5033. Are your lines on private roads?—They are all within the grant.

F-5034. Can anybody go through your lines who wants to?—It will be very difficult to stop them.

F-5035. Is there any scrutiny?—Yes. I have *chowkidars* in each line in order to keep off trespassers. The whole garden is fenced.

F-5036. Who comes under the category of a trespasser?—Anybody can come from the garden in order to go to the next bazaar.

F-5037. Supposing anybody came along ostensibly for the purpose of organizing your workers into a trade union: would he be allowed free access to your workers?—He would have to come along the Government road, but certainly he would not be allowed on the private road.

F-5038. Could he reach your coolies by the Government road?—Yes.

F-5039. So that there is one public road?—There must be a public road North, South, East and West on the tea garden. The Government demands an outlet North, South, East and West.

F-5040. Is that a Government rule?—Yes, We must leave lands for roads North, South, East and West.

F-5041. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you many children of 3 and 4 on your books?—If they bring a *hazira* they are entered on the books. But it is unusual to have children of 3 and 4. We make special baskets for them. In the rains we have 20 or 30 working on the garden.

F-5042. What *hazira* do they do?—They help the women in bringing the extra *hazira*.

F-5043. At what age do they generally work?—4, 5 or 6.

F-5044. *The Chairman*: They are working with their mothers?—Yes, they are practically with their mothers.

F-5045. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many children have you on your books?—We had 44 working children yesterday.

F-5046. How many men were there yesterday?—There were not many yesterday, because they were all drunk yesterday being Monday.

F-5047. *Mr. Clow*: Yesterday you had 208 men and they did in addition to the 208 first *haziras* 341 additional *haziras*, 338 women who did in addition to their first *haziras* 193 second *haziras* and 44 children who had only one *hazira*?—Yes.

F-5048. You pay the women monthly not merely for the *haziras* but also for the extra tasks?—Yes. The women are paid monthly. The men are paid for their extra tasks every Friday.

F-5049. *The Chairman*: Is drink a serious evil here?—Do they drink the liquor which they themselves brew?—It is a serious evil here. They do not drink so much their own liquor as the Government liquor. It is selling cheap at 5 or 6 annas a bottle. They buy it and take it into their lines. But that liquor is more harmful than the liquor they themselves brew.

F-5050. Have you made any endeavour to restrict the consumption of liquor?—The Dooars Planters' Association tried to restrict this for years. We have certain restrictions as regards the brewing of country liquor. We pay a tax of As. 4 per acre to Government and we issue permits to the people who want to brew this liquor.

F-5051. In this district does Government raise its revenue by liquor regulation?—Yes, it does very much. I want that the rate should be increased in order to make it more difficult for them to brew their own liquor.

F-5052. Is it a serious evil here on the gardens where they employ primitive type of labour?—Yes.

F-5053. Do they drink here more than in their own country because of their higher earnings?—In my experience of the past 25 years the evil is getting worse. They are not able to do the tasks which they were doing before. They are growing weaker on account of this liquor habit.

F-5054. Is it a bad kind of liquor which the Government brew?—Yes, it is a bad kind of liquor.

F-5055. You made representations and Government took no notice of them? —I understand the revenue went down. We were asked to issue permits for brewing country liquor. We are actually contributing Rs. 278 a year as fees for our coolies brewing the country liquor.

F-5056. How far is the Government liquor shop from your garden?—A mile and a quarter.

F-5057. *Mr. Clow*: Do you suggest that Government has been pressing you to increase the consumption of liquor in order to increase the revenue?—No, they have lessened the price per bottle and that has increased consumption.

F-5058. Did they want to increase their revenue?—As far as I can understand I think the Deputy Commissioner or whoever it was fixed the revenue to be got from this item and we have to pay that. That is my opinion.

F-5059. *Mr. Cliff*: How many houses have you for housing your labourers? —We have 663 thatched houses and about 120 tin-roofed houses.

F-5060. Would it be a good thing for the tea industry if there was a Board of Health to look after the health of the tea garden workers?—Yes, provided the Government has one too.

F-5061. Would you, representing the tea industry, welcome a board of that kind for the tea gardens?—I would welcome anything connected with the improvement of the health of the workers. But it is very discouraging to find that when you try to do the best for your workers they take advantage of it and when they are on the road to recovery they leave the garden saying that there is a ghost in the garden and so on. All our welfare activities have not helped to increase the flow of labour.

F-5062. Is it not a legitimate reason for having a Board of Health or a committee containing some representatives of the planters also so that they may address themselves continuously to the welfare of the garden labourers?— If there is a system which is uniformly applicable to all the gardens it is all right; otherwise I will suffer.

F-5063. With regard to wage rates would you have any objection to a minimum wage fixing machinery for the tea garden labourers?—He can earn enough even now. If he does not earn enough it is on account of his laziness. I am willing to give my workers Re. 1 a day if they work for me. I would set them a 2 hours first task, a 2 hours second task and a 2½ hours third task.

F-5064. But there are some gardens which would not do that?—Yes, they are so full of labour that they cannot give more than one task for each. But from our statistics you will find that only a very small proportion of the people work and they work for a very small number of days in the month. They work on an average 15 days in a month.

F-5065. *The Chairman*: Do you attribute that to the fact that when they have earned a certain amount they have no desire to earn more?—A labourer is quite content with what he earns unless he wants to buy another cow or goat in which case he works a little more.

F-5066. *Mr. Cliff*: How can the standard of the people on the gardens be improved?—The only way is to give them education.

F-5067. Would you oppose compulsory primary education for the tea garden labourers?—If that was introduced I should certainly support it because that is the only way to improve them.

F-5068. Most of the managers seem to fear any attempt on the part of outsiders to form combinations of tea garden workers into trade unions. Would you have any objection to an attempt of that kind?—I have not studied anything about trade unionism.

F-5069. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is there a big *busti* here?—Yes, there is a *busti* from here right up to the railway line. Many tea garden coolies live there.

F-5070. How much of outside casual labour do you get from the *busti*?—We get from 30 to 50 every day. In the planting and harvesting seasons we get nothing.

F-5071. Supposing you had a Health or Welfare Trust you would have it confined to labourers living on the gardens?—Yes.

F-5072. What about labourers coming from outside?—In the case of epidemics like cholera and small-pox we will have to extend its operations to a ten mile radius.

F-5073. Do the outside casual labourers do more than those living on the garden?—Yes, they do an average of 3 *haziras* a day because they have nothing else to do, whereas our coolies have to go and get fire-wood, attend to their own lands and so on. They do little work in the afternoon.

F-5074. Is it a good thing to have *khet* lands?—Yes, provided it is properly controlled. Otherwise we will lose our land and the coolies will not work properly on the garden. Our ideal is to have a certain amount of *khet* land, not over much. We cannot have more than half to one acre for each labourer.

F-5075. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you get labourers from your adjoining districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur?—No.

F-5076. Is it because they get more from their lands than what you will pay them here?—I cannot say. I do not know what they earn by working on their own lands.

(The witness withdrew. The Commission adjourned to Asansol.)

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ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

LABOUR IN INDIA.

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TO

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